

Headquarters 1st Brigade, Ruggles Division
2nd Army Corps, Army of the Mississippi
Corinth Miss. May 15th 1862

Captain,

I have the honor to submit this, my report of the part taken by the Brigade under my Command, in the affair with the enemy at Farmington on the 9th instant.

By a circular order from Division Headquarters the Brigade was put in readiness on the night of the 8th to move to the front at an early hour on the morning of the 9th. I was directed by the Brigadier General commanding the Division to march my command to a field some half mile beyond the breastworks, to form the Brigade in close columns by divisions, and to await further orders. At the same time I was informed that it was the purpose of the commanding General that we should move out on the lower Farmington road until the enemy should be found and there to encounter him. Also that Brigadier General Walker commanding 3rd Brigade Ruggles Division, with (among other troops) one regiment of infantry (37th Miss. Regt. Col. Benton commanding) and one section of Artillery, Lt. Vaught commanding, belonging to my Brigade would deploy his column as soon as Bridge Creek was crossed and that my command consisting of the 25th La. Col. Fiske; the 36th Miss. Col. Brown, and the Florida Battalion Lt. Col. Clack, and four pieces of the Washington Artillery Capt. Hodgson, would follow closely his movements, and be ready to support him at any point of the field where occasion might require. My disposition was in column by platoons, right in front. In this manner we moved to within half a mile of Farmington, advancing slowly & cautiously being regulated in this by Brig. Genl. Walker's line in front. After a halt of about half an hour, by Genl. Ruggles's order we moved up into the village and halted for some time about one hundred yards in rear of and on the left of Genl. Walker. By order from the same authority I then formed the Brigade on Genl. Walker's left, which was now advancing. The four pieces of artillery under Capt. Hodgson were ordered to follow at convenient distance in rear of my centre. Genl. Walker's Brigade being in motion at the time I was ordered to form upon its left, and some hundred yards in advance, compelled me to execute the movement at a double quick, which however was completed just in time to engage the enemy's skirmishers as they were retiring down the slope of an open plain and entering a thick wood beyond. I deemed it necessary to press on without hesitation and push the enemy from his cover, as well as to gain a less exposed position for our own troops. The nature of the ground on my right had proved impracticable and a short delay was occasioned by the effort of the 25th La. and 36th Miss. Regiments to pass the obstacle. The latter Regiment had only arrived a few days previous, and had enjoyed none of the privileges of drill and instruction. To prevent further delay any confusion, I ordered forward the balance of the Brigade and instructed Col. Brown to form his Regiment in rear of my centre and to follow on closely until an opportunity was presented of regaining his position in line. On ascending to the top of a hill in an open field we received a heavy fire from the enemy's skirmishers in the thick wood not a hundred yards in front: and just at this moment the Orleans Guard's Battery was coming into position immediately in my centre for the purpose of shelling the wood. As the officer in charge informed me that this was by Genl. Ruggles' order – whom I saw present about this time – I directed the Brigade to take cover behind the remains of an old fence near the brow of the hill and a few paces in rear of the battery – the right wing of the 25th La. extending to the right of the battery. In

this position we could occasionally pick off a sharpshooter as he would uncover himself in the woods, but it was too exposed to justify its occupation for any length of time. Many of my men were being wounded and several killed. I requested the Battery to cease firing that I might charge the wood. In the mean time the 36th Miss. Co. Brown had regained its position in line, but many of its members were now straggling to the rear from under the sharp fire of the enemy's skirmishers. I endeavored with some success to rally them and immediately ordered a charge. It was gallantly responded to by the 25th La. and Florida Battalion, as also by a larger portion of the 36th Miss. The wood was gained without any difficulty, and the enemy was pushed rapidly through to an open field beyond. In this charge he had several killed and we took eight prisoners (three wounded) and a quantity of knapsacks, blankets, etc. etc. Also a few stand of arms. His surprise and hasty flight was evidenced by the manner in which these things were scattered through the woods, & half cooked breakfasts that lay around. Hogs and Mutton just butchered and not yet dressed could be seen in many places.

As we reached the open field beyond the wood, our pursuit was checked by the opening of Robertson's battery on our left which swept the field the full length of our front, dealing death and dismay in the ranks of the enemy's cavalry, a squadron of which had the temerity to attempt a charge upon our lines. At one time they were in easy range of our infantry which might have added many to the number of empty saddles, but for an impression that got abroad along the lines that it was our own cavalry, which impression was confirmed by an order coming from the right not to fire upon them. Being engaged personally at the time in bringing into line the 36th Miss., I did not hear the order and only learned of it when I had enquired why my command had ceased or failed to fire. By this time that column had fled beyond range. I pressed forward through the open field in front and charged into the wood beyond. I had not advanced far however when a citizen approached me & said it was impossible for the Brigade to get through a morass immediately in front – that he had informed General Ruggles of the fact, and that he (Genl. Ruggles) had sent him to me with information. As I had seen Genl. Ruggles on the field the moment before entering the wood, I concluded to speak with him on the subject – not however till a couple of staff officers had gone forward to reconnoitre [reconnoiter] the morass. I found Genl. Ruggles near by in the open field, and he confirmed what the citizen had told me and directed me to hold the Brigade in the wood where it was, till the result of a reconnoissance [reconnaissance] then being made could be ascertained – when he would give me further orders. After remaining in that position some half hour, he ordered me to withdraw into the open field near where he then was, which being accomplished he directed me to march back to a point a short distance in rear of Farmington, halt, and communicate with him through a staff officer. In the mean time I directed Lt. Col. Clack to detail an officer and two men to repair to a Gin House nearby in which was stored unginmed cotton as also several bales already packed, and to take an estimate of the quantity, quality & value of the same together with the house, machinery, etc. and to burn and destroy the same, reporting in full to me as soon as we returned to Corinth. Col. Clack was also directed to detail an officer with sufficient force to take charge of and bring off the knapsacks, blankets, clothing, etc. which had been left by the enemy in his flight. As my command filed by in their return to Farmington I observed Lt. Brown with a detail of 20 men collecting these articles, many of which had already been scattered & carried off by troops in passing. Having no wagons at hand, I

directed Lt. Brown to take the most valuable articles, such as blankets, overcoats, knapsacks, etc. and bring them off the field, but to prevent stragglers from lingering around the place in search of plunder, to gather all the valueless stuff such as old underclothes, etc. and to burn them. Both Capt. McMurdo's and Lt. Brown's reports are herewith transmitted. On reaching the point in rear of Farmington indicated by the Division commander, I communicated with Genl. Ruggles through Lt. Janes of my staff, who soon returned with orders for me to resume my position within the [trenches?] at Corinth, where my command arrived about sundown. Accompanying this report will be found a list of casualties [casualties] in my command, showing a loss of three killed, forty nine wounded and one missing. As this list however does not embrace the information desired in every particular, by a recent circular from General Headquarters, I have this day required a report from Regimental and Battalion commanders in conformity therewith, which will be transmitted at the earliest practicable moment.

It is proper for me to say that the troops of my command with inconsiderable exceptions, bore themselves, on this occasion, in a manner highly creditable to themselves and their Regimental commanders. None of them, except the Florida & Confederate Guards Battalion and the Washington Artillery ever having been under fire before, it could hardly be expected that a few would not shrink from the first volley of a concealed foe. The 25th La. Regt. though recently raised and arrived since the battle of Shiloh behaved like veterans, maintaining their line unbroken and always moving forward with spirit and alacrity whenever ordered to do so. Great credit for this state of things in a new Regiment is due to the discipline as well as gallantry displayed by the officers of the Regiment, both field and company. The Florida Battalion Lt. Col. Clack commanding gained fresh laurels in this field. By their discipline, valor, and promptness, both officers and men fully sustained the high reputation they had won on the bloody hills of Shiloh – never faltering – ever in the van. A large portion of the 36th Miss. Regt. although never having formed a line of battle, or heard a hostile gun before, behaved with that gallantry and spirit which has characterized the troops of that chivalrous state on every field. It is not doubted but the reputation of the state will be fully sustained on any future occasion requiring a display of intrepidity and valor. The 37th Miss. Col. Benton, on this occasion was detached from my Brigade and appeared on the field under the immediate command of Brig. Genl. L.M. Walker, who will report upon their conduct on this occasion. On one portion of the field, however they came under my immediate observation, and made a most gallant charge on my right and in conjunction with the 25th La. Regt.

Nothing can be said on this occasion in praise of the conduct of the Washington Artillery which would add to its well earned reputation on a former and a bloodier field. Suffice it to say that they were ever present in the right place at the right time displaying that skill in the management of their pieces, and the practice of their gunners which always wins fights as well as laurels. *

For instances of individual gallantry displayed upon the field by subalterns and men, who deserve notice, I respectfully refer to the accompanying reports of Regimental Commanders as well as for other details not specified in this report.

Captain R.M. Hood

I am Captain
Very respectfully
Yr. Obt. Svt.

A.A. Genl.
Ruggles Division Etc.

Patton Anderson
Brig. Genl. Comdg. Etc.

- To my personal staff, Capt. Wm. G. Barth A.A. Genl., 1st Lieut. Wm. M. Davidson aid de camp, 2nd Lieut. John W. Janes acting Brigade Ordnance officer, Captain Thaddeus Foster Brigade Quarter Master, and Edward McDonald acting Brigade Surgeon, I am indebted for their prompt and efficient assistance in their respective departments. All my orders were promptly delivered and every assistance was rendered by each of them which the occasion demanded.

Transcribed by Christopher A. Baker, University of Florida, 2008.