

Head Quarters, Reynolds Brigade  
Near Dalton Dec. 15/[18]63

Major,

In accordance with directions from Division Hd. Qrs., I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of my Brigade consisting of the 54<sup>th</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Va. Regts. & the 58<sup>th</sup> & 60<sup>th</sup> N.C. Regts. (consolidated,) during the engagement on the 25<sup>th</sup> ultimo.

At 7 o'clock on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>, I joined my Brigade posted in the riflepits at the foot of Missionary Ridge, & covering a space of some fourteen hundred yards on the left of Gen. Patton Anderson's Division.

At 10 o'clock A.M. the enemy attacked my line. Permitting them to approach within 200 yards of the riflepits, I ordered fire to be opened on them, and after an action of about an hour, they were driven back with considerable loss & did not again attempt to force my position. In this short action, the officers & men of my command, without exception conducted themselves with coolness & gallantry.

At 2 o'clock P.M. I received orders to fall back from the riflepits to the crest of Missionary Ridge, which I did by alternate Companies, deployed as skirmishers, and joined my line of battle on the ground designated. I will here state, that some of the companies of the 60<sup>th</sup> N.C. Regt., which were on the extreme left of the line, in moving up the ridge, were obliged, on account of the peculiar topography of the ground, to oblique somewhat too far to the right and on reaching the top of the Ridge, found themselves separated from their command, & owing to the difficulty of joining their own Regt they remained in line with Gen. Bates' Brigade. A short time after I had taken my position on the Crest of the Ridge, I observed the enemy advancing to the attack in three lines of battle. There being two pieces of artillery posted on the left of my line, I directed them to open fire on the enemy, which was done with excellent effect.

The enemy having reached our abandoned riflepits, I was directed by Gen. Anderson's Comdg. the Division, who was there present with my Brigade, to cause the guns to be depressed & open on them with canister. This was instantly done, & so terrible was the effect of this fire on the dense lines of the enemy, that it caused them to falter for an instant, but closing up their ranks, they again advanced to the charge. In a short time the enemy came within range of musketry, & my Brigade opened on them in fine style and as they advanced rapidly up the face of the ridge my fire, & that of my troops on my right, was so severe that for a time the enemy were checked. Unfortunately at this juncture, when every heart beat high with hope, & victory was almost within our grasp, the troops posted in the riflepits on the right of my Brigade, broke & fled in the utmost disorder. The enemy seeing the advantage that must result from this disgraceful & inexplicable pause on the part of the hitherto invincible troops, at once crossed the hill on my right and opened a heavy fire on my line, completely enfilading my position; this of course rendered necessary an immediate change of position, I therefore changed front to the rear on the left Battalion, my troops performing this delicate & dangerous maneuver under the fire of the enemy in admirable style & without the least confusion or irregularity. As soon as my new line was formed I opened fire by company, and continued to engage the enemy until I found that the troops on my left had also given way, and the enemy occupied on my left & now rear. Having now no supports whatever,

I considered it more prudent to withdraw my small, but gallant Brigade than to remain with the almost certainty of capture. I therefore retired (it was now dusk) by the right flank down the ridge, sheltering my troops as much as possible from the fire of the enemy who by this time had opened our own captured guns upon me from two different & commanding points on the ridge. Learning that Genl. Bates & the troops on my left were proceeding towards the Pontoon bridge at Birds Mill, I moved in the direction of our extreme right, where I yet heard firing. I did this on the principle that in the absence of orders, it was my duty to go to the support of those yet engaged. On reaching the road leading to "Shallow Ford" & Chickamauga river, I received orders to conduct my command to "Shallow Ford" Bridge & report to Genl. Manigault, who would place my command in position. I reached this point about 10 o'clock, & after remaining some two hours, took up the line of march for Chickamauga. It is with no little pleasure & pride that I am enabled to say that both in the rifle pits at the foot of the Ridge, & during the engagement on the ridge, all the officers & men of my Brigade acted with the gallantry & coolness of veterans. Throughout all the movement none left the ranks, but obeyed every order promptly & without the slightest confusion or disorder. I am indebted to my Regt. Comdrs Col. Hardy 58 & 60 N.C. Regts, Lt. Col. Wade comdg. 54<sup>th</sup> VA Regt. & Maj. French comdg. 63<sup>rd</sup> VA Regt., for a hearty cooperation & much assistance in all my movements during the day. Maj. French was struck by a fragment of a shell, but though painfully wounded, refused to leave the field until the action was over. Maj. Waever of the 60<sup>th</sup> NC Regt. & who was in command of my extreme right also deserves honorable mention for conspicuous gallantry in conducting the retreat of his command from the rifle pits to the top of the Ridge. He was the last man to leave the trenches, & displayed an intrepidity & indifference to danger seldom surpassed. Capt. A. T. Stewart 58<sup>th</sup> NC and Lieut. Jacob Anderson comdg. Co. "F" 54<sup>th</sup> VA Regt, acted with great gallantry, encouraging & setting examples of heroism to their men, Richard B. Ally color bearer Sergt. Wm. McKinnon & Private A.M. Chumbly Co. "F" all of 54<sup>th</sup> VA Regt & Sergt. Dr. W.F. Ester 58<sup>th</sup> NC were conspicuous for bravery. Co "F" 54<sup>th</sup> VA Regt particularly distinguished itself as sharpshooters, performing most effective service. As to my staff officers I am under especial obligations to the gallant Maj. C.W. Phifer A.A.G. who bore himself as he has always done in battle, with coolness & the most distinguished courage. He rendered great assistance in my change of front & all the maneuvers of the day.

Capt. J. Wm. Matthews A.A.G., Lts W.A.M. Patton. W.H. Claiborne my aids & my volunteer aid-C.B. Whitfield, rendered efficient service and gallantly discharged every duty they were called upon to perform. The officers & men attached to the section of artillery on my left deserve the thanks of our Division Comdrs for their distinguished gallantry & skill in managing their guns. Amidst a storm of shot & shell they stood by their guns, nor left their position until nearly all the horses were shot down, & they were overwhelmed by the enemy.

I am, Maj., Respty  
Yr. Obt. Servt.  
(Sgd) A.W. Reynolds  
Brig. Genl.

Maj. Wilson

A.A.G.  
Anderson's Brigade

Official J.W. Matthews  
A.A.G.

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