

Numbers 131. Report of Colonel Michael T. Donohoe, Tenth New Hampshire Infantry.

OPPOSITE FREDERICKSBURG, VA.,

December 17, 1862

COLONEL: I have the honor to make the following report of the part taken in the action of the 13th instant by this regiment:

On Saturday morning, 13th, I was ordered to take my regiment to the front and relieve the Ninth New York Volunteers, who were then on picket on the left of our line, and directly opposite the burnt railroad bridge. This was done very quietly, and without the knowledge of the enemy, it being very foggy. I received orders about 9 o'clock to return with the regiment to our place in the brigade, being relieved by the Second Delaware. Just as we were ready to march, another order arrived, which obliged me to place the regiment on picket again. During this time we had not fired a shot, though the enemy's pickets kept up a constant fire, and 2 of our men were wounded. Colonel Stedman, **Eleventh Connecticut** Volunteers, reported to me with 500 men, and we strengthened our line of pickets. At about 10.15 o'clock, firing was heard on our right, and soon I discovered the enemy's pickets retiring. I ordered our line to follow, which they did, and occupied the block-house on the crest of the opposite hill on our left, and the railroad on our right. In this position the regiment remained till nearly dark, when orders were received from you to prepare for a charge. The regiment did not move forward at the moment the balance of the brigade did on the left owing to my waiting to have the Ninth New York take its place on the right. I soon moved, however, without the Ninth New York, and proceeded to the railroad grade, where a regiment was lying down. Some delay was caused by this; but as they were crossed, the men moved on very well, though somewhat crowded from the left. Upon arriving at a little creek or ditch, the enemy's fire was severe, and checked our progress and created confusion. After some minutes, I succeeded in forming a portion of the line again, and crossed a fence, and found a number of the Thirteenth New Hampshire and Twenty-fifth New Jersey there. I proposed to the commanders that "we should move on," but a fire from troops in our rear caused me to change my mind, and, facing the regiment about, I marched back to where we started from, having had 29 men and 3 officers wounded and probably 6 men killed.

I cannot close this report without making a remark relative to the general conduct of the regiment. Under the circumstances, I feel that they did, well, having never been under fire before, and being witness to many ineffectual attempts of both new and old troops to break the enemy's lines, and seeing the immense destruction of men, which would naturally disconcert new troops. The officers, with a solitary exception, did very well.

Hoping sincerely that the next time the Tenth is called upon they will profit by this their first experience, and, in common with the rest of our army, succeed in driving and routing the enemy, I subscribe myself your very obedient servant,

MICHAEL T. DONOHOE,

Colonel Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers.

Colonel R. C. HAWKINS, Commanding First Brigade.