

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH RHODE ISLAND REGIMENT,  
Camp near New Berne, March 17, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following report of the part taken by the Fourth Rhode Island in the battle of New Berne, March 14, 1862:

Landed from the steamer Eastern Queen, by the aid of the stern-wheeler Union, at a point some 16 miles below this place, on the southern bank of the River Neuse, at 10.30 o'clock a. m. Thursday, the 13th instant, and found the regiment on the marsh and woody land. By your orders took up line of march in rear of the Fifty-first Pennsylvania, continued on through the day, nothing of importance occurring. We bivouacked for the night, which was wet and stormy. The men, being well supplied with blankets and provisions, did not suffer from the exposure. On the morning of the 14th, at 6.30 a. m., we were again ready for a start, when you ordered me to follow the rear of General Foster's brigade, which I did, moving off on the right of our brigade. The road being very heavy, our marching was slow, when at about 8 o'clock a. m. heavy firing was heard ahead and on our left, General Foster being engaged with the batteries in front, General Reno having engaged the right of the enemy.

Following you by the front of the enemy's lines we filed to the left through the wood for some distance nearly to the railroad, when by your orders the regiment halted while you ascertained where we were most needed. Standing in this position, a few minutes Captain Kenyon's company, D, was deployed to the front as skirmishers, and our position being rather exposed, moved the regiment to the railroad and waited for further orders. While here part of the Twenty-first Massachusetts, Lieutenant-Colonel Clark, was driven back from the battery in a charge they had made before we came up. Colonel Clark assuring me of the feasibility of charging the works from my position, and Mr. Lydig, an aide on your staff, urging me to take the responsibility, I told him if Mr. Hill, your other aide, would inform you, I would go on. Mr. Lydig then promptly started to bring up the Eighth Connecticut to support me. I formed the regiment in a partially-protected hollow, the right wing in front, supported by my left wing, the space and position rendering this, as I judged, the best plan. I then gave the order to charge. Passing quickly by the rifle pits, which opened on us with little injury, we entered in rear of their intrenchments, and the regiment in a gallant manner carried gun after gun, until the whole nine brass field pieces of their front were in our possession, with carriages, caissons, horses, &c., the enemy suddenly retiring, firing only three guns from the front and three at us from the fort on their left, which happily passed over our heads. The enemy forming in the woods-I should judge about the strength of two regiments-I did not think it prudent to attack them. The national flag of the Fourth Rhode Island was planted on the parapet, and the enemy retired from the whole length of their lines on their left flank. I formed the regiment, after resting a few minutes, in rear of the Eighth and **Eleventh Connecticut** and Fifth Rhode Island.

In about ten minutes, by your orders, I prepared to attack the rifle pits on the right of General Reno's force, where the firing had been and still continued heavy. Countermarched by the right flank and enter the woods near the brick-works, when the enemy opened on us with a severe fire, killing and wounding some of my best officers and men. Seeing this would not do, I ordered the regiment to charge the pits and railroad embankment, which they did in a fine manner, carrying them in about fifteen minutes. At about the same time General Reno's brigade drove the enemy from their front.

Collecting the wounded under the care of my surgeons I prepared to move on, when in a short time by your orders we moved forward on the railroad toward New Berne. On arriving at the county road turned off and sent my right company forward as skirmishers. Marched on without opposition, arriving near New Berne, when your ordered me to take possession of the deserted camp by the road, lately occupied by Colonel Lee's regiment. This I proceeded to do, and took possession of the camp, stores, &c., where my regiment has since remained. The regimental quartermaster, Lieutenant C. S. Smith, will render an account of the property found when he has made the inventory.

For the brave men who so gloriously fell I could not say enough. They fell gallantly at their posts-Captain [Charles] Tillinghast at the head of his company; Captain [William S.] Chase, severely wounded, leading on his; Lieutenant Curtis also wounded at his post. Of the living it would be invidious in me to name one officers above another when all did so well. Every wish and measure was promptly responded to by the officers of field, staff, and line, and this example the men were proud to follow. Surgeons Rivers, Millar, and Mr. Flanders, the chaplain, were indefatigable in their exertions for the comfort of the men.

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All of which is respectfully submitted.\*

Your obedient servant,

I. P. RODMAN,

Colonel, Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers.