

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA,
New Berne, April 10, 1862.

I have the honor to make the following detailed report of the battle of New Berne, as promised in my hurried report of the 16th ultimo:

After embarking my command, consisting of the brigades of Generals Foster, Reno, and Parke, at Roanoke Island on the morning of the 11th, the transport fleet, in conjunction with the naval fleet, arrived without accident off the mouth of Slocum's Creek, in the Neuse River, some 16 miles from New Berne, on the evening of the 12th, where we anchored for the night. Soon after anchoring I called the three general officers in council, and after consultation with Commodore Rowan we decided to land at the mouth of Slocum's Creek on the following morning under cover of the naval guns, and proceed up the direct road to New Berne, our advance to be designated by signal rockets from the head of the column, thus enabling the Navy and our armed transport vessels to shell the road in advance of us.

At 6.30 the following morning I hoisted the preparatory signal. The naval vessels, with the gunboat Picket, moved in toward the mouth of the creek and shelled the woods some distance, in advance of us. A reconnaissance was made to ascertain the depth of water by the gunboat Delaware, Captain Quackenbush, and by Mr. H. H. Helper, with the boat's crew of the Alice Price. After receiving their reports the signal for landing was hoisted, the light-draught steamers and surf-boats having been previously filled with our men, and in twenty minutes some three regiments were on shore. The steamers having grounded, the men on them leaped overboard and waded to the shore, holding their cartridge-boxes out of the water. The enthusiasm with which this work was accomplished cannot be excelled. As the colors of each regiment were planted on the shore the men rallied to them, and their proper formations were soon made. The steamers and boats returned to the fleet for more troops, and the landing was continued, under the direction of my chief quartermaster, Captain Herman Biggs, until the whole force detailed for the attack had reached the shore except the field artillery and some of the infantry that had not arrived from Hatteras Inlet.

In the mean time I had landed my staff, and detailed Captain R. S. Williamson, Topographical Engineer, to move on in advance of the column for the purpose of reconnoitering the positions of the enemy. I detailed my aides Lieutenants Pell and Fearing to accompany him, and requested him to call on General Foster for two of his aides, and Lieutenants Strong and Pendleton were detailed to accompany him.

The six naval boat howitzers, under command of Lieutenant McCook, having landed, I ordered a detail of a regiment from General Reno's brigade to assist in hauling them over the road, which was so bad that it was impossible for them to be dragged by the gunners. The Fifty-first Pennsylvania was detailed for this service. I then moved on to the head of the column, and found it had reached the first intrenchment at Otter Creek, some 6 miles up, which had been deserted by the enemy. Captain Williamson, having discovered this fact and previously reported it to General Foster, proceeded on with his party to make a further reconnaissance. After obstructing the railroad at this point, I ordered General Foster to move up the main county road with his brigade and General Reno to move his brigade up the railroad, leaving orders for General Parke to follow with his brigade up the county road. Soon after starting the columns Captain Williamson reported to me that a line of breastworks,

broken by a redan for field pieces, along the bank of the river a mile in advance, had also been deserted by the enemy. I visited this work, accompanied by Generals Foster and Reno, where we communicated with the fleet.

Overtaking the head of the column, the march was continued until my own staff officers and those of the different brigades who were acting as escort to Captain Williamson came in contact with the enemy's pickets. It then being nearly 8 o'clock, I ordered a halt, and directed General Foster to bivouac on the right and left of the county road in a line at right angles to it, ordering one regiment to occupy the road leading down to the fortifications on the river. General Reno's brigade occupied a corresponding advanced position across the railroad a half mile to the left and General Parke occupied a position immediately in rear of and parallel with General Foster. It rained all night, as it had done during the day, so that our men passed a most cheerless night. The Fifty-fifth Pennsylvania, with the naval boat howitzers, under Lieutenant McCook, together with two guns landed from the Cossack and Highlander, under Captains Bennett and Dayton, did not reach my headquarters till 3 o'clock in the morning. Too much praise cannot be awarded to the officers and men who performed this very arduous service, as these eight pieces constituted our entire artillery force during the engagement of the next day.

Soon after leaving the landing I determined not to land the light batteries of Captains Belger and Morris and our wagons at Slocum's Creek, and sent an order to Captain Biggs to move up the river and land them at the deserted intrenchment above the mouth of Otter Creek, but the dense fog that prevailed during the afternoon and night made it impossible to land anything, and it was equally impossible to communicate from shore with the fleet by signals, as agreed upon.

On the following morning I ordered Captain Williamson to move forward and reconnoiter the position of the enemy, which was known to be not far in advance of our pickets, from information obtained during the night from negroes and others, to the effect that they were posted behind a long line of intrenchments leading from the river across the county road to the railroad. The brigades were formed and ordered to advance as follows: General Foster to move up the county road and attack the enemy's front and left, General Reno to move up the railroad and, if possible, turn the enemy's right, and General Parke

to move up the county road as a reserve. I also ordered General Parke to detail the **Eleventh Connecticut** to relieve the Fifty-first Pennsylvania in dragging up the boat howitzers, and their work was done in an efficient and prompt manner. The head of the columns very soon came within range of the enemy's artillery, and the following dispositions were made: General Foster placed the Twenty-fifth Massachusetts, Colonel Upton, and the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts, Colonel Stevenson, in line of battle on the right of the county road parallel with the enemy's intrenchments; the six navy boat howitzers, under Lieutenant McCook, with the howitzers of Captains Dayton and Bennett, across the road, the the Twenty-seventh Massachusetts, Colonel Lee, and the Twenty-third Massachusetts, Colonel Kurtz, in line of battle on the left of the road.

The enemy then opened fire, both musketry and artillery, upon General Foster's lines. General Reno then, moving briskly forward with his brigade along the railroad, ordered a charge of the right wing of the Twenty-first Massachusetts, Lieutenant-Colonel Clark, on the

the brick-kiln, just in the rear of the main line of intrenchments, which was entirely successful. He at the same time ordered the left wing of the Twenty-first Massachusetts, Major Rice; the Fifty-first New York, Colonel Ferrero; the Ninth New Jersey, Colonel Heckman, into line of battle on the left of the railroad, with a view of supporting the Twenty-first Massachusetts, holding the Fifty-first Pennsylvania, Colonel Hartranft, in reserve; but he soon found that instead of the enemy's right being on the railroad it extended to a point some three-quarters of a mile beyond, and they were posted along the whole line in a series of redans separated from him by fallen trees and an almost impassable swamp. He soon found himself engaged along the whole line, and was unable to support Colonel Clark, who was soon after compelled to return from the brick-kiln from the attack of an overwhelming force. General Foster ordered the Tenth Connecticut, Colonel Drake, to interline on the left of the Twenty-third Massachusetts. I then ordered General Parke's brigade to take a position in the intermediate space between General Foster and General Reno, and to support whichever brigade needed it. His brigade was formed in the following order, beginning at the left: The Fourth Rhode Island, Colonel Rodman; the Eighth Connecticut, Colonel Harland; the Fifth Rhode Island, Major Wright. The **Eleventh Connecticut**, which had brought up the boat howitzers, I held as reserve. Soon after this, learning from General Foster that the Twenty-seventh Massachusetts had exhausted its ammunition, I ordered the **Eleventh Connecticut**, Colonel Mathewson, to report to General Foster for their support.

The engagement was now general all along the whole line. It had been previously ascertained, by the reconnaissance of Captain Williamson, that the enemy had many pieces of field artillery behind their intrenchments, and on their left flanks there was a river battery with four 32-pounders, pivot guns, which enfiladed our lines. Having ordered to General Foster the last of my reserve, I sent word to General Parke to push on through the timber and pass the enemy's right. I then proceeded to the left of our lines to communicate with General Reno, where I found his brigade very hotly engaged with the enemy.

In the mean time Colonel Rodman, of the Fourth Rhode Island, has met Colonel Clark, of the Twenty-first Massachusetts, who informed him that he could get in rear of the enemy's intrenchments by charging down the railroad directly upon the brick-kiln, which he at once did, under a galling fire from the rifle pits in front of General Reno, and was supported by the remainder of the brigade, by order of General Parke, planting their colors upon the parapet. The brigade then moved rapidly down the line of intrenchments, the Fourth Rhode Island leading, clearing it of the enemy as they advanced and capturing their guns. General Foster, seeing our forces inside of the enemy's lines, immediately ordered his brigade to charge, when the whole line of breastwork between the railroad and the river were by this combined movement of the two brigades most gallantly carried, the enemy retreating in the great possible confusion. After the cheers of our men had subsided it was discovered from the sharp firing on our left that General Reno was still engaged with the enemy, upon which General Parke moved back, with a view, if possible, of getting in the rear of the enemy's forces in the intrenchments to the left of the railroad. General Foster also moved forward with one of his regiments farther to the right, with a view to getting in their rear. General Parke, having reached an advantageous position to the right of the brick-kiln and in rear of the redans, by a heavy fire very much staggered the enemy, when General Reno ordered the Fifty-first Pennsylvania, Colonel Hartranft, to charge the enemy's line, which charge was supported by the remainder of his brigade, causing the enemy to desert his works in great confusion.

At this juncture General Foster appeared in their rear with one of his regiments, thus cutting off their retreat, and received from Colonel Avery an unconditional surrender of himself and over 200 men. The Twenty-first Massachusetts was left in charge of the prisoners. The remaining force at that point moved along the railroad directly for New Berne. In the mean time I had conducted the four regiments of General Foster's brigade on the county road in pursuit of the enemy, and at the crossing of the county road and railroad the column came together, General Foster's brigade consolidated and moved on, General Reno's brigade following. I ordered General Parke's brigade to follow the county road, and if possible save the bridge over the Trent from destruction. I then joined the head of General Foster's brigade, and soon after discovered that the railroad bridge and part of the city were on fire. Upon arriving at the head of the bridge I halted the brigades, and after visiting the city, in company with Generals Foster and Reno and consulting with Commodore Rowan, I ordered General Foster to move across to the city and occupy it. Having discovered that the draw of the county bridge had been destroyed, I sent an order to General Parke to proceed no farther, but to bivouac for the night.

Of what has happened since that time I have already sent you detailed accounts. For a more perfect understanding of the exact movements of the different brigades I beg to refer you to the very accurate reports of my brigadier-generals. I also beg to refer you to the report of Captains Williamson and to the accompanying sketch* for a more accurate knowledge of the nature and position of the enemy's intrenchments as well as our own position in the battle. The endurance and courage displayed by our officers and men from the moment they landed at Slocum's Creek until they reached New Berne was beyond anything I could have expected. The road from the landing to Croatan, a distance of 6 miles, was newly cut, and consequently almost impassable, and continually rendered worse by the rain, the march of the troops, and the wheels of the artillery.

I have before mentioned that the rear of the column, with the artillery, did not reach our position in front of the enemy's until 3 o'clock in the morning. Both officers and men bivouacked in the open fields and swamps in order of battle, catching such rest as they could, the rain falling constantly during the night. At daylight the next morning the regiments were in line, and soon the brigades commenced filling off to take their positions closer to the enemy's works. When I started from my headquarters for the head of the column I felt that we were going to the fight under most unfavorable circumstances, and expected to find the men fagged and leg-weary, but as I passed regiment after regiment their hearty cheers and firm step convinced me that I had underestimated them.

On reaching the turn in the road where they first came under fire of the enemy's cannon the only change I could perceive in their demeanor was an over-anxiety to keep their ranks well closed, and they filed to their positions, under the direction of their brigadier-generals, with all the regularity and steadiness of veteran soldiers. For more than three hours the contest continued, the fog being so dense at times that the position of the enemy could only be ascertained by the rattle of their musketry and the roar of artillery. The result has proved what work they can do under such trying circumstances. In the midst of all the privations since we left Fortress Monroe the most marked feature that has been demonstrated in the character of these men is their extreme patience. With men of less patience and subordination the work could not have been accomplished.

I cannot mention personal instances of gallantry where all have behaved so nobly. To the reports of Generals Foster, Reno, and Parke, who were always with their brigades in the thickest of the fight, as well as to the reports of the colonels of the regiments, who commanded by example as well as authority, I beg to refer you for details. To them and their brave officers and men the country owes every success which has been obtained during the campaign, and I am sure their services are appreciated.

By the inclosed report of Brigade Surg. W. H. Church, our medical director, it will be seen that our loss was overestimated in my hasty report the day after the battle. The accompanying lists show 88 killed and 352 wounded.* Among these names are some of our most valuable officers and men. They are sad losses to us and to their relatives and friends. They nobly gave up their lives in defense of their country, and a debt of gratitude is due from every American citizen to the wives, mothers, and fathers who have laid such sacrifices on the altar of their country. They have my heartfelt sympathy, and I constantly pray that but few more such sacrifices will be required for the breaking up of this unholy rebellion. The memories of the brave dead will ever be green in the hearts of their countrymen and the scars of the wounded will be honorable passports for them through life.

As indicated in the beginning of my report, the plan of attack contemplated the co-operation of the Navy, which was most successfully carried out. As we moved along the road their shells fell in advance of us, and as we approached the rear of each rebel fortification their shells dropped inside the parapets, and by this combined movement the enemy was forced to fly in the greatest confusion. In this instance as well as in every other where it has been needed the most perfect understanding and co-operation have existed between the two arms of the service since we joined the naval fleet at Hatteras Inlet. I need hardly say that these brave officers and sailors are bound to us by the strongest ties of friendship and companionship in arms.

The armed transports of the fleet in this instance, as in every other, have shown that they have been most efficiently managed, and in speaking of the services of this command I always include all the transports of the fleet. The gunboat Picket, Captain T. P. Ives, rendered marked service in this engagement as well as at Roanoke and elsewhere.

The duties of the officers and attendants of the medical staff have been most arduous both during and since the battle and most nobly have they fulfilled their mission, displaying in all instances both skill and courage.

Some of the results of this battle may be enumerated as follows: The capture of nine forts, with forty-one heavy guns; two miles of intrenchments, with nineteen field pieces; six 32-pounders not in position; over 300 prisoners; over 1,000 stand of small-arms; tents and barracks for 10,000 troops; a large amount of ammunition and army supplies; an immense amount of naval stores, for which I refer you to Commodore Rowan's report; the second commercial city in the State of North Carolina; the entire command of the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds; the capture of Beaufort, Carolina, and Morehead Cities, and the complete investment of Fort Macon, which we hope soon to reduce. The prisoners belonging to this city I have released on their parole, together with the sick and wounded. The remainder, some 160, I have sent to New York. I hope my course in releasing the sick and wounded and the citizens of this place will meet the approval of the Department, and I should have been glad

to have released them all had the enemy fulfilled their engagement made with me when I released the Roanoke prisoners.

I cannot close this report without paying a just tribute of praise to the members of my staff, who have so nobly aided me in every effort in the accomplishment of this work. Dr. Church, after designating the positions for hospitals and performing other duties devolving upon him as medical director, rendered me most efficient service in directing troops and carrying orders. Captain Richmond, my assistant adjutant-general, and Lieutenants Pell and Fearing accompanied me on the field, where they displayed great gallantry and skill.

Captain Herman Biggs, my chief quartermaster, rendered most important service in directing the debarkation of troops and the movement of our supply transports. From the organization of this expedition in New York last September his work has been arduous and unremitting, and the fact that no call for anything which appertains to his department has been unsatisfied is sufficient evidence of the efficiency with which he has performed his work. He has been and was in this instance most nobly seconded by Captains Cutting and Loring. Captain R. S. Williamson, chief topographical engineer, made some most daring reconnaissances, and by his skill and courage has commanded the respect of and endeared himself to the whole command. Captain E. R. Goodrich, my chief commissary, and Captain D'Wolf, in this instance as in all others, have shown marked efficiency in the discharge of the duties of their department under the most trying circumstances. Lieutenant Flagler, my chief ordnance officer, has constantly managed his department with great skill, and rendered most important aid in this instance. My private secretaries, Messrs. Larned and French, here as at Roanoke, accompanied the army on the field, ever ready to perform the duties required of them.

I mentioned in my first dispatch that the loss of the enemy was less than our own, but subsequent information has convinced me that it was much greater; that a large number of their killed and wounded were carried off in the cars there is no doubt, but in the absence of accurate information I refrain from making an estimate. It is never a source of pleasure to me to exaggerate the loss on either side, and could the same results have been obtained without the loss of a man it would have been a source of great gratification. happily I have the opportunity of decreasing my former estimate of our own loss.

I have the honor to be, your very obedient servant,

A. E. BURNSIDE,

Major-General, Commanding Department North Carolina.

GENERAL ORDERS, HDQRS. DEPT. OF NORTH CAROLINA, Numbers 17.
New Berne, March 15, 1862.

The general commanding congratulates his troops on their brilliant and hard-won victory of the 14th. Their courage, their patience, their endurance of fatigue, exposure, and toil cannot be too highly praised. After a tedious march, dragging their howitzers by hand through swamps and thickets; after a sleepless night, passed in a drenching rain, they met the enemy in his chosen position, found him protected by strong earth works, mounting many and heavy

guns, and although in an open field themselves, they conquered. With such soldiers advance is victory.

The general commanding directs with peculiar pride that, as a well-deserved tribute to valor in this second victory of the expedition, each regiment engaged shall inscribe on its banner the memorable name, "New Berne,"

By command of Brigadier General A. E. Burnside:

LEWIS RICHMOND,

Assistant Adjutant-General