

Numbers 18. Report of Brigadier General Edward Harland, U. S. Army, commanding Second Brigade.

HDQRS. [SECOND Brigadier,] THIRD DIV., NINTH ARMY CORPS,
Suffolk, Va., May 6, 1863.

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to submit the following report of the movements of the troops of this brigade from April 11 to present time:

On the afternoon of April 11 the brigade was placed under arms in consequence of the approach of the enemy. I received orders from General Peck to hold my command in readiness to support either General Terry or Colonel Foster, who had commands, respectively, on the right and left of Fort Nansemond.

The troops remainder under arms during the night, and on the morning of the 12th, by order of General Peck, I sent the Eighth and Sixteenth Regiments Connecticut Volunteers to occupy a portion of the breastworks on the right of Fort Union. About noon of the same day I received verbal instructions from Brigadier-General Corcoran to take command of the line of defense between Forts Union and McClellan.

On the morning of the 14th the entire brigade was posted along the line of breastworks under my command. That evening, by order of General Peck, I sent the Eighth Connecticut to report to General Getty for instructions, since which time the regiment has not been under my command.

On April 18 I was ordered to take command of the line of defenses extending from Fort Halleck to Battery Onondaga. The **Eleventh** and Fifteenth Regiments reported to me on April 28 and the Sixteenth on the 29th.

Nothing of any importance occurred until May 3, when, with the **Eleventh**, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Regiments, I took party in the reconaissance on the Providence Church road. The regiments crossed the Nansemond at the drawn-bridge at about 9 o'clock on the morning of May 3. Immediately after the brigade had crossed the bridge the One hundred and third and Eighty-ninth New York, in the advance, engaged the enemy's pickets. The brigade halted, and remained in this position until about 12 m., when I crossed the river to confer with General Getty, and received orders from him to send one regiment to support the One hundred and third New York, which was reported to be without ammuniton, and also to return and take the general direction of the movement.

I recrossed and sent the Sixteenth Connecticut, under command of Colonel Beach, up to the support of the One hundred and third Regiment, and having reaches said regiment relieved it. After relieving the One hundred and third the Sixteenth engaged the enemy and moved forward a short distance until the right

of the regiment rested on the bank of the river. This position was held by the regiment until night, when the troops were withdrawn to the other side of the river.

Soon after sending the Sixteenth Connecticut to support the One hundred and third New York I received word from Colonel Derrom, commanding the Twenty-fifth New Jersey, on the right of the road, that he needed support; also word to the same effect from Colonel Stevens, commanding the Thirteenth New Hampshire, which was on the left of the road. I sent the Fifteenth Connecticut, under Colonel Upham, to re-enforce the right, and the **Eleventh Connecticut**, under Colonel Stedman, to re-enforce the left.

The reports of the commanders of these different regiments are herewith forwarded, by which it will be seen that their positions did not vary materially during the rest of the day. The general position remained the same throughout the day, with the exception that part of the artillery took up a more advanced position about 5 p. m., by order of General Getty. About the same time I placed the One hundred and forty-third New York, one of the regiments halt in reserve in the orchard, on the left of the road. The regiment was deployed in a direction parallel to the line of battle, the right resting about 100 yards in rear of the left of the advance while the left of the regiment rested on a bay that set back from the river.

About sunset Captain Stevens, of General Getty's staff, informed me that General Getty wished me to withdraw the troops to the other side of the river as soon as I could, under cover of night; that he desired the pickets withdrawn last, and that he wished one section of Howard's battery and one of Davis' battery to remain until the bulk of the troops had crossed. Captain Stevens indicated the positions which General Getty desired those sections of batteries to occupy. He also stated that General Getty wished me to direct Colonel Derrom, of the Twenty-fifth New Jersey, to make a detail of men from his regiment to take up the bridge after the troops had all crossed, and to superintend the work himself. I sent one staff officer to give the necessary orders to the troops on the right of the road and another to those on the left. Before these staff officers returned Lieutenant Faxon, aide-de-camp of General Getty informed me that General Getty wished to see me at General Peck's headquarters. I found General Getty, who told me that he had given orders that four pieces of Davis' battery instead of two were to remain to protect the troops in falling back, and that Colonel Davis, of the --- Regiment, would superintend the taking of the bridge instead of Colonel Derrom, and that he wished me to have a detail of men sufficient for that purpose report to Colonel Davis at the bridge. General Getty further directed me to place one of the regiments which had been held in reserve during the day in the rifle-pits on the left bank of the river, to serve as a rear guard. I went to the other side of the river to superintend the withdrawal of the forces.

After the troops had all crossed the river except the One hundred and seventieth New York, which was then marching from the rifle-pits (where it had been placed to serve as a rear guard to the bridge), I saw Lieutenant Faxon, who informed me that it was not General Getty's intentions that the troops should be withdrawn until further orders were received from him; that he had heard that the enemy were retreating, and if so he wished to be in a position to follow them up in the morning. The movement had been conducted so far that in a few minutes all the troops would be across. I therefore did not order the crossing to cease, but waited until the last had crossed and then reported in person to General Getty that the troops were across and that Colonel Davis was commencing to take up the bridge. General Getty repeated what Lieutenant Faxon had informed me - that it was not his intention to have the forces withdrawn until ordered by him. As the rumor that the enemy were retreating proved to be true it is to be regretted that this singular misunderstanding should have arisen.

I forward herewith regimental reports of the movements of the different regiments in this brigade from April 11 to April 30, and reports of the commanders of the **Eleventh**, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Regiments of the part taken by their respective regiments in the reconnaissance of the 3rd instant. Lists of casualties have already been forwarded.*

I am, captain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD HARLAND,

Brigadier-General, Commanding.

CHARLES T. GARDNER,

Assistant Adjutant-General.