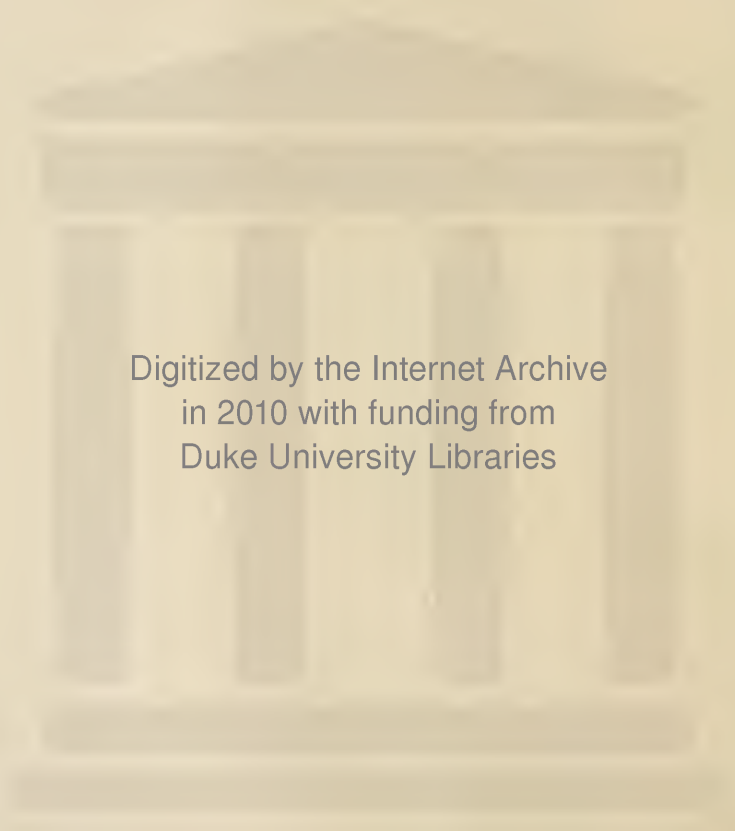


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REPORT

OF

BRIGADIER GENERAL ECHOLS,

OF THE

BATTLE OF DROOP MOUNTAIN.

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THE GAZETTE OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

IN THE YEAR 1901

PART I

THE GAZETTE

BATTLE OF DROOP MOUNTAIN.

REPORT OF GENERAL ECHOLS.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, ARMY SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA, }
Lewisburg, Nov. 19, 1863. }

Major CHARLES S. STRINGFELLOW, *A. A. G.*, &c.:

MAJOR: I have the honor to make the following report of the battle of Droop Mountain, fought on the 6th instant, in Pocahontas county, between the troops under my command and those under the command of Brigadier General Averill, of the Federal army. The report would have been forward sooner, but for the necessary delay in receiving the reports of some of the commanding officers who participated in the action.

On the morning of the 4th instant, I received a despatch from Colonel William L. Jackson, who then had his headquarters at Mill Point, in Pocahontas county, that the enemy, to the number of one thousand, had made their appearance, on the evening before, at Green Bank, in said county; and on the morning of the 5th instant, another dispatch was received from him conveying the information that on the evening of the 4th, two thousand of the enemy had advanced to a point within three miles of Mill Point, and that, if they continued to advance, he proposed to give them battle; and suggesting to me to reinforce him, if I could do so, saying that if I could not hold them in check he would fall back towards me. I immediately dispatched him that I would move my brigade to his support. Accordingly, at nine o'clock, A. M., on the 5th instant, this brigade, consisting of the twenty-second regiment and twenty-third and twenty-sixth battalions of Virginia volunteers, and Chapman's battery, of four guns, and Jackson's battery, of two guns, (the latter, temporarily detached from Jenkins' cavalry brigade,) was put in motion from this place, and was marched during the day fourteen miles, in the direction of Colonel Jackson. A portion of Jenkins' brigade—the fourteenth and sixteenth regiments of Virginia cavalry—was also near this place, under the command of Colonel M. J. Fergusson. A portion of the fourteenth reg-

iment was directed to move forward, by Colonel Fergusson, to the support of Colonel Jackson—the sixteenth regiment, and the remainder of the fourteenth, being detained to picket the roads and guard the approaches from the Kanawha Valley.

During the day, I received a dispatch from Colonel Jackson telling me that he had been engaged with the enemy, and calling on me again to reinforce him. During the night of the 5th instant, I received dispatches from him, informing me that he had taken a very strong position on Droop Mountain, and that he intended to maintain it, and that he expected the fight to be resumed the next morning. His estimate of the enemy's forces was then thirty-five hundred, and his opinion was that all of Averill's force was in his front. I accordingly moved my brigade at two o'clock, A. M., with the view of reaching Colonel Jackson as early possible in the morning. The brigade reached the point designated about nine o'clock, A. M., having marched fourteen miles, with the exception of the twenty-sixth battalion, (Lieutenant Colonel Edgar,) which was detached with one piece of artillery some twelve miles from the position, and sent to hold another road by which the enemy would be enabled to move from their position upon our rear. Upon reaching the position taken by Colonel Jackson, I at once assumed command of the whole force. I found that he had posted the most of his own command, with the portion of the fourteenth Virginia cavalry, which had reported to him for duty, very advantageously beyond the crest and on the side of the mountain. Chapman's and Jackson's batteries, under the command of Major Wm. M. McLaughlin, were immediately moved to the front just beyond the summit of the mountain, near a point where Col. Jackson had already put in position the two pieces of his battery under the command of Captain Lurty. Colonel G. S. Patton was ordered to take command of that portion of the first brigade then present, viz.: Twenty-second Virginia regiment, (Major R. A. Bailey commanding,) and the twenty-third Virginia battalion, (Major Wm. Blessing commanding,) and to put in position, which he did, by placing the twenty-second regiment in rear of the artillery as a support, and posting the twenty-third battalion on the right of the turnpike road and on the right of our line at the summit of the mountain, two companies being deployed as skirmishers.

The view from the position thus assumed is a very extensive one, looking down upon the plain known as the "Little Levels," and upon the village of Hillsborough, near which the enemy had encamped during the previous night. The lines of the enemy could be seen in part from the position at a distance of two and two and a half miles. Our artillery very soon after being placed in position opened upon the enemy in the valley beneath, the enemy's artillery for sometime replying vigorously and rapidly. Soon after the opening of the artillery, skirmishing commenced along the line, and the twenty-second regiment was moved to the right and rear of the ground occupied by Col. Jackson's command, and six companies of the twenty-third battalion were put in position to act as a support to the artillery, the other two companies of that battalion being deployed upon the right and acting

as pickets on roads in the rear, it being soon evident that the principal attack of the enemy would be upon our centre and left.

About the time of the changes in the disposition of the troops thus mentioned, it being reported to me that the enemy were making a movement upon our extreme left and advancing in that quarter over the side of a mountain near by, and under cover of thick woods and undergrowth, Colonel Jackson was ordered to send a force there to hold them in check, and, if possible, drive them back, and he accordingly ordered Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, of the nineteenth Virginia cavalry, with about one hundred and seventy-five men for that purpose. The enemy at this point had his forces so masked and concealed that it was impossible to estimate his force, especially as a very large force was seen in front. The fighting on the left soon became very severe, and I was notified by Lieutenant Colonel Thompson that he was being hard pressed and must be reinforced. Major Blessing, with the six companies of the twenty-third battalion, was accordingly ordered to report to and reinforce him, which was promptly done. The enemy at this time began to advance upon the centre and the fighting became general along the whole line, our artillery being served with great rapidity and precision, and succeeding in silencing the batteries of the enemy. In the course of an hour after the twenty-third battalion was sent to the left, and after very heavy fighting upon that flank, I was again notified by Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, who had most gallantly contended with the numbers opposed to him, alternatively driving them back, and being in turn borne back, that he was being overpowered by the superior forces opposed to him, when Colonel Patton was ordered to detach three companies of the twenty-second regiment and to move them to the left and to take command of them with the other troops then there. This was done—the three companies thus detached being placed under the immediate command of that gallant young officer, Captain John R. Thompson, of the twenty-second regiment, who, upon this occasion, as upon many previous ones, greatly distinguished himself. The enemy were for a time held in check and driven back; but after a long and hard struggle it became evident that we were too greatly outnumbered, and I was informed by Colonel Patton that his force was not sufficient for the numbers opposed to him, and I saw that our left was being driven and bent back to the rear. During this time, a very heavy body of the enemy was thrown upon our centre, under the immediate command of Colonel Jackson, and the batteries of the enemy were again put into position and opened upon us, and that portion of our line began to waver and fall back. Deeming it useless to continue the unequal contest longer, at about four o'clock, P. M., I gave orders to the troops to fall back slowly, and then for the artillery to be withdrawn from the field, where it had remained until nearly all of the supports had retired, and continued to hold the enemy in check by its rapid and well directed discharges of grape and canister, for which, too high praise cannot be awarded to Major McLaughlin and Captains Chapman, Jackson, and Lurty, and the officers and men under their command.

The retreat having to be conducted over a narrow and straight road, along the top of a mountain, for a distance of four miles, some confusion was produced by an alarm which arose among the horseholders of the dismounted cavalry, and some of the men of the command became detached and made their way out through the woods. The enemy pressed for some few miles with their cavalry and mounted infantry and two or three pieces of their artillery, but were held in check by our rear guard of cavalry, which was organized and controlled most gallantly and efficiently by Colonel M. J. Fergusson, aided by Colonel Jackson, to both of which officers the thanks of the command are due for their great gallantry and efficiency, as exhibited throughout the whole battle and retreat.

Colonel Patton, by my orders, went to the front and did everything that could be done in steadying and rallying and encouraging the men, and was, as usual, conspicuous on the field and in the thickest of the fight.

The force under my command, and actually engaged in the fight, numbered about seventeen hundred men. The force of the enemy engaged was about seven thousand, whom we held in check and fought for six hours. The estimate of Colonel Jackson placing their numbers at three thousand five hundred was correct at the time when made; but they were reinforced during the night previous to the battle without his knowledge, and these reinforcements could not be known, owing to the character of the country, until the fight had progressed for some time.

It was necessary that the retreat should be rapid, as, soon after the termination of the battle, information was brought to me that Brigadier General Duffie, of the Federal army, was, at two o'clock, P. M., on the top of Little Sewell mountain, eighteen miles west of Lewisburg, advancing rapidly upon that town with a column of twenty-five hundred men and five pieces of artillery to intercept me at that point. At four o'clock, P. M., when the battle ceased, I was twenty-eight miles from Lewisburg. General Duffie halted and encamped for the night some ten or twelve miles west of Lewisburg; but I, after halting my infantry and artillery and trains two hours for rest and refreshment, passed through Lewisburg and over Greenbrier river between three and four o'clock, A. M., on the morning of the 7th instant, General Duffie, with his troops, entering the town cautiously at eleven o'clock, and General Averill at four o'clock, P. M., on the same day.

My artillery and trains were brought safely through, with the exception of a brass howitzer, belonging to Chapman's battery, which had been badly injured in a previous engagement and the carriage of which broke completely down during the retreat, so that it had to be left, thus affording the enemy the only trophy of which they could boast.

The casualties among our troops in killed, wounded and missing amount to two hundred and seventy-five, a considerable number of those who were reported as missing having returned to duty. The loss of the enemy was much greater, as is attested by the

number of their dead left or buried near the field, and also of their wounded who were left, besides the large number of dead and wounded who were known to have been conveyed away. Among our killed we have to deplore many gallant spirits, most conspicuous among whom, for his uniform gallantry and many soldierly qualities, was Major R. A. Bailey, of the twenty-second regiment, whose loss will be long and deeply felt. No soldier ever displayed more dauntless courage than did he upon this, his last, battle-field. It would make this report too long to mention particularly the names of all those who attracted observation and extorted admiration by their good conduct. I must refer for the most of these to the accompanying reports of commanding officers. I cannot, however, refrain from bearing testimony to the distinguished gallantry of Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, Major William Blessing, Major McLaughlin, Captains Chapman, Jackson and Lurty of the artillery, and of Adjutants Rand, of the twenty-second regiment, and Hardin, of the twenty-third battalion.

My attention was also particularly drawn, during the thickest of the fight, to the exhibition of cool courage and noble daring presented in the conduct of Lieutenant C. J. Harvie, of Jenkins' brigade, and of Captain L. R. Exline, of Colonel Jackson's command. The members of my staff, Captains R. H. Catlett and W. R. Preston, and Lieutenants J. W. Branham, Wood Bouldin, Jr., E. C. Gordon and H. C. Caldwell, deserve especial mention for their activity, energy and courage upon the field, in rallying and encouraging the troops, and in conveying orders; and I desire, in the most emphatic manner, to express my obligations to Major George McKendall, brigade quartermaster, not only for his valuable services on the field, but for the untiring energy and ability displayed by him in his department.

Lieutenant Colonel Edgar, of the twenty-eighth battalion, who, as has herein before been mentioned, was detached from the brigade and ordered upon a road leading to the rear of our forces, was, by the movements of the enemy, cut off from the balance of the command, but succeeded in bringing off the whole of his battalion and rejoining the brigade, with his troops in fine condition, for which he is entitled to the highest praise, surmounting, as he did, many difficulties, which only his fine judgment, will and courage could enable him to overcome.

So far as the beneficial results of the expedition to the enemy can be estimated they amount to nothing. They came with two large forces, amounting, in the aggregate, to nearly ten thousand men, with the expectation of capturing the command of Colonel Jackson and this brigade and of their moving on upon our interior lines of railroad. By fighting, however, so far from the interior, and by being so checked and damaged and baffled as they were, they failed in the one object and abandoned the other. I transmit herewith the reports of the various commanding officers, and also a diagram showing the position of the troops upon the field of battle.

I am, Major, very respectfully, &c.,

JOHN ECHOLS, *Brigadier General.*

REPORT OF COLONEL JACKSON.

HEADQUARTERS, UNION VIRGINIA, }
November 9, 1863. }

Captain R. H. CATLETT, *A. A. G.* :

CAPTAIN : On the third instant, at six o'clock, P. M., I received a despatch from Lieutenant George W. Siples, commanding at Dunmore, that the enemy had appeared in force at Green Bank, twenty miles from Huntersville. This information I dispatched to Brigadier General Echols, and to Colonel Arnett, commanding at Marlin's Bottom, and to Captain J. W. Marshall, commanding at Edray. I also ordered Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, then on an expedition to Nicholas county, to return. Lieutenant Siples was instructed to ascertain the force and intentions of the enemy, and, if pressed, to fall back through Huntersville to Mill Point, by the Beaver creek road, blockading said road as effectually as possible. At the same time, I took the precaution to send thirty mounted men by the Beaver creek road to Huntersville, and ordered Colonel Arnett to send scouts to the same place from his camp. I received no further dispatch from Lieutenant Siples, who, it seems, in the effort to obtain information of the enemy, was cut off, and did not rejoin me until after our arrival at Union. This will, in some measure, explain why I had no definite information of the strength of the enemy, and underestimated his force. On the next day, at twelve M., I learned from my scouts at Huntersville, that the enemy were at that place, and advancing on the Beaver creek route, to Mill Point. I directed Colonel Arnett to draw in Captain Marshall and to fall back to Mill Point, cutting down and blockading the road at all practicable points. By this time, Lieutenant Colonel Thompson having returned, I directed him, with the mounted men of his detachment, to move rapidly up the Beaver creek route, to blockade and hold that road until Colonel Arnett passed the point of intersection of the two roads leading to Mill Point, which is one mile from that place, and then to fall back to Mill Point, where I proposed to make a stand. This was successfully accomplished by Colonel Thompson. About dark, Colonel Arnett passed the point aforesaid, and Colonel Thompson slowly, and in admirable order, disputing every inch of the ground, fell back before the overwhelming force of the enemy. The enemy went into camp in plain view, and made no demonstration during the night, except by rocket signals, which were answered from a point near Huntersville, and also on the Beverly road, beyond Marlin's Bottom bridge, although after disposing of my force to repel assault, with a view to ascertain whether they had artillery, I built camp fires in my rear. Here I again despatched to General Echols the position of affairs.

As soon as it became light, the next morning, the enemy advanced skirmishers and sharpshooters, and I directed Captain Warren S. Lurty to open his artillery, (two twelve-pound howitzers,) and the skirmishers and sharpshooters, fell back over the hill, where the main

force of the enemy was masked. Here it was evident that the cutting down of the road, &c. had delayed the artillery of the enemy. The shells from Captain Lurty's pieces held the enemy in check, and produced some confusion in his camp. It becoming evident, from the sound, that the enemy was about to make some movement, Captain L. R. Exline, with thirty men, made a successful reconnoissance, encountering and driving in the sharpshooters, and returning in safety, after discovering that artillery was coming up. Knowing that with long range guns, the enemy would have decidedly the advantage, I was prepared to fall back as soon as his artillery was put in position. About eleven o'clock, A. M., it was so placed, but previous thereto, our shells were thrown with some effect. Accordingly my command fell back in good order, under a heavy fire of five pieces of artillery, and pursued by a large mounted force; Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, with cavalry, bringing up the rear. Arriving at Droop mountain, I posted my artillery and infantry on that very strong position. The effort of the enemy in pursuit, seemed to be to cut off Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, but in this he was foiled at the foot of the mountain, by a few well directed shells from Lurty's battery. The enemy, about two o'clock, P. M., went into camp between Hillsborough and Mill Point, as could be plainly seen from our position. About this time, I learned that General Echols was moving to my support, and, during the evening, Colonel Cochran, with the fourteenth Virginia cavalry, arrived.

During the night, there was no apparent movement of the enemy; but a large camp-fire was observed in the neighborhood of Huntersville. From scouts sent to reconnoitre, and from my own observation, I estimated the force encamped before me at thirty-five hundred; but I am now convinced that during the night, or the next morning, a large reinforcement arrived, and from the facts now before me, I estimate the Federal force under General Averill at seven thousand five hundred.

On the morning of the 6th instant, about nine, A. M., General Echols arrived, and soon afterwards the twenty-second Virginia regiment, and Lieutenant Colonel Derricks' battalion, with Jackson's and Chapman's batteries under command of Colonel George S. Patton. General Echols approved the disposition of my force, and the position selected, and immediately prepared for the apprehended attack. I had a force in front about the centre of the position, under Colonel Arnett, who had thrown up temporary breastworks during the night and morning. The right, with artillery, I regarded as self-protecting.

The fourteenth Virginia cavalry joined my force on the left of the centre. Lieutenant Colonel Thompson was on our extreme left, pointing to the rear, with instructions to hold that, and to prevent the enemy from attaining our rear. The positions assigned to the twenty-second regiment and Derricks' battalion were judiciously selected, but need not be described by me. I had on the field about seven hundred and fifty men. The residue of my force was on the Locust creek road, or cut off in Pocahontas.

The enemy moved to the attack about eleven, A. M., planting ar-

tillery on our right, threatening and skirmishing with the centre, and by a vigorous attack on our extreme left. The fight was well maintained on our extreme left, but it becoming evident to General Echols that our force there must be reinforced, (indeed, Lieutenant Colonel Thompson called for reinforcements,) he directed two companies of the fourteenth Virginia cavalry and Derrieks' battalion there, and subsequently several companies of the twenty-second regiment, and eventually Colonel Patton proceeded there. The fight now became general on the whole line. Several charges were made on the centre—the position occupied by Colonel Arnett and Colonel Cochran; but were gallantly repulsed, and the centre never did falter or give way until it became manifest that the extreme left could no longer be held, and that the enemy were getting in our rear, then the force in the centre pressed by four regiments of the enemy, fell back towards the batteries. At this point, I communicated to General Echols the situation of the centre, and suggested to Major McLaughlin, chief of artillery, to move all or a portion of his artillery to the rear. He did move all but two pieces, one from Chapman's and the other from Jackson's batteries. Captains Jackson and Chapman remained with these two pieces. General Echols, at this stage, arrived at the position held by me, and assisted in rallying the men. It is unnecessary for me to report what then occurred during his presence. Quite a number were rallied at this point, held the position gallantly, and the two pieces aforesaid rained canister and grape upon the enemy, checking their advance on the centre and right. Holding this position about twenty minutes, I received an order from General Echols to fall back, as the enemy had almost reached the rear, and could no longer be held.

I accordingly fell back in as good order as the nature of the case would admit, under severe shelling and an enfilading fire of musketry, making a momentary stand before reaching the road, to enable the two pieces aforementioned to get out. As soon as I perceived their safety, I reached the road. Near this point, the brave Major Bailey, of the twenty-second, was mortally wounded, and others fell. After this, I assisted Colonels Cochrane and Fergusson in protecting the retreat, at the request of General Echols, and passed through Lewisburg about daylight the next morning. The sixteenth Virginia cavalry having come in from Meadow Bluff, remained there and brought up the rear. A portion of my command, with others, were cut off, there being but the one road to retreat upon, and that at one time somewhat jammed by horsemen, infantry and trains, but it afforded me pleasure to state that the most of those cut off are safe, and are returning to their commands. I fear my loss is about one hundred and fifty in killed and wounded, including a number of gallant officers. You will appreciate the difficulty in estimating the loss at this time. My train and artillery were all brought out safely, except the wagon loaded with corn, which broke down. The horses are safe.

My command, and the officers and men of others, so far as they came under my immediate notice, made a splendid fight against overwhelming odds, as long as the position was tenable. I have pratically

pated in a number of distinguished battles, and have not witnessed more gallant conduct anywhere. I cannot omit calling attention, especially, to the brave bearing of Captains L. R. Exline, (who lost an arm at Sharpsburg,) George Downs, J. W. Ball, D. M. Camp, and Lewis Martin, (the latter twice wounded,) and Lieutenants S. W. Rice, C. Minter, John Lewis and J. Morgan, (the latter killed.)

The officers and men of Captain J. W. Ball's nineteenth Virginia cavalry never were in disorder during the fight or retreat. There are others who deserve notice for gallant conduct, but the limits of this report preclude their mention.

I witnessed great gallantry on the part of officers and men of the fourteenth Virginia cavalry, and the twenty-second Virginia regiment, but these will doubtless be appropriately mentioned by the proper officers.

The officers and men of Captain Lurty's battery exhibited a high order of courage and skill, and both at Mill Point, and at Droop mountain gave indications of what that new company will yet become.

The loss of the enemy was much greater than ours. I should say, from my own observation, double the number in killed and wounded. He took but few prisoners in my opinion.

The brilliant fight at Droop mountain, and the subsequent movements of our force, will, I am satisfied, compel the enemy to abandon his designs, whatever they are, or were, notwithstanding this force numbering near ten thousand, including the force from the Kanawha valley, that was to cut off our retreat.

Accompanying this, are the reports of Colonel William W. Arnett and Lieutenant Colonel William P. Thompson, to which I call special attention.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM L. JACKSON,

Colonel commanding brigade.

REPORT OF COLONEL PATTON.

HEADQUARTERS TWENTY-SECOND VIRGINIA REGIMENT, }
Camp Bailey, Nov. 19, 1863. }

Captain R. H. CATLETT,

Assistant Adjutant General :

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the troops under my command in the action of Droop Mountain, on the 6th instant.

I was ordered by the Brigadier General commanding to assume command of his brigade, consisting only of the twenty-second Virginia regiment and twenty-third Virginia battalion—the twenty-sixth Virginia battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Edgar, having been detached to occupy a position on another road. Upon the troops reaching the western extremity of the mountain, I ordered Major Blessing, commanding the twenty-third Virginia battalion, to move his command to the right of the turnpike road, at the summit of the mountain, and to deploy two companies as skirmishers in his front. The twenty-second Virginia regiment, commanded by Major R. A. Bailey, was ordered to a position in the rear of the artillery, to act as support. It soon became evident that the enemy's efforts would be directed wholly to our centre and left. I was now requested by Colonel W. L. Jackson to move a regiment to his right and rear as a reserve to his command, and to protect the right of the hill on which the artillery was posted. I ordered the twenty-second Virginia regiment forward, and supplied its place near the artillery with the twenty-third Virginia battalion, now reduced to six companies, two being detached as pickets on roads in our rear.

While these dispositions were being made, a brisk artillery duel was kept up, and the skirmishing along the line became frequent and heavy. The increased rapidity of the firing on the left now gave notice that the enemy were there in force; and I was ordered by General Echols to send the twenty-third Virginia battalion to reinforce Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, of the nineteenth Virginia cavalry, in command on that flank. This was done, and the action became very heavy in that direction. It was evident that our men were largely outnumbered, and were being driven back. At this juncture, I was ordered to assume command on that flank, and three companies of the twenty-second Virginia regiment under command of Captain John R. Thompson, sent with me. On reaching the scene of action, it was evident that our little force was largely outnumbered, and the enemy were entirely beyond both flanks, our forces were retiring from the field, in spite of the earnest and gallant efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Thompson and other officers to rally them. Captain Thompson, with his three companies, gallantly rushed to the front, formed under a galling fire, and actually drove back the enemy for some little distance. I now endeavored to rally men to his support, seconded most

gallantly by Colonel Thompson; and we succeeded in collecting a considerable number together, when I received a communication from General Echols informing me that the whole right had given away, and ordering me to fall back to the main road, and join him. I sent orders to the commanders to fall back slowly; and with the men we had collected, marched to the road. I was then ordered by General Echols to proceed to the front, and endeavor to rally the men, which I could not succeed in doing, as the whole road was blockaded with artillery caissons, wagons and horses, which forced many of the men to take to the woods, to escape capture, and which prevented anything like reorganization.

At Frankfort, nineteen miles from the field, I succeeded in collecting a nucleus of the command, and kept it together. I am ignorant of what passed on the right after I was sent away; but that part of the field was under the personal supervision of General Echols, and I am without an official report, in consequence of the death of Major Bailey. I cannot conclude without expressing my high appreciation of the valor and desperate courage of the troops under my command. They fought under the most discouraging circumstances, and fought well; and they were still fighting when they were ordered to retire.

The twenty-second Virginia regiment went into action about five hundred strong, losing one hundred and thirteen in killed and wounded and missing. The twenty-third Virginia battalion was about three hundred and fifty strong, and lost sixty-one in killed, wounded and missing.

I have to deplore the loss of the gallant Major R. A. Bailey, of the twenty-second Virginia regiment. When struck, he was bearing the colors of his regiment, and rallying his men by voice and example. In him the cause has lost a brave and devoted officer, whose cool courage and excellent judgment had been tested on many fields.

Lieutenant William S. McClanahan, of company A, of the same regiment, was mortally wounded, and has since died. He was a gallant soldier.

Major William Blessing, of the twenty-third Virginia battalion, is entitled to credit for his skilful handling of his men, and for his courage. He speaks most favorably of Adjutant James A. Harden. Captains R. S. Laidley and George L. Chilton, of the twenty-second Virginia regiment, were seriously wounded while gallantly leading and encouraging their men, and are recommended for favorable notice.

I cannot mention particularly the officers on the right, as I was not a witness of the fight there. I feel it my duty to call especial attention to Captain John R. Thompson, company A, twenty-second Virginia regiment, who received his third wound on this occasion, while bravely leading his men. This gallant young officer is entitled to great credit; and he is earnestly recommended to the favorable notice of the Brigadier General commanding.

I owe thanks to Captain William R. Preston, A. A. G., and Lieutenant Myers Rand, adjutant of the twenty-second Virginia regiment, acting as aids. They carried my orders intelligently, and were much exposed. Their gallantry was conspicuous.

Sergeant Major Munroe Quanier is also entitled to credit for courage and efficiency.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant.

GEO. S. PATTON,

Colonel commanding Brigade.

REPORT OF COLONEL FERGUSSON.

HEADQUARTERS JENKINS' CAVALRY BRIGADE, }
November 16, 1863. }

Major C. S. STRINGFELLOW, *A. A. G.* :

MAJOR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the action of a portion of this command in the action at Droop Mountain, on the 16th instant.

Having received information from Brigadier General Echols, of the advance of the enemy under General Averill upon Mill Point, the position occupied by Colonel Jackson's command, I ordered the fourteenth Virginia cavalry (Colonel Cochran's command) to the support of Colonel Jackson, at Mill Point, with orders to co-operate with Colonel Jackson in contesting the advance of the enemy.

Upon consultation with General Echols, it was deemed unsafe to withdraw the whole force from the front of Lewisburg, guarding the approaches from Kanawha and Nicholas counties. Accordingly the sixteenth regiment Virginia cavalry, Major Norman commanding, was ordered to take position near Bunker's mill, five miles west of Lewisburg, while a squadron from the fourteenth regiment Virginia cavalry, (Captain Strain commanding,) remained upon picket and outpost duty, covering the roads from Nicholas county. Although no advance was at that time reported from Kanawha, apprehensions were felt, that such an advance would be made in co-operation with General Averill, and the presence of an increased force in that direction, strengthened these apprehensions.

Having received no orders from Major General Jones, indicating the disposition I was to make of this command, I reported to Brigadier General Echols, and was under his orders, and did then, and do now, cheerfully concur with General Echols in the disposition made of the whole command. On the morning of the 5th instant, I joined General Echols, who was then on the march, and arrived at the camp of Colonel Jackson, at the eastern base of Droop Mountain, at six o'clock, A. M., of the 6th instant. One squadron from the fourteenth regiment, was ordered to take position upon what is known as the "old road" or "Locust Creek road," the residue of the fourteenth regiment (being the efficient men of six companies) were dismounted and participated in the engagement which followed. Four companies were upon the extreme left of the line of battle, under the immediate command of Lieutenant Colonel Gibson, and two companies in the centre under command of Captains Smith and McClung.

The enemy's force was large and overpowering. Our force was compelled to fall back. Some confusion prevailed at first, owing in a great degree to the shape of the ground and the character of the country, and also to an alarm which had spread among the horse holders; but after the command had remounted, order was restored and an efficient rear guard formed. The enemy pressed vigorously,

and skirmishing continued for ten miles. Upon arriving at Frankfort, and halting the command for rest and food, information was received from Major Norman, of the advance of the enemy in force, from Kanawha, and at that time, at Meadow Bluff, fifteen miles west of Lewisburg. The march was again resumed, the sixteenth regiment remaining in position until the column had passed Lewisburg, and then formed the rear guard, leaving Lewisburg as the enemy, in large force, entered it from Kanawha.

Our loss in that portion of the fourteenth regiment engaged, was three killed, eight wounded and fourteen missing.

Among the wounded are Captains Smith and McClung and Lieutenant G. T. Roger.

Major B. F. Eakle, Captain E. E. Bouldin and Lieutenant J. A. Framenter, of the fourteenth regiment, with the privates who composed the rear guard, behaved with the most commendable coolness and courage.

The distinguished gallantry of Lieutenant C. T. Harvie, of the P. A. C. S., is worthy of the highest commendation.

I am Major, your most obedient servant,

M. J. FERGUSSON,
Commanding brigade.

