

official account of which, with the casualties and the number of prisoners, was made to you under date of Feb. 19.

I did not meet the enemy again in any force till the (March) 20th instant on our march that day from our camp near Cox's Bridge on the Neuse River toward Bentonville. The 2nd Brigade, Colonel Catterson, had the advance that day and skirmished freely with the enemy, driving him easily until we had arrived within three miles of Bentonville. The enemy here became stubborn, and, threatening an attack on the 2nd Brigade, I was ordered up and went into position on Colonel Catterson's left. We now advanced our line of battle of two brigades about half a mile and put up works. About 3 p.m. I was directed by Brevet Major-General (C. R.) Woods, commanding division, and also by Major-General Logan, commanding the corps, to take three regiments, and if possible clear the road in our front and open communication with the XIV Corps, now fighting apparently about a mile from us on our left front. I placed the 25th Iowa, Lieutenant Colonel Palmer commanding (which regiment I had ordered out about an hour before as skirmishers), to take the advance, and directed the 30th Iowa, Lieutenant Colonel Roberts commanding, and the 31st Iowa, Lieutenant Colonel Jenkins commanding, to follow as a reserve. The 25th Iowa was deployed as skirmishers with their colors in the road I was going to clear, and my first movement with the regiment was to change direction to the right. This movement was made steadily until three-fourths of the regiment had crossed the road, when our proximity to the rebels on my left and in the road caused very severe skirmishing. Two regiments of the 2nd Division now came up on my left rear (I think the 6th Missouri and the 30th Ohio), one of them, the 6th Missouri, deployed as skirmishers. I made arrangements with the officer commanding the last-mentioned regiment to join the two regiments with mine, and at a given signal the 25th Iowa and the 6th Missouri should make a charge. The charge proved entirely successful, although at a severe loss in the 25th Iowa. We drove the enemy's skirmishers, composed of Hoke's division from the Virginia army, back to their works across the swamp, clearing the road and thus opened communication with the XIV Corps. The officers and men of the 25th Iowa behaved handsomely and fought desperately. Lieutenant Colonel Palmer, commanding the regiment, and Captain Allen, acting major, who lost his right leg in the engagement, deserve notice for exposing themselves freely and for the gallant manner in which they cheered their men forward.

At night I retired to a new line and my place was occupied by other troops. I have already sent you a list of the casualties and the number of prisoners captured.

On the (March) 21st instant I had orders to erect a line of works on the skirmish line, and at 1 p.m. I moved three regiments to the front line, the 4th Iowa on the right, connecting with the left of the 1st Brigade, Brevet Brigadier-General (W. B.) Woods commanding, the 30th Iowa in the center and the 9th Iowa on the left. The 25th Iowa and the 31st Iowa were in the rear, held in reserve. We put up a temporary line of works under fire of the enemy, and at 2 p.m. I received orders to charge the enemy's skirmish line, 150 yards in my front in good skirmish pits. We captured the pits with but slight loss, but the enemy evinced so much determination to regain them that the fighting became very sharp. The enemy's main line of battle, behind good works, was by actual measurement but 100 yards from these skirmish pits, and he fired from the works by volley. At three different times they followed up the fire by volley by an assault on my skirmishers. Their men swarmed over the works and charged gallantly, but I had re-enforced the line till I had nearly a line of battle and our incessant firing prevented them from charging as a perfect organization and every charge was repulsed. The orders came to me so positive to hold the ground I had already gained, even from Generals Howard and Logan, that I should have done so or ruined the brigade.

At night I relieved the skirmish line with the 31st Iowa, Lieutenant Colonel Jenkins commanding. Colonel Jenkins managed the new line admirably. It rained a great deal during the night, but his men worked faithfully, and he put up quite a strong line of works so near the

enemy that the conversation had to be carried on in whispers. Captain Teale of the 4th Iowa deserves especial notice for his gallantry in holding the most exposed and dangerous part of the line. I regret to announce this gallant young officer was very severely wounded in the leg. Lieutenant Colonel Nichols and Major Anderson of the 4th Iowa, deserve mention for voluntarily going on the skirmish line at a time when there was some wavering manifested. Captain Bowman, of my staff, also exposed himself freely and deserves notice. I mention these officers from personal observation, as twice during the day I deemed it my duty to go on the skirmish line myself. The other officers on the skirmish line--Captain Inman, 9th Iowa; Lieutenant Shields, 4th Iowa; Lieutenant Sharp, 9th Iowa; Lieutenant Rifley, 30th Iowa, are all reported to me to have behaved well and set a good example to their men. The loss on the skirmish line was quite severe. I sent you an official list of the casualties the same night and the prisoners captured.

On the morning of the (March) 22nd, half an hour before day(light), I rode out to the advanced post and ordered a patrol forward to feel of the enemy, but it was soon discovered he had left during the night. I at once sent word to the general commanding the division, and with a detachment of the 31st followed him up. Everything indicated a precipitate retreat. A few stragglers were picked up. Some of their dead and wounded were found near the roadside uncared for, and quite a number of small-arms, haversacks and clothing were found scattered in their deserted camp. Just at sunrise I ran onto their rear guard, composed of cavalry, and my detachment being too small to fight it I covered the road with a few men to make an effect and ordered some 10 or 15 men as skirmishers to annoy the enemy until a regiment which I had just ordered up (the 31st Iowa) should arrive. Very soon after this our entire division moved to Bentonville, where we remained during the day, and at sundown we returned to the camp we had left in the morning. The graves of 17 rebel officers in my front indicates that the enemy suffered severely in killed and wounded. On our march toward Goldsborough on the (March) 23d instant I had the good fortune to have the post of honor, rear guard for the Army of the Tennessee. The rear guard of my command fell upon the 25th Iowa.

On the (March) 24th instant I was ordered to remain at the pontoon bridge over the Neuse River near Goldsborough to cover the crossing of our corps train, and on the (March) 26th instant I rejoined the division in camp near Goldsborough.

During the campaign just closed this brigade has been in four engagements, with the following loss: Killed, seven; wounded, 64; missing, 12. We have captured and turned over to the provost-marshal 145 prisoners of war. In taking the city of Columbia, S. C., we captured 43 pieces of artillery, about 5000 stand of arms, immense quantities of ammunition and ordnance stores and released 40 officers confined there. We have marched 485 miles, made 15,037 yards of corduroy roads and have destroyed three miles of railroad. The brigade is in excellent health and spirits, but very ragged.

My thanks are due all my staff officers--Capt. John N. Bell, 25th Iowa; Capt. A. Bowman, 9th Iowa; Lts. Samuel W. Snow and Baron H. Crane, 25th Iowa (now in the hands of the enemy), and Lt. John W. Gilman, 31st Iowa--for the zeal manifested by them during the entire campaign to do their whole duty.

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

**GEO. A. STONE, Colonel, 25th Iowa Vols., Commanding Brigade**