

REPORT OF COLONEL JAMES C. RICE,
COMMANDING THIRD BRIGADE, FIRST DIV., FIFTH A. C.
AT BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG, WITH
REPORTS OF REGIMENTAL COMMANDERS.

"Rebellion Records," Series 1, Vol. 27, page 616.

July 31, 1863.

In compliance with orders from division headquarters, I have the honor to report the operations of this brigade during the battle near Gettysburg on the 2nd and 3rd inst.

The brigade, under the command of the late Colonel Vincent, was detached from the division and ordered into position at about 4 p. m. of the 2nd instant, on the extreme left of our line of battle. The Twentieth Maine occupied the extreme left of the brigade line, the Sixteenth Michigan the extreme right, connecting with the Third Division, under General Crawford, while the Eighty-third Pennsylvania and Forty-fourth New York occupied the center. The muskets taken into action by the brigade numbered about 1,000.

The ground occupied by the brigade in line of battle was nearly that of a quarter circle, composed mostly of high rocks and cliffs in the center and becoming more wooded and less rugged as you approached to the left. The right was thrown forward somewhat to the front of the ledge of rocks, and was much more exposed than other parts of the line. A comparatively smooth ravine extended along the entire front, perhaps 50 yards from our line, while on the left and beyond a high and jagged mountain rises, called Round Top hill. That the disposition of the forces and the nature of the ground may be better understood by the general commanding, I send with this report a diagram of the same.

The brigade had scarcely formed in line of battle and pushed forward its skirmishers when a division of the enemy's forces, under General Hood, made a desperate attack along the entire line of the brigade. He approached in three columns, with no skirmishers in advance. The object of the enemy was evident. If he could gain the vantage ground occupied by this brigade, the left flank of

our line must give way, opening to him a vast field for successful operations in the rear of our entire army.

To effect this object the enemy made every effort. Massing two or three brigades of his force, he tried for an hour in vain to break the lines of the Forty-fourth New York and Eighty-third Pennsylvania, charging again and again within a few yards of these unflinching troops. At every charge he was repulsed with terrible slaughter. Despairing of success at this point, he made a desperate attack upon the extreme right of the brigade, forcing back a part of the Sixteenth Michigan. This regiment was broken, and, through some misunderstanding of orders, explained in the official report of the commanding officer, it was thrown into confusion; but being immediately supported by the One Hundred and Fortieth New York Volunteers, the line became again firm and unbroken.

It was at this point of time that Colonel Vincent, commanding the brigade, fell mortally wounded. Of the character of this gallant and accomplished officer I will speak before I close this report.

The enemy again attacked the center with great vigor, and the extreme left with desperation. Passing one brigade of his forces by the right flank in three columns, he pushed through the ravine toward the left of our brigade, came immediately to a "front," and charged upon the Twentieth Maine. Now occurred the most critical time of the action. For above half an hour the struggle was desperate. At length the enemy pressed so strongly upon the left flank of Colonel Chamberlain's regiment that he wisely determined to change the order of battle, and commanded his left wing to fall back at right angles to his right. He then ordered a charge and repulsed the enemy at every point.

On assuming the command of the brigade during this attack upon the center and left, I at once passed along the line, and notified the officers and men of my own regiment that I was about to take command of the brigade and that they must hold their position to the last. I did this that no panic might arise. I then notified all the commanders of the regiments in person, and assured them of my determination to hold the line to the last. Colonel Chamberlain and other officers immediately informed me that their commands

were out of ammunition. I had at this time neither an aide nor an orderly even to bear a message. (See P. S.) The enemy was still pressing heavily upon the line. I immediately pressed into service every officer and man in the rear not engaged in the action, whether known or unknown, and made them pledge their honor that they would deliver in person every order that I should send by them. I sent four of them, one after another, with orders for ammunition. The ammunition came promptly, was distributed at once, and the fight went on.

The enemy was now attempting to take possession of Round Top hill, a commanding position overlooking our left. It was evident no time was to be lost, and I sent at once other officers, whom I pressed into my service, with messages to the general commanding the corps, asking for re-enforcements to support the brigade. The messages were promptly delivered, and five regiments were at once sent to my support from the Third Division, General Crawford, under command of Colonel Fisher.

Having, with the aid of this officer, properly disposed of three regiments of this force, I ordered Colonel Chamberlain, of the Twentieth Maine, to advance and take possession of the mountain. This order was promptly and gallantly executed by this brave and accomplished officer, who rapidly drove the enemy over the mountain, capturing many prisoners. Colonel Fisher at once ordered two regiments of his command to support Colonel Chamberlain, and the hill remained permanently in our possession.

The forces of the enemy being now repulsed on our left and front, I ordered a detachment from the Forty-fourth New York Volunteers and the Eighty-third Pennsylvania to push forward and secure all the fruits of this hard-earned victory.

It was now 8 o'clock in the evening, and before 9 o'clock we had entire possession of the enemy's ground, had gathered up and brought in all of our own wounded and those of the enemy, and had taken and sent to the rear over 500 prisoners, including 2 colonels and 15 commissioned officers, together with over 1,000 stand of arms belonging to the enemy.

The following morning the prisoners of the brigade buried all of our own dead and a large number of those of the enemy.

The fearful loss of the enemy during this struggle may be estimated from the fact that over 50 of his dead were counted in front of the Twentieth Maine Regiment, and his loss was nearly in that proportion along our entire line.

Although this brigade has been engaged in nearly all of the great battles of the Army of the Potomac, and has always greatly distinguished itself for gallant behavior, yet in none has it fought so desperately or achieved for itself such imperishable honors as in this severe conflict of the 2d instant.

A nominal and tabular list of the casualties of this brigade has already been forwarded to the major-general commanding, but it is fitting again to mention the names of the brave and faithful officers of the command who fell in this desperate struggle. Of the Forty-fourth New York Volunteers, Capt. L. S. Larrabee and Lieutenants Dunham and Thomas; of the Twentieth Maine, Lieutenant Kendall, and of the Sixteenth Michigan, Lieutenants Browne, Jewett, and Borden were killed.

The brigade was relieved during the forenoon of the 3d instant by the First Brigade, and ordered to the center of the line, where it remained in reserve the balance of the day, exposed to a severe cannonading, but with no loss, from the security of its position.

The colonel commanding would commend to the favorable notice of the general commanding the following-named officers, for their gallant conduct in battle on the 2d instant: Colonel Chamberlain and Adjutant Chamberlain, of the Twentieth Maine; Lieutenant-Colonel Conner and Major Knox, of the Forty-fourth New York Volunteers; Captain Woodward and Adjutant Gifford, of the Eighty-third Pennsylvania, and Captain Elliott and Adjutant Jacklin, of the Sixteenth Michigan.

Especially would I call the attention of the general commanding to the distinguished services rendered by Colonel Chamberlain throughout the entire struggle.

To the loss sustained by this command in the death of Colonel Vincent I can refer in no more appropriate lan-

guage than that used in the general order announcing it to this brigade, a copy of which I herewith annex.

P. S. In justice to the officers composing the staff, it gives me satisfaction to state, in explanation of my report, that at the time I took command, Captain (Eugene A.) Nash, inspector-general of the brigade, was, in obedience to orders received from Colonel Vincent, at the front watching the movements of the enemy, to report the same if he should attempt a flank movement; that Captain (John M.) Clark, assistant adjutant-general, in obedience to orders, was absent for ammunition, and that Captain (Amos M.) Judson, by orders, was absent for re-enforcements. During the night these officers rendered me the greatest service and I desire to commend each of them to the most favorable notice of the commanding general for their gallant conduct both under Colonel Vincent's command as well as my own.

(Inclosure.)

General Orders No. 5,
Hdqrs. 3d Brigade, 1st Div., 5th Corps,

July 12, 1863.

The colonel commanding hereby announces to the brigade the death of Brig.-Gen. Strong Vincent. He died near Gettysburg, Pa., July 7, 1863, from the effects of a wound received on the 2d instant, and within sight of that field which his bravery had so greatly assisted to win. A day hallowed with all the glory of success is thus sombered by the sorrow of our loss. Wreaths of victory give way to chaplets of mourning, hearts exultant to feelings of grief. A soldier, a scholar, a friend, has fallen. For his country, struggling for its life, he willingly gave his own. Grateful for his services, the State which proudly claims him as her own will give him an honored grave and a costly monument, but he ever will remain buried in our hearts, and our love for his memory will outlast the stone which shall bear the inscription of his bravery, his virtues, and his patriotism.

While we deplore his death, and remember with sorrow our loss, let us emulate the example of his fidelity and patriotism, feeling that he lives but in vain who lives not for his God and his country.

REPORT OF COL. JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN,
TWENTIETH MAINE INFANTRY.

Field Near Emmitsburg, July 6, 1863.

In compliance with the request of the colonel commanding the brigade, I have the honor to submit a somewhat detailed report of the operations of the Twentieth Regiment Maine Volunteers in the battle of Gettysburg, on the 2d and 3rd instant.

Having acted as the advance guard, made necessary by the proximity of the enemy's cavalry, on the march of the day before, my command on reaching Hanover, Pa., just before sunset on that day, were much worn, and lost no time in getting ready for an expected bivouac. Rations were scarcely issued, and the men about preparing supper, when rumors that the enemy had been encountered that day near Gettysburg absorbed every other interest, and very soon orders came to march forthwith to Gettysburg.

My men moved out with a promptitude and spirit extraordinary, the cheers and welcome they received on the road adding to their enthusiasm. After an hour or two of sleep by the roadside just before daybreak, we reached the heights southeasterly of Gettysburg at about 7 a. m. July 2.

Massed at first with the rest of the division on the right of the road, we were moved several times farther toward the left. Although expecting every moment to be put into action and held strictly in line of battle, yet the men were able to take some rest and make the most of their rations.

Somewhere near 4 p. m. a sharp cannonade, at some distance to our left and front, was the signal for a sudden and rapid movement of our whole division in the direction of this firing, which grew warmer as we approached. Passing an open field in the hollow ground in which some of our batteries were going into position, our brigade reached the skirt of a piece of woods, in the farther edge of which there was a heavy musketry fire, and when about to go forward into line we received from Colonel Vincent, commanding the brigade, orders to move to the left at the double-quick, when we took a farm road crossing Plum Run in order to gain a rugged mountain spur called Granite Spur, or Little Round Top.

The enemy's artillery got range of our column as we were climbing the spur, and the crashing of the shells among the rocks and the tree tops made us move lively along the crest. One or two shells burst in our ranks. Passing to the southern slope of Little Round Top, Colonel Vincent indicated to me the ground my regiment was to occupy, informing me that this was the extreme left of our general line, and that a desperate attack was expected in order to turn that position, concluding by telling me I was to "hold that ground at all hazards." This was the last word I heard from him.

In order to commence by making my right firm, I formed my regiment on the right into line, giving such direction to the line as should best secure the advantage of the rough, rocky, and stragglingly wooded ground.

The line faced generally toward a more conspicuous eminence southwest of ours, which is known as Sugar Loaf, or Round Top. Between this and my position intervened a smooth and thinly wooded hollow. My line formed, I immediately detached Company B, Captain Morrill commanding, to extend from my left flank across this hollow as a line of skirmishers, with directions to act as occasion might dictate, to prevent a surprise on my exposed flank and rear.

The artillery fire on our position had meanwhile been constant and heavy, but my formation was scarcely complete when the artillery was replaced by a vigorous infantry assault upon the center of our brigade to my right, but it very soon involved the right of my regiment and gradually extended along my entire front. The action was quite sharp and at close quarters.

In the midst of this an officer from my center informed me that some important movement of the enemy was going on in his front, beyond that of the line with which we were engaged. Mounting a large rock, I was able to see a considerable body of the enemy moving by the flank in rear of their line engaged, and passing from the direction of the foot of Great Round Top through the valley toward the front of my left. The close engagement not allowing any change of front, I immediately stretched my regiment to the left, by taking intervals by the left flank, and at the same

time "refusing" my left wing, so that it was nearly at right angles with my right, thus occupying about twice the extent of our ordinary front, some of the companies being brought into single rank when the nature of the ground gave sufficient strength or shelter. My officers and men understood my wishes so well that this movement was executed under fire, the right wing keeping up fire, without giving the enemy any occasion to seize or even to suspect their advantage. But we were not a moment too soon; the enemy's flanking column having gained their desired direction, burst upon my left, where they evidently had expected an unguarded flank, with great demonstration.

We opened a brisk fire at close range, which was so sudden and effective that they soon fell back among the rocks and low trees in the valley, only to burst forth again with a shout, and rapidly advanced, firing as they came. They pushed up to within a dozen yards of us before the terrible effectiveness of our fire compelled them to break and take shelter.

They renewed the assault on our whole front, and for an hour the fighting was severe. Squads of the enemy broke through our line in several places, and the fight was literally hand to hand. The edge of the fight rolled backward and forward like a wave. The dead and wounded were now in our front and then in our rear. Forced from our position, we desperately recovered it, and pushed the enemy down to the foot of the slope. The intervals of the struggle were seized to remove our wounded (and those of the enemy also), to gather ammunition from the cartridge-boxes of disabled friend or foe on the field, and even to secure better muskets than the Enfields, which we found did not stand service well. Rude shelters were thrown up of the loose rocks that covered the ground.

Captain Woodward, commanding the Eighty-third Pennsylvania Volunteers, on my right, gallantly maintaining his fight, judiciously and with hearty co-operation made his movements conform to my necessities, so that my right was at no time exposed to a flank attack.

The enemy seemed to have gathered all their energies for their final assault. We had gotten our thin line into as good a shape as possible, when a strong force emerged from

the scrub wood in the valley, as well as I could judge, in two lines in echelon by the right, and, opening a heavy fire, the first line came on as if they meant to sweep everything before them. We opened on them as well as we could with our scanty ammunition snatched from the field.

It did not seem possible to withstand another shock like this now coming on. Our loss had been severe. One-half of my left wing had fallen and a third of my regiment lay just behind us, dead or badly wounded. At this moment my anxiety was increased by a great roar of musketry in my rear, on the farther or northerly slope of Little Round Top, apparently on the flank of the regular brigade, which was in support of Hazlett's battery on the crest behind us. The bullets from this attack struck into my left rear, and I feared that the enemy might have nearly surrounded the Little Round Top, and only a desperate chance was left for us. My ammunition was soon exhausted. My men were firing their last shot and getting ready to "club" their muskets.

It was imperative to strike before we were struck by this overwhelming force in a hand-to-hand fight, which we could not probably have withstood or survived. At that crisis, I ordered the bayonet. The word was enough. It ran like fire along the line, from man to man, and rose into a shout, with which they sprang forward upon the enemy, now not 30 yards away. The effect was surprising; many of the enemy's first line threw down their arms and surrendered. An officer fired his pistol at my head with one hand, while he handed me his sword with the other. Holding fast by our right, and swinging forward our left, we made an extended "right wheel," before which the enemy's second line broke, and fell back, fighting from tree to tree, many being captured, until we had swept the valley and cleared the front of nearly our entire brigade.

Meantime, Captain Morrill with his skirmishers (sent out from my left flank), with some dozen or fifteen of the U. S. Sharpshooters who had put themselves under his direction, fell upon the enemy as they were breaking, and by his demonstrations, as well as his well-directed fire, added much to the effect of the charge.

Having thus cleared the valley and driven the enemy up the western slope of the Great Round Top, not wishing to press so far out as to hazard the ground I was to hold by leaving it exposed to a sudden rush of the enemy, I succeeded (although with some effort to stop my men, who declared they were "on the road to Richmond") in getting the regiment into good order and resuming our original position.

Four hundred prisoners, including two field and several line officers, were sent to the rear. These were mainly from the Fifteenth and Forty-seventh Alabama Regiments, with some of the Fourth and Fifth Texas. One hundred and fifty of the enemy were found killed and wounded in our front.

At dusk, Colonel Rice informed me of the fall of Colonel Vincent, which had devolved the command of the brigade on him, and that Colonel Fisher had come up with a brigade to our support. These troops were massed in our rear. It was the understanding, as Colonel Rice informed me, that Colonel Fisher's brigade was to advance and seize the western slope of Great Round Top, where the enemy had shortly before been driven. But, after considerable delay, this intention for some reason was not carried into execution.

We were apprehensive that if the enemy were allowed to strengthen himself in that position, he would have a great advantage in renewing the attack on us at daylight or before. Colonel Rice then directed me to make the movement to seize that crest.

It was now 9 p. m. Without waiting to get ammunition, but trusting in part to the very circumstance of not exposing our movement or our small front by firing, and with bayonets fixed, the little handful of 200 men pressed up the mountain side in very extended order, as the steep and jagged surface of the ground compelled. We heard squads of the enemy falling back before us, and, when near the crest, we met a scattering and uncertain fire, which caused us the great loss of the gallant Lieutenant Linscott, who fell, mortally wounded. In the silent advance in the darkness we laid hold of 25 prisoners, among them a staff officer of General (E. M.) Law, commanding the brigade imme-

diately opposed to us during the fight. Reaching the crest, and reconnoitering the ground, I placed the men in a strong position among the rocks, and informed Colonel Rice, requesting also ammunition and some support to our right, which was very near the enemy, their movements and words even being now distinctly heard by us.

Some confusion soon after resulted from the attempt of some regiment of Colonel Fisher's brigade to come to our support. They had found a wood road up the mountain, which brought them on my right flank, and also in proximity to the enemy, massed a little below. Hearing their approach, and thinking a movement from that quarter could only be from the enemy, I made disposition to receive them as such. In the confusion which attended the attempt to form them in support of my right, the enemy opened a brisk fire, which disconcerted my efforts to form them and disheartened the supports themselves, so that I saw no more of them that night.

Feeling somewhat insecure in this isolated position, I sent in for the Eighty-third Pennsylvania, which came speedily, followed by the Forty-fourth New York, and, having seen these well posted, I sent a strong picket to the front, with instructions to report to me every half hour during the night, and allowed the rest of my men to sleep on their arms.

At some time about midnight, two regiments of Colonel Fisher's brigade came up the mountain beyond my left, and took position near the summit; but as the enemy did not threaten from that direction, I made no effort to connect with them.

We went into the fight with 386, all told—358 guns. Every pioneer and musician who could carry a musket went into the ranks. Even the sick and footsore, who could not keep up in the march, came up as soon as they could find their regiments, and took their places in line of battle, while it was battle, indeed. Some prisoners I had under guard, under sentence of court-martial, I was obliged to put into the fight, and they bore their part well, for which I shall recommend a commutation of their sentence.

The loss, so far as I can ascertain it, is 136—30 of whom were killed, and among the wounded are many mortally.

Captain Billings, Lieutenant Kendall, and Lieutenant Linscott are officers whose loss we deeply mourn, efficient soldiers and pure and high-minded men.

In such an engagement there were many incidents of heroism and noble character which should have place even in an official report; but, under present circumstances, I am unable to do justice to them. I will say of that regiment that the resolution, courage, and heroic fortitude which enabled us to withstand so formidable an attack have happily led to so conspicuous a result, that they may safely trust to history to record their merits.

About noon on the 3d of July, we were withdrawn, and formed on the right of the brigade, in the front edge of a piece of woods near the left center of our main line of battle, where we were held in readiness to support our troops, then receiving the severe attack of the afternoon of that day.

On the 4th, we made a reconnaissance to the front, to ascertain the movements of the enemy, but finding that they had retired, at least beyond Willoughby's Run, we returned to Little Round Top, where we buried our dead in the place where we had laid them during the fight, marking each grave by a head-board made of ammunition boxes, with each soldier's name cut upon it. We also buried 50 of the enemy's dead, in front of our position of July 2. We then looked after our wounded, whom I had taken the responsibility of putting into the houses of citizens in the vicinity of Little Round Top, and, on the morning of the 5th, took up our march on the Emmitsburg road.

REPORT OF LIEUT.-COL. NORVAL E. WELCH,
SIXTEENTH MICHIGAN INFANTRY.

Near Emmitsburg, Md., July 6, 1863.

In reply to circular of this date from brigade headquarters, as to the part this regiment sustained in the action of July 2 and 3, I have the honor to report:

The regiment, under my command, lay with the Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Corps, closed in mass, near and in rear of Gettysburg, to the left of the main road, during most of the day. The brigade was commanded by

Col. Strong Vincent, Eighty-third Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers.

About 4 p. m. we moved rapidly to the extreme left of our line of battle, and went into position on the left of the brigade, at that time circling the crest of a high, rocky hill. After deploying two of my largest companies as skirmishers—Brady's Sharpshooters from the left, and Company A from the right—I was ordered at double-quick to the right of the brigade, and to take my position on the right of the Forty-fourth New York. Before this could be accomplished, however, we were under a heavy fire of the enemy's infantry. We succeeded, however, in securing our places after some loss.

We remained in this position nearly half an hour, when some one (supposed to be General Weed or Major-General Sykes) called from the extreme crest of the hill to fall back nearer the top, where a much less exposed line could be taken up. This order was not obeyed, except by single individuals. From some misconstruction of orders, and entirely unwarrantable assumption of authority, Lieutenant Kydd ordered the colors back. None left with them, however, but three of the color-guard. They followed the brigade colors to where Colonel Vincent, after being wounded, had been carried, where they remained all night, joining the regiment in the morning with 45 men, who had left the field during and after the fight. All the remainder of the regiment retained their position until relieved.

The two companies sent out as skirmishers numbered about 50. The number of muskets taken in line was about 150; the number killed and wounded 59—21 killed. Several wounded have since died.

On the 3d, we took up a new line farther to the right, at the left of the brigade, and remained on our arms for twenty-four hours.

Captain Elliott and Adjutant Jacklin behaved with their usual gallantry. Captain Partridge, Lieutenants Borgman (wounded), Woodruff, Forsyth, Cameron (wounded, with arm amputated), Swart, Graham, Salter, and Captain Chandler, behaved nobly and handled their men with coolness and valor. Lieutenants Browne, Company E, Jewett, Company K, and Borden, Company F, died, bravely defend-

ing the flag they had sworn to support and that they loved in their hearts, and emulating the bravest. I had no truer or purer officers, and their loss cannot be replaced.

REPORT OF LIEUT-COL. FREEMAN CONNER,
FORTY-FOURTH NEW YORK INFANTRY.

July 6, 1863.

I have the honor to submit the following report of the action taken by this regiment in the engagement of July 2:

About 4 p. m. our regiment, Col. J. C. Rice commanding, was placed in position on Round Top Hill, with the Eighty-third Pennsylvania on our left and the Sixteenth Michigan on our right. Company B was immediately thrown out as skirmishers. When they had advanced about 200 yards they met the enemy advancing in three lines of battle.

Orders were immediately given by Capt. L. S. Larrabee, commanding the company, to fall back upon the battalion. It was while executing this order that that faithful and brave officer was shot through the body and instantly killed, being the first officer that this regiment had ever had killed in battle.

The enemy continued to advance until the first line came within about 40 yards of our line. Upon their first appearance we opened a heavy fire upon them, which was continued until they were compelled to retreat. After they had disappeared in our immediate front, we turned our fire upon those who had advanced in the hollow to our right, and continued it until we were out of ammunition.

After we had been engaged about one hour, Colonel Vincent, commanding brigade, was wounded, and the command fell upon Col. J. C. Rice, and the command of the regiment upon myself.

We remained in our position until the next morning about 8 a. m., when we were relieved by Colonel Hayes, Eighteenth Massachusetts. We were then moved to the right about three-eighths of a mile, and formed in line of battle, the Sixteenth Michigan on our left and the Twentieth Maine on our right.

I regret to add that in addition to Captain Larrabee, whose death I have already noted, the officers are called upon to mourn the loss of First Lieutenant Eugene L. Dunham, Company D, a brave and efficient officer, who was instantly killed during the heavy firing from the enemy in our front. Capt. William R. Bourne, Company K; Capt. Bennett Munger, Company C; Adj. George B. Herendeen; First Lieut. Charles H. Zeilman, commanding Company F, and Second Lieut. Benjamin N. Thomas, Company K, were wounded, the latter, it is feared, mortally.

It affords me great pleasure to be able to state that both officers and men behaved with the greatest coolness and bravery, not a single case of cowardice having come to my ear.

REPORT OF CAPT. ORPHEUS S. WOODWARD,
EIGHTY-THIRD PENNSYLVANIA INFANTRY.

Near Emmitsburg, Md., July 6, 1863.

In compliance with orders from headquarters Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Corps, I have the honor to report the following as the operations of my command during the battle of the 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th instant.

On the morning of the 2d instant, moved to the front. At about 2:30 p. m. was ordered into position on our extreme left, the Forty-fourth New York on my right, the Twentieth Maine on my left. At 3:15 p. m. the enemy advanced and engaged my skirmishers, pressing on in force, with bayonets fixed. They soon drove in my skirmishers and engaged my regiment, posted behind rocks and stones hastily thrown up for defense. The contest continued lively until nearly 6 p. m., when the enemy fell back. I instantly threw forward a strong line of skirmishers, who captured between 50 and 60 prisoners and 200 stand of arms.

My men and officers acted splendidly. Where all did so well, I cannot discriminate.

My loss amounted to 10 killed and 45 wounded.

At 1:30 a. m. on the 3d, moved to the support of the Twentieth Maine, which had succeeded in taking a high hill

a little to the left of my former position. Remained here until 10 a. m., when, being relieved by a regiment of the Pennsylvania Reserves, rejoined my brigade, massed in the woods, just at the right of General Sykes' headquarters. Here I remained until 12 m., the 4th, when the brigade was thrown forward on a reconnaissance. We moved out, and occupied the position occupied by the enemy the previous day; threw forward skirmishers, but found no opposing force within 2 miles. I deem it but proper to state that but for the prompt and skillful disposition made by Colonel Vincent of the troops under his command (the Third Brigade), the enemy would have succeeded in turning our left.

I regret to state that Colonel Vincent was severely wounded. My command (his regiment) esteemed him highly as a gentleman, scholar, and soldier, and bitterly avenged his injury.

REPORT OF GEN. ROMEYN B. AYRES,

COMMANDING SECOND DIVISION, FIFTH ARMY CORPS,
JULY 28, 1863.

"Rebellion Records," Series 1, Vol. 27, page 634.

EXTRACT.

* * * In the afternoon, the enemy's attack on the left of our position being developed, the division, *preceded by the First Division*, was marched to the support of our troops engaged, the Third Brigade being placed in position on the general line of battle upon a rocky hill (usually called Round Top hill) of great importance, facing the Emmitsburg and Gettysburg pike. This brigade was ordered to hold this hill, which duty it performed well and effectually. * * *

REPORT OF COL. KENNER GARRARD,
COMMANDING THIRD BRIGADE, SECOND DIV., FIFTH A. C.
AT BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG
AFTER DEATH OF GENERAL WEED.

"Rebellion Records," Series 1, Vol. 27, Part 1, page 651.

EXTRACT.

* * * At this point the leading regiment, under the direction of General Warren, chief engineer Army of the Potomac, was led to the left, up on what is known as Round Top ridge. Hazlett's Battery ascended the ridge immediately in rear of this regiment (the One hundred and fortieth New York Volunteers, Col. P. H. O'Rourke commanding), and went into battery on the summit. The One hundred and fortieth was formed in line, and was immediately closely engaged with the enemy at short musket range on the left slope of the ridge.

A portion of the First Division, Fifth Army Corps (Vincent's Brigade. O. W. N.), was engaged to the left of the ridge, and this regiment and Hazlett's Battery were brought up to assist the First Division in repelling a heavy assault of the enemy, with the evident design of gaining this ridge. Colonel O'Rourke was mortally wounded at the head of his regiment while leading it into action.

The other regiments, One hundred and forty-sixth New York Volunteers and the Ninety-first and One hundred and fifty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteers, were led to the right and front some distance, and formed in line in a narrow valley to support a portion of the Third Corps and Watson's Battery, then severely pressed by the enemy. Before becoming engaged, however, orders were received for these regiments to return at double-quick to Round Top ridge, and secure and hold that position. The Ninety-first was posted on the left of the battery, connecting with the One hundred and fortieth. The One hundred and forty-sixth and One hundred and fifty-fifth were posted on the right, extending from the battery on the summit, along the crest of the ridge, to the gorge on the right.

* * * When the brigade and Hazlett's Battery seized the ridge, it was done under a heavy musketry fire, and was

entirely unoccupied, *excepting by a part of the First Division* (Third Brigade under Vincent. O. W. N.), on the extreme left, and I am gratified to report to the general commanding the division that *the order to secure and hold the ridge was faithfully executed.*

COMMENTS ON OFFICIAL REPORTS.

In reports marked "extract," portions in relation to preliminary movements and in some cases recommendations of officers for good conduct and matters purely formal are omitted, but all which relates directly to the subject of this paper is given as reported by the several officers.

GENERAL SYKES

States that he posted Sweitzer's and Tilton's brigades of the First Division himself. He says that "In the meantime, Vincent's brigade, of this division, had seized the rocky height, closely followed by Weed's brigade, Second Division. These troops were posted under the direction of General Warren, Chief Engineer of this army." If by "these troops" General Sykes means to include Vincent's brigade, it appears to be an error. There seems to be no reference to Warren in any of the reports of Vincent's brigade and no evidence that Warren at any time went farther to the south than the ground occupied by the One hundred and fortieth New York of Weed's brigade.

The statement that Weed's brigade had been taken away from its position on the hill by order of General Sickles and ordered by General Sykes to return and reoccupy that position is not confirmed by the report of Colonel Garrard, who assumed command when General Weed fell, and made the report for the brigade after the battle. He must have been present and could hardly have failed to notice this change of position. It seems more probable that General Sykes had ordered the brigade to the hill before he went to the rear to bring up the Third Division and finding on his return that General Weed with all his regiments except the One hundred and fortieth New York were marching to the front by order of General Sickles, ordered them back to the position which he had previously assigned to them.

GENERAL BARNES.

This officer's report was not made until August 24, nearly two months after the battle and then only after the receipt of positive instructions to make his report. It is a long document, composed largely of verbatim copies of the reports of his subordinate officers. It seems evident from the reports of his brigade commanders that they received very little assistance from him during the battle. General Sykes says that he personally posted the First and Second Brigades. The Third Brigade was removed from his immediate command and asked and received no advice or assistance from the Division commander. Barnes says that he was with General Sykes when General Warren applied to the latter for troops to occupy Round Top, that Sykes yielded to Warren's urgent request and that he (Barnes) immediately directed Colonel Vincent, commanding the Third Brigade, to proceed to that point with his brigade. In view of the writer's certain knowledge of the conversation between Colonel Vincent and the officer of General Sykes' staff and the enquiry of that officer for the whereabouts of General Barnes, the only plausible explanation of Barnes' statement is that General Sykes' aide found Barnes after leaving Vincent and Barnes sent the order after Vincent and his brigade had gone.

Some important discrepancies are found between General Barnes' report of the orders given and movements made by the First and Second brigades and reports of these movements made by the brigade commanders, some of which will be specified in comments on the Brigade Reports. Reading between the lines, it appears that Barnes' action as division commander was not efficient and did not inspire great confidence in him in the minds of any of his brigade commanders. Orders which he claims to have given in regard to some of the movements of the brigades are reported by Colonel Tilton and Colonel Sweitzer to have been made under their own initiative and when they finally reached their last position they reported directly to the Corps commander. General Barnes says that "Being disabled for further actual command of the division, the opportune arrival of General Griffin enabled me to relinquish

it to him, and the division moved toward Middletown, where it arrived July 8." He does not say what caused his disability. The only reference to him which writer has been able to find in the official reports, is that in 1864 he was relieved from duty on court martial and assigned to the command of a prisoners' camp at Point Lookout.

COLONEL TILTON

After describing the position taken by his brigade and the attack on his front, states that "General Barnes ordered me to fall back in good order if unable to hold the position." He makes no mention of an order from General Barnes to change his front to repel the attack on his flank. Finding that the enemy was in great force on his right and rear, he made several changes of position apparently without orders from General Barnes, and at last, after crossing an open field, took up a new position upon the right of the Second Division, *and reported to General Sykes.*

COLONEL SWEITZER,

After detailing the various movements of his brigade, some by the direction of General Barnes and others by his own orders, in extricating his men from their perilous position, he adds these significant words: "About dark on the evening of the 2nd, the Acting Assistant Adjutant General of the First Brigade came to me and enquired for General Barnes; said he was directed by General Sykes to tell him to have the Second Brigade form on the right of the First, in the position they then were. As General Barnes was not present, I received the order, and put the Second Brigade in the position indicated, where we remained until the evening of the 5th, when the division advanced toward Emmitsburg." From this it would appear that at the close of the battle on the second day General Barnes was not present or in communication with any of the brigades of his division. From his conduct as reported by the commanders of the First and Second brigades, the reader may judge what would have been the result if Vincent had waited for an order from him before moving his brigade to Little Round Top.

COLONEL RICE.

As his report and those of his regimental commanders show so clearly the importance of the part taken by this brigade in securing the victory at Gettysburg, they are given in full. It will be noticed that neither Colonel Rice nor any of the regimental commanders make any reference to General Warren having conducted them to this position or taken any part in posting the brigade. The report of Colonel Chamberlain graphically describes the fighting of his splendid regiment. The promotion of Colonel Rice to be Brigadier-General and his transfer to another corps, left Colonel Chamberlain in command of this famous brigade and with his Twentieth Maine, the Eighty-third Pennsylvania, and other regiments which had been added to the command later in the war, Chamberlain commanded the force which received the formal surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox. The brief reports of Lieutenant-Colonel Conner of the Forty-fourth New York and Captain Woodward of the Eighty-third Pennsylvania, are scarcely adequate to measure the splendid fighting of these regiments. The report of Lieutenant-Colonel Welch of the Sixteenth Michigan contains some statements which are not confirmed either by the brigade commander or the commanders of the other regiments. He says, "About 4 p. m. we moved rapidly to the extreme left of our line of battle, and went into position on the left of the brigade, at that time circling the crest of a high, rocky hill. After deploying two of my largest companies as skirmishers—Brady's Sharpshooters from the left, and Company A from the right—I was ordered at double-quick to the right of the brigade, and to take my position on the right of the Forty-fourth New York. Before this could be accomplished, we were under a heavy fire of the enemy's infantry. We succeeded, however, in securing our places after some loss." This statement does not appear to be in accordance with the facts. When the brigade neared the position assigned to it, marching in column of fours, the Forty-fourth New York headed the column, followed by the Sixteenth Michigan, the Eighty-third Pennsylvania next, the Twentieth Maine bringing up the rear. At the request of Colonel Rice that the

Forty-fourth New York and Eighty-third Pennsylvania might fight side by side, as they had in all previous engagements, Colonel Vincent assented, and directed the Sixteenth to pass the Forty-fourth. This may have been done at the double-quick, but no skirmishers were thrown out at that time by the Sixteenth Michigan and probably at no time during the battle, as the ground in their front was open to the foot of the hill. As soon as the Sixteenth Michigan was in place the other regiments followed, taking position on the left in the following order: Forty-fourth New York, Eighty-third Pennsylvania and Twentieth Maine on the left. The brigade was all in position before a soldier of the enemy had been seen. The skirmishers thrown out by the Eighty-third and Forty-fourth advanced some distance before a shot was fired by either side. The Sixteenth Michigan was fully in place and at least two heavy assaults had been repulsed by the other regiments before the Sixteenth Michigan had received a shot from the direction of its front. After the attacks by the five Alabama regiments had been repulsed from our center, the Texas regiments of Robertson's brigade passed north on the left of Law to a point some distance beyond the Sixteenth Michigan, then advanced in heavy force against that regiment. Its right wing fell back in disorder, while the left held fast. The Texans were within our lines for a few moments, when the timely arrival of the One hundred and fortieth New York and their charge down the slope, caused the enemy to retire, and our line was re-established. In his attempt to stop the retreat of Welch's men, Colonel Vincent was mortally wounded. Welch further states, "We remained in this position nearly half an hour, when some one (supposed to be General Weed or Major-General Sykes) called from the extreme crest of the hill to fall back nearer the top, where a much less exposed line could be taken up. This order was not obeyed, except by single individuals. From some misconception of orders, and entirely unwarrantable assumption of authority, Lieutenant Kydd ordered the colors back. None left with them, however, but three of the color-guard. They followed the brigade colors to where Colonel Vincent, after being wounded, had been carried, where they remained all night,

joining the regiment in the morning, with 45 men, who had left the field during and after the fight. All the remainder of the regiment retained their position until relieved." This is a remarkable statement evidently made to account for the unsoldierly conduct of the portion of the Sixteenth Michigan and its commanding officer. It is certain that neither General Sykes nor General Weed was near that position at that time. He makes no mention of the presence of the One hundred and fortieth New York with Colonel O'Rorke at its head, which charged down the hill and repulsed the enemy which had driven back the right of Welch's regiment. It is certain that Welch with his 45 men did not follow the brigade colors at that time to the house where Vincent was carried, because the brigade colors did not leave the hill until the fighting was all over, when the writer, who carried those colors, was sent to the rear by Colonel Rice to get assistance for our wounded. It is certain that Colonel Welch told the writer near the farm house where Vincent lay, that the brigade had been driven off the hill and he did not know where it was. It is probable that Welch with a part of his regiment sought safety in the rear of the ridge, and went with his men nearly a mile from the scene of the fight of his brigade and remained until morning.

It is significant that in his report Colonel Rice commended for their gallant conduct Colonel Chamberlain and Adjutant Chamberlain of the Twentieth Maine, Lieutenant-Colonel Conner and Major Knox of the Forty-fourth New York, Captain Woodward, commanding Eighty-third Pennsylvania, and Adjutant Gifford of that regiment, but in the Sixteenth Michigan mentions only Captain Elliott and Adjutant Jacklin, omitting any reference to Lieutenant-Colonel Welch.

Colonel Rice in his kindness of heart seems to have accepted the statement made by Colonel Welch in his report, but could not commend his conduct. Possibly as he was engaged with his own regiment at the time this break occurred he had no personal knowledge of the facts. Welch continued in command of the regiment and in subsequent battles acted well.

Colonel Vincent gave up his life here, but his brigade, with the assistance of the One hundred and fortieth New

York led by the gallant Colonel O'Rorke, maintained its position until the end.

In 1901 the writer sent substantially the same statement, in regard to Vincent's conduct at Gettysburg, to each of the officers named below, and received letters in reply with permission to publish them, from which the following extracts are made:

FROM MAJOR-GENERAL DANIEL BUTTERFIELD.
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC AT GETTYSBURG.

Hotel Royal Palm, Miami, Florida, February 19, 1901.

No man who lived and fought in the battle of Gettysburg did more for his country than Vincent. I knew the whole matter from beginning to end. He was a magnificent soldier, a gentleman of high education and great ability.

General Tremain brought messages to General Meade and to me from the field, describing the exigency and great need for the immediate occupation of Round Top, and authority was given him to send the troops there. In my judgment there was not another command on the field which could have been more effective in the matter of time and rapidity of movement in getting to the spot in time to have saved the day, owing to its wonderful efficiency, drill and discipline under Vincent, who had been trained and educated with it.

FROM DANIEL E. SICKLES, MAJ.-GEN., U. S. V.
COMMANDING THIRD ARMY CORPS AT GETTYSBURG.

New York, November 21, 1901.

Colonel Vincent's part in the operations of that day, on the left of the Union lines, was distinguished by excellent judgment, prompt movements and signal gallantry, for which he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General, before his death, on the 7th of the month. My own command, the Third Army Corps, was engaged in the immediate vicinity, and I had, therefore, an opportunity of observing

Vincent's fight and can speak of it from personal knowledge. There is no doubt that the repulse of Lee's assault on our left flank, on the 2d of July, '63, saved the Union army from defeat at Gettysburg. This was accomplished by the Third and Fifth Corps and Caldwell's division of the Second Corps. I have always regarded General Vincent's co-operation as worthy of all praise.

FROM JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN,
BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. V.

COLONEL COMMANDING 20TH MAINE VOLUNTEERS
AT GETTYSBURG.

Portland, Maine, November 18, 1901.

Col. Vincent's conduct in taking his brigade to Little Round Top and placing it in position, and in throwing his great personal energy and determination into the fight there, are personally well known to me. I regard the timely occupation of that position, which was at that stage of the battle the key of the Union defense, as due to the energy and skill of Colonel Vincent.

FROM HENRY E. TREMAIN,
BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL, U. S. V.

New York, November 23, 1901.

Upon reading the foregoing, I recall many reasons besides your own valuable testimony for believing that the account is correct, and that too much recognition cannot be given by this country to the skill and heroism of General Vincent's supreme effort and sacrifice.

FROM GENERAL ELLIS SPEAR.
MAJOR 20TH MAINE VOLUNTEERS AT GETTYSBURG.

Washington, D. C., November 23rd, 1901.

I have read carefully the foregoing statement in regard to General Vincent's services at Gettysburg. As to the greater part of the statement, I know of my own knowledge that it is strictly accurate. What happened on the

right of the brigade when Vincent was mortally wounded, I did not see, being then with the 20th Maine closely engaged on the left, but it was a matter of common report at the time, and beyond question the statement is strictly accurate. I had seen General Vincent in battle before and knew what he would do then. He was a very valuable officer and of great promise, and his death was a great loss to the army, but the success he achieved in averting the imminent and great danger on the left at Gettysburg on the second day of the battle, was worth what it cost, though the price was great.

FROM GENERAL JAMES LONGSTREET, C. S. A.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 6, 1901.

It gives me pleasure to state in reference to the worth of Little Round Top to the Union army at Gettysburg, it was everything to the success of the Union battle. General Vincent's prompt action in moving to save that point, held it, and was the means of getting the battle to his side. Many minutes delay would have given the Confederates the field.



Position of Eighty-third Pennsylvania Volunteers on Little Round Top, Gettysburg.