

Object ID: *MG0828_SeriesD-62_F12*

Document: *Willcox's South Mountain battle report, dated September 14, 1862*

Transcription:

to silence the enemy battery at all hazards, sent picket report to Reno, and was making disposition to charge, moving 17th Michigan, so as to crop the hollow, and flank the enemy's guns; when the enemy charged out of the woods on their side directly upon our front in a long heavy line extending beyond our left to Cox's right—I instantly gave the command forward, and we met them near the foot of the hill 45th Pa. in front—The 17th Mich. rushed down into the hollow, faced to the left, leaped over a stone fence, and took them in flank. Some of the supporting regiments over the slope of the hill, fired over the heads of those in front and after a severe contest of some minutes, the enemy were repulsed, followed by our troops to the opposite slope and woods forming their own position—Their battery in front of us was withdrawn, but the guns across the main pike played upon us heavily with shot and shell – Cook reopened his fire—Reno and Sturges came up, the firing except from artillery had about ceased—Sturges' regiments relieved my division in the front as soon as our ammunition was exhausted—Sturges opened with his Artillery on enemy's battery and troops across the main pike and night came on—A large number of prisoners and the wounded were collected—After dark the enemy opened fire on Sturges with musketry, in which the gallant and beloved Reno was killed and a temporary confusion occurred until Sturges' troops were handsomely rallied and my division took position close up in their support—

Still later a heavy fire of musketry opened on us, the enemy (as was learned from a prisoner) being reinforced by a Brigade of Whittings Division

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and the troops were engaged until 10'clock, our soldiers firmly holding the ground they had now—Before 12 O'clock the enemy were in full retreat abandoning their wounded – In mentioning names for commendation I would say that the coolness and gallantry of the commanding officers of brigades and regiments alike shone brightly—Col. Welsh handled his brigade handsomely and Col. Christ performed his duty coolly and well—The 17th Mich. Col. Withington performed a feat that may vie with any recorded in the annals of war, and set an example to the oldest troops—This Regiment had not been organized a single month, and was composed of raw levies—Scarcely less praise is due to the 45th Pa. Lt. Col. Curtin for its bravery and dashing spirit, meeting the enemy's charge in front in full career—

Capt. Cook deserves credit individually for his courage and perseverance under a disorganizing fire, for his activity in repairing the disaster to his battery, and bringing it to bear upon the enemy's infantry at the right moment—

I am specially indebted to the assistance of Capt. Robt. A. Hutchins A. A. G. and to Lieut. Levi Brackett 28th Mass. Aid de Camp in my efforts to keep the troops in hand and changing front under fire, and for their rapid delivery of orders – Appended is a list of casualties-

Respectfully
(Signed) O. B. Willcox
Brig. Genl. Comm^dg Division



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Report
Battle of South Mountain
Sept. 14, 1862
1st Division
9th Army Corps
General Wilcox

Analysis: Wiggin

This was probably written after Sept. 18, when Welsh's report (TW-D-10) is dated. It appears to be missing the first page(s), as there is not the usual formal introduction to the report.

Scope and Content:

Handwritten report most likely in a copyist's hand of General Orlando Willcox's Antietam Battle Report. Report details the activities of Willcox's 1st Division (includes Welsh's 2nd Brigade) during the battle of Antietam. Narrative mentions death of General Jesse Reno and includes recognition of Colonel Thomas Welsh who "handled his brigade handsomely." First page appears to be missing, but transcript of the complete letter can be found at <https://civilwarhome.com/willcoxantietamor.html>.



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