

Manassas

Warwick County Va

July 5<sup>th</sup> 1861

Major W. H. Wright

Commanding Louisiana Battalion

Sir

A detachment of Infantry of One hundred men composed of details from the five Companies of the Louisiana Battalion, each under its own Captain or Lieutenant, with the addition of one Company of fifteen or twenty men, was sent to the immediate command of Col. Drury left here between 12 and 1 o'clock last night in the direction of Warrenton and was stationed shortly before daylight in ambush in the woods near Curtis farm. The design of the Col was to surprise a party of two or three hundred Federal Troops reported to infest that neighborhood. Information was soon brought by a mounted scout, that about one hundred of the enemys Cavalry were approaching. Col Drury's orders were that the infantry should lay or crouch down and conceal both persons and guns. This alarm however passed off and the Col now by special order - dispatched eight or ten infantry Scouts through the woods on our left and to the right to reconnoiter. ~~Had a man sent to reconnoiter on our right~~



was in position ready for the attack and within a few  
minutes we were by the side of the opposite position  
of the enemy. The enemy party afterwards approached.  
Our formation intended to be in line was irregular  
owing to our position among bushes vines, logs and trees,  
a few minutes afterwards the Col said "they are coming"  
and I took my post. [A few changes of shots occurred  
first between the enemy and our scouts, then a few shots  
were fired by the several companies followed by a few from  
the extreme left of our dit chain returned by a considerable  
number of our company of whom but little was seen through  
the affric covering the entrance in the undergrowth, this firing  
from our side was continued as far as Col Dring  
was concerned. It was expected by the Cavalry  
that the enemy party consisted of infantry, and a few horsemen only,  
Col Dring directed that their column should be allowed  
to pass the wood's road in which the Howitzers stood  
and which joined the principal road near our left  
and to pass a little beyond our left before we fired  
into them for which he would himself give the  
word. The enemy however never did trust the head  
of his column beyond the opening of this cross road,  
I was now informed that Col Dring was wounded  
perhaps killed and stepping to his side I found it  
to unfortunately true, Compelled thus to assume the  
Command I instinctively continued to act for a minute  
or two upon my orders and waited for the enemy's column



to appear. Even if I failed to pursue the Col's plans  
I could not fire upon vacantly in our front and  
if we fired left-oblique our own Scouts would be  
endangered but it was unnecessary to give any order  
to him as those who could catch a glimpse of the  
enemy were already firing. I therefore gave an  
order to wheel to the left in order to confront and  
see the enemy. This order was executed by a part of  
the line but when we reached the road the enemy  
had escaped out of view. Considerable confusion  
was here caused by the battery's flight and muzzling  
off with great violence down the road ~~of~~ the Howitzer  
horses with the piece attached and the Cavalry quitting  
it.

promptly summoned and by Command assigned  
to me by Col Drury aided by some of the Howitzer's party  
remained in possession of the field abandoned by the  
enemy. The Col's Body was secured and subsequently  
the body of private Hackett found to be missing. The  
object of Col Drury's expedition having been frustrated  
by the action which had occurred and the ambulance  
discovered being in the neighborhood of large bodies  
of the enemy from which they could speedily be snatched  
I conducted the Infantry ~~as~~ assigned to me together  
with the Howitzer party whose ~~place~~ <sup>was again in its place</sup>  
in good order back to camp. All the officers and men  
of the Infantry placed as before mentioned under my  
Supervision behaved with courage but the enemy fled



in haste for them under the plans and orders of Col  
Drew to effect the results which might ~~not have~~  
otherwise been hoped for. I regret to report  
killed our gallant Commander - Lieut Col Drew  
and private Hackett of the Sherwood Grays. Slightly  
wounded private W. Buford of the Crescent Rifles.  
From the nature of our position in ambush  
and the hasty retreat of the enemy soon after the  
Command devolved upon me it is impossible  
to estimate with any degree of accuracy the number  
of those opposed to us. I wish to make mention  
of the humane and gallant conduct of Private  
Holcombe of the Sherwood Grays and Private Estelle

of the same Company who were engaged with the wounded  
man Hackett and aiding in bringing off his body  
from the place in which he had fallen whilst  
scouting beyond the scene of the principal  
skirmish. It is reported that the enemy had  
four killed and two wounded.

Respectfully  
S. W. Hook  
Captain  
Crescent Rifles