

27 May 2014

Stones River National Battlefield Park
3501 Old Nashville Highway
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Attn: Superintendent, Gayle Hazelwood
Re: Private James F. Fambro, Company
Company E, 2nd Georgia Cavalry, CSA

Gib
JMS
X Jim

Dear Superintendent Hazelwood,

I am a volunteer with the Chesterfield Historical Society of Virginia even though I now reside in South Carolina. My work for them has largely involved research and examination of Chesterfield County's soldiers from the War Between The States and their individual stories. While carrying out my research, I happened upon the records of Private James H. Fambro { from Monroe County, Georgia}, and found evidence of a truly heroic and audacious deed on the first day's fighting at the Battle of Stones River that seems to have been "lost" to historians.

Upon contacting the Monroe County Georgia Historical Society in Forsyth about Fambro, it became apparent his story was unknown even to them. Accordingly, I forwarded the information in hand to Mr. Ralph Bass, a chief officer of the Society, who also writes weekly columns for the "Monroe County Reporter", a weekly newspaper. After reviewing what I provided, Mr. Bass wrote a fine little article on Fambro which almost certainly is the first public acknowledgement ever of Fambro's deed.

I now pass this information on you with hopes it adds another little bit of knowledge about that terrible battle. I ask for nothing from you but do hope his story can somehow be recognized in your presentation of the battle.

Since Fambro's Compiled Service Records are available to you on-line, I am not including them with this letter. The key document in his CSR is of such faint and poor quality that I cannot print a legible copy anyhow. Instead, I have included a transcription of this letter for your reference. A copy of Mr. Bass's article is also attached. Please feel free to contact me direct should you have any questions or comments.

With best regards,

D. Michael Thomas

D. Michael Thomas
96 Indigo Lane
Goose Creek SC 29445
Home Tel: 843-789-3597
Email: Thomdav2@att.net

First, some background To Private Fambro's battlefield exploit to put things in perspective. As a 20 year old Private in {Company E, 2nd Georgia Cavalry} Wharton's Cavalry Brigade, Fambro was involved when Wharton's cavalry was unleashed on the Union rear on 31 December 1862. All accounts state that Wharton's men were victorious in a number of engagements and took horses, mules, beef cattle, commissary supplies and several wagon trains. In attempting to get these prizes back to Confederate lines, the various captures were consolidated into an extremely long procession. Late in the day, a Union cavalry command mounted a vigorous attack on the tail of the mixed caravan and, after initial success, was driven away. In their attack, however, some cannon and prisoners were recovered and it with this aspect that I direct your attention to the following letter from Lt. Colonel F.M. Ison, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Georgia Cavalry to Adjutant & Inspector General Samuel Cooper. I transcribed this letter directly from Fambro's CSR with great difficulty and present it exactly as how I read it complete grammar errors.

"Headquarters 2nd Ga. Cavalry Reg't
Near Beach Grove, May 20th 1863

Gen'l!

There being a vacancy in the Captaincy of Co. "E", 2nd Ga. Cavalry reg't caused by the resignation Captain T.J. Brooks, I have the honor to recommend for promotion to this position Private Jas. F. Fambro of Co. "E". 2nd Ga. Cavalry reg't. He is a man of intelligence, integrity and bravery. He was born in Monroe County and is a citizen of Ga. His daring and courage were noticed on several occasions and particular at the late battle of Murfreesboro.

On the morning of the 31st of Dcbr 1862 while charging a brigade of infantry, his horse was killed from under him and undaunted he marched and killed one of the enemy's cavalry, took his horse, mounted him and having seen two pieces artillery in position and manned he rode up, ordered them to surrender, limber up and drive them out on the pike which was done by the evening but on account of the Waggon trains being in the rear it was impossible for him to bring such out.

Gen'l, most respectfully,
Your able Servant,
F.M. Ison, Lt. Col.
Commanding 2nd Ga. Cav. Reg't"

No source I can find identifies the Union artillery command that was captured, but this letter appears to identify how they were taken and by whom. It is likely there were 15-20 Union POW's with the two cannon and probably a dozen or more horses. With all their tack and accouterments , this was a huge

nerves of steel. I would say he exuded "command presence" for apparently none of his prisoners tested him or his shooting skills by resistance or escape.

Ison's letter resulted in Fambro being promoted from Private to Captain under the Confederacy's "Valor and Skill Act of 1862". Of the 90 enlisted men promoted from the ranks in 1863 under this program, Fambro was the only one who rose to Captain: all others were made 1st or 2nd Lieutenants. An on-line copy of these CSA War department promotions can be found at the following link:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/listofappointmen00conf#page/n3/mode/2up>

Two other things of note regarding Fambro. Lt. Colonel Ison was Fambro's first company commander. Secondly, in Fambro's CSR there is a Union document showing he was captured that same day. However, there is nothing else in his record showing he was sent to a POW facility, exchanged or anything else. It leads me to believe Fambro was captured when the Union cavalry recovered their cannon and prisoners but later escaped.

The enclosed article by Ralph Bass provides all the known biographical data available for this young soldier.

dmt 26 May 2014