

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS
ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

May 13, 1895

Dear Captain Clark:

I have just received your note of May 3 through the Adjutant General's office in Washington, in which you wish to incorporate a cut of myself, with other regimental commanders of the First Brigade, in your forthcoming History of the 125th Ohio. I comply with your request with great pleasure, and enclose herewith an engraving taken just after the muster-out in 1865.

When the war ended I was Lieutenant Colonel, but held the Governor's commission as Colonel, which the War Department refused to recognize. The Wisconsin historian, however, for whom the engraving was made, insisted on the full rank, hence the shoulder straps in the engraving.

To be thus associated for all time with the 125th I appreciate as a great distinction, and I beg to thank you very much for remembering me in such an agreeable manner.

I understand from your correspondence that you purpose giving special prominence in your narrative to the part taken by the regiment and brigade in the battle of Franklin. This is very proper, as it is rarely the case that the influence of a particular command in controlling a great event can be as clearly traced as in behalf of the First Brigade at Franklin; and the decisive character of the battle itself cannot be overestimated, as it transpired at the most critical period of the war.

Briefly stated, the situation was something as follows:

General Sherman was in Georgia, rapidly approaching Savannah, but still without a base; General Grant had no troops to spare from the front of Petersburg and Richmond; in New Orleans and other places in the far south and west we had only a few thousand men. Hood's success at Franklin, therefore, meant Confederate supremacy over Tennessee and Kentucky, with the numerical strength of his army raised probably to at least 100,000 men. With such a force it was possible for him to sweep up to the Ohio River, and thereby oblige General Grant to detach largely from his army for the protection of the West, thus exposing General Sherman in Georgia to a concentrated attack by Lee before he could reach his new base.

In a word, had Hood entered Nashville sword in hand at the head of a victorious army, which would have resulted from defeat of the Union army at Franklin, the civil war in all its subsequent scenes might have been essentially varied.

Battles great for conception or political results, ought to be studied; but those that save should be commemorated and celebrated. We owe admiration to the first; gratitude to the others.

Franklin was essentially a battle that saved, and as such must be classified as second only to Gettysburg in importance during the entire war.

In this transcendent conflict the First Brigade played a part particularly its own. Whatever disputes may have arisen from the battle in other respects, it has never been denied that Opdycke's command restored the broken line at Carter's Hill. In this light I have, therefore, made the forgoing connected and somewhat lengthy statement in order to suggest the expediency of an effort to secure a suitable brigade memorial, to be erected on the field. Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin are interested.

If each state could be induced to appropriate \$1500 for each of its regiments there engaged, the individual efforts of survivors in addition thereto might, perhaps, be sufficient to secure a site and put a monument on a solid foundation. Please reflect upon the matter, and if favorably impressed by the suggestion, consider the possibility of giving practical effect to a movement looking to the end in view.

Very truly yours,

Arthur MacArthur, Jr.