

From Murfreesboro.

(Correspondence of Ohio State Journal.)

CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO, TENN.,  
January 8, 1863.

I think that this, the anniversary of the victory at New Orleans, an appropriate time to dwell with feelings of national pride and joy upon two events that have transpired during the last half century, and which so vitally concerns the history of our beloved country. One of them refers to the expulsion from our soil the haughty Briton, by "Old Hickory" and compatriots, a half century ago. The other one, the defeat of our rebel foes before Murfreesboro and their ejection from the adopted State of the lauded hero who swore, by the "Eternal," that while he lived the "Union must be preserved."

It is with mingled feelings, I repeat, of pride and affection that the sincere lover of his country views that emblem of "purity, truth, justice, and universal freedom," which floated triumphantly over "Bartlett's," Yorktown and New Orleans,—the Flag of Washington and the martyrs of '76, of Jackson, Scott, and heroes of 1812, the Banner of Thirty-four States, (and dead and gone to rest, ever many more) above which history has so long, loved to hover, and around which cluster the hopes and prayers of every true American heart; eye, and of the far off ones across the waters,—the "Flag of our Union," waving in triumph over the hospital city of Murfreesboro, the next day, 1862. The battle has been fought, and Victory perched upon our Banner. At what sacrifice this has been achieved, none but those whose firesides are now absolute, own estimate; for their heart treasures, home's loved ones are for the time being, lost to them for their loved ones now rest in a soldier's honored grave. Dear bereaved ones, do not let the query, "Why has Victory, and not trouble, yet, but the more noble one, if that, insupportable misdeeds has it brought us and ours," buoy you up under this great bereavement and all will yet be well.

On Wednesday morning, near sunrise, our brigade (Seventeenth, commanded by Col.

onel Beatty, 33rd Ohio,) was ordered forward from the place we occupied the morning prior, which was toward the rear of the left water toward to the right. The order being communicated, Gen. Rosecrans, who were assigned, for a short time, a position near a James Cedar thick growth about 100 yds. in width, ordered to the right of our division (3d, Rosecrans's) double quick, and took position on a rising piece of ground amid a dense growth of cedars, and three or four skirmishers, while we laid down and awaited the rebel approach. We did not have to wait long, however, for the skirmishers upon each side soon became engaged; ours, for a time, got the advantage and pressed the rebels sharply for some time, but the enemy, reinforcing their sharpshooters, ours fell back to their former position, while the rebel forces pushed forward regardless of the fire from our men, but kept on moving upon our right flank, while the 22d Ind. poured into them volley after volley. The enemy's ostensible object being to turn our flank, which our commander, perceiving, he took precaution to circumvent by changing front, but still the enemy continued on in the same direction, compelling us to fall back by several movements, until we came to an open field fronting the pike. We remained there but a short time when we were ordered into a new position on the left, facing the enemy's front; in the above named cedar grove, our regiment, (3d Ohio, Lieut. Col. Lawson commanding,) was the only one present of our brigade. We formed in line, threw out skirmishers and lay down, where we kept up a lively fire upon the enemy's skirmishers, who were posted in large numbers behind rocks and trees, harassing us with a galling fire. It was while here that we sustained our greatest loss in killed and wounded. Our company (A) lost H. B. Bennett, killed; Frank W. Mescham, Geo. Cobb, and John Porcella, wounded. The regiment lost five or six killed and a number wounded. We did not remain here long unsupported, as we were against superior numbers, but were ordered to fall back, which we accomplished in tolerably good order, until we came to the open field, where, in the act of forming our regiment in line, another regiment (the name of which I now forget) rushed through our partially shattered column, throwing us into considerable confusion, which, in conjunction with the other disadvantages with which we had to contend, such, for instance, a terrific cross-fire from the enemy, who had succeeded in getting upon both of our flanks with their batteries, giving us shell and grape. Another disadvantage was, for the time being, a lack of field officers. Col. Beatty had his horse shot under him while endeavoring to rally his brigade, which led to us his valuable services for the time being. Lieut. Col. Lawson, commanding the 3d Ohio, while in the woods, had received a ball between the sole of his boot and his foot, benumbing it so much as to prevent him from keeping with the regiment, as he was on foot. Our Major (Wing) and company officers, who did their duty nobly, were all that were left us, through their exertions and the opportune arrival of Gen. Rosecrans and part of his staff, saved us from total rout. We finally rallied around our colors, reformed our broken column, and amidst a terrible fire, we succeeded in reaching cover behind an embankment of the Railroad on the left centre. It was while running the gauntlet of the enemies cross fire that we lost many of our men in killed and wounded. Our Fourth Sergeant Geo. W. Moffrain was killed by a six-pound solid shot striking him in the head, causing instantaneous death. He was a good soldier, and acted heroically all through the engagement. Peace to his gallant spirit—while we, as comrades, tender our heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved friends. Corporals James H. Darden, John Conway, and S. A. Frazier, and privates William Wertz and B. F. Strahl, were wounded. We went into the field with some forty men, and when we arrived under cover we had not much more than half that number; while here the batteries of Loomis and Border Trade, I believe, supported by the Regulars and Pioneer Corps, repulsed the enemy on our right, charging them with the bayonet, creating great havoc among the rebels. Gen. Rosecrans, in making us a little speech afterwards, told us he just got them where he wanted to. We had fallen back a short distance from the railroad and had formed a new line, when Rosecrans rode up to us in his everlasting old black conical wool hat, which looked as if it, like us, could not withstand the outside pressure and had caved in; his old blue overcoat hanging somehow on his shoulders, his face all scratched up by the bushes, with a stump cigar about two inches

Ohio State Journal

January 24, 1863, pg. 2

Sergeant Henry Breidenthal

Co. A, 3rd O.V.I

long, unlighted, between his fingers, and himself generally as cool as a "cucumber." We were drawn up in line and received him with a military salute, accompanied by three rousing cheers for "Rosecrans and victory." Said he, "Soldiers, I thank you—no honor to me, I pay honor to you," and grasping the hand of Col. Beatty, exclaimed, fervently, "Why, Colonel Beatty, how do you do, I thank God I see you here," and turning to us, said, "Boys I am glad to see you all, you have done nobly, and I hope by the blessing of God we will to-day strike this infernal rebellion a crushing blow." He then gave us a very plain little lesson, teaching us how to take advantage of position, &c. Said he, "Did you see that little affair a while ago upon our right? Why it was the easiest thing in the world; we reserved our fire until we could see the buttons on their coats, then let loose upon them, and then we up and at them with the bayonet, and they 'skedaddled.' Why boys, it was just as easy as rolling off a log. That is the way to do it; now am I understood?" Aye, aye, was the lively response, as he rode off, while we gave three cheers for the hero of Rich Mountain, Iuka, Corinth, and of to-day, as he gave us in return his hearty "I thank you, my boys,"—and he passed along the whole line slowly, eliciting the hearty applause of all.

Thus, with the exception of some skirmishing and some changes of positions, closed the 31st of Dec., the last of the dying year—a year pregnant with events more numerous and vital to us as a nation than was ever, or will again, in all probability, be crowded within the short space of another twelve months—1862 being ushered in with the victories of Mill Springs, Forts Henry and Donelson, Island No. 10, and Shiloh, as one-half of the pyramid of victory; and with Antietam, South Mountain, Perryville, and Murfreesboro for the other base; while upon this enduring foundation of glory and triumph is laid the cap stone—as a halo of glory—that glorious triumph over tyranny and oppression, the President's Proclamation of freedom to four millions of human beings, bearing upon their souls the impressed image of the Great Author of universal freedom. And now, while among the embers of the dying year, we gather together the ashes of our deceased comrades, and scoop out a last resting place for all that now remains to us, and dear ones at home, and consign them to a soldier's grave, and drop the tear of sorrow, and carve a remembrance upon a rude, perishable headstone; let us not grieve as those who have no hope, but let us all draw consolation from knowing that upon this monument of enduring greatness and glory, which their disinterested patriotism contributed no little to pile to the heavens—a memorial that will live green in the hearts of a grateful people, when Egypt's Pyramid will be numbered with the things that were—will be inscribed in golden letters of love, admiration and gratitude. "Ye knew your duty and nobly has it been performed—the blessing you have secured us and our children are worthy our sacrifices—sorrow and glory enough for one year. Farewell old dying year." I remain yours in my country's cause,

H. BREIDENTHAL,  
Company A, 3d O. V. Infantry.