

Accounts of 21st Michigan Infantry from the Detroit Free Press January 1863

Sill's Brigade, Sheridan's Division, McCook's Corps

Accounts of 21st Michigan Infantry

Source: Detroit Free Press, January, 1863

Online at: <http://www.21stmichigan.org/history/art.1.htm>

FROM THE TWENTY-FIRST.

The Regiment Engaged Four Successive Days.

Gallantly of the Officers and Men.

THE LOSS OF THE REGIMENT ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY SEVEN.

FULL LIST OF THE KILLED, WOUNDED AND MISSING.

Headquarters Twenty-First Mich., Inf.

Camp at Stone [sic] River, Jan. 7, 1863

The battle of Murfreesboro is now among the actions of the past. After six days of fierce fighting the enemy have evacuated, and again left us in possession of a place we never should have surrendered. The engagement commenced on Monday, and continued until Saturday night after dark. I have no time to [illegible], but that the contest has been hard won. I leave you to determine [illegible] of killed and wounded.

General Johnson's division occupied the right, General Davis' [sic] division came next, and our division (General Sheridan's) had a position near the center.

On Wednesday morning at daybreak an attach [sic] was [illegible] upon Johnson and Davis with overwhelming force, who were driven back, thus leaving our division exposed to a murderous fire from the front and on our right flank. The enemy closed in rapidly and nearly surrounded us, but they were timely checked. Our fighting was for the most part in thick cedar woods. Our regiment was engaged four different times on Wednesday. Our loss was [illegible] in each engagement. It was in command of Lieutenant Colonel McCreary (Colonel Stevens being still in Nashville), who is evidently a fitting man, and among the bravest of the brave. Under his lead Michigan never will be disgraced. [Illegible]

We went into battle with one bullet hole through our colors, which we received at Perrysville, and came out with twenty-six holes in our colors and through our staff.

[illegible] He received a [illegible] wound on the army [sic] in the early part of the contest, but did not leave the field until the battle was over. He [illegible] with the regiment, and doing well, I understand that Colonel McCreary has paid him a handsome compliment [sic] in his report.

Captain Chase, of Company H, also did nobly. Captain Albee, of Company G, was wounded and taken prisoner. They offered to parole him but he refused to take the oath, and finally made his escape.

In a word, [illegible] have done their duty. Will not the Governor [illegible] us replacements to fill up our thinned ranks. Below I give you a list of our
[illegible/remaining article text missing]

Source: Detroit Advertiser and Tribune, January 30, 1863, pg. 1

Correspondence of the Advertiser and Tribune.

Camp on Stone [sic] River, Tenn., Jan 19.

We are once more in camp and have again entered upon the regular routine of camp duties. We are recovering somewhat from the effects of the hardships and exposure of a week upon the battle-field; and saving our terrible thinned ranks, things are beginning to assume their usual appearance. We have lost many a noble generous hearted fellow from our midst. Their loss can never be repaired. At the camp and bivouac fires their cheerful voices will be heard no more. But they fell like brave men, and died as the true soldier loves to die, on the bloody field amid the crash of battle.

THE TWENTY-FIRST IN THE LATE BATTLE.

The 21st comes out of this fight covered with blood, and not altogether without honor. The following extract from the report of our brigade commander speaks for itself: "The enemy have turned our right, was again advancing in force, when I moved to the rear with the 24th Wisconsin and 88th Illinois, across the road where I formed, on the left of the 88th Indiana, leaving the 21st Michigan to support Capt. Hescok's battery. They were here assailed by great numbers of the enemy, but manfully held their ground until the battery was removed, when they fell back in good order, losing heavily in killed and wounded." (See report of Lieut. Col McCreery.)

OFFICERS COMMENDED.

In speaking of the officers of his brigade, he mentions Lieut. Col. McCreery and Adjutant Wells, of the 21st, in the highest terms of praise, saying: "They behaved with great coolness and presence of mind, being ever ready to obey my commands."

IN CLOSE QUARTERS.

And here let me add, on falling back with the battery, we formed again in a thick cedar wood, where portions of Sheridan's and Negley's divisions were engaged in the most desperate and determined contest, being almost entirely surrounded by an overwhelming number of the enemy. Here we experienced the horrors of war, in all its terrific magnificence and splendor. Heaven and earth seemed to quake and tremble under the terrible discharges of artillery; the air seemed literally frightfully alive with hissing bullets and screaming shells. Huge trees are cut off by solid shot, and come crashing to the ground; the limbs are torn from the cedars by the bursting shells, and as you move along, the earth is ploughed at your feet and your clothes are rent and torn as if by some angry spirit; rider less horses, with flowing manes and distended nostrils, dash madly through the wood; men are dropping about you on every side; you see their ghastly wounds, and their faces grow pale in death; you hear their dying groans despite the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry.

DEATHS SINCE THE BATTLE.

Several of the poor fellows, at first reported wounded, have since died, and many more must go.

CALL ON THE SANITARY COMMISSION.

By the way, have we a Sanitary Commission in Michigan? And if so, could not something be done to alleviate the sufferings of our hundreds of wounded in hospitals: Illinois, Wisconsin and other States have their agents here, looking after the wounded, distributing delicacies, etc., but not a Michigan man have we seen since the battle.

THE SURGEON.

Dr. John Avery is doing good service in the regiment. He is an excellent surgeon; very successful in the treatment of all camp diseases; kind-hearted and patient, he has won the esteem and love of all. He has also executive ability; everything connected with the hospital is kept snug and neat, and the sick are made comfortable. Col. McCreery has succeeded in getting an officer detailed to look after our sick and convalescents in Kentucky, and to hurry the latter forward to the regiment as fast as possible.

RECRUITING SERVICE.

Capt. Harry C. Albee, of Grand Haven, has been sent home on recruiting service. Lieut. John Morton, of Ionia, I think will be put on the same service. We feel anxious to see late Michigan papers; Dec 20th is the latest date which has reached us.

Yours truly, M. B.