

Fort Wayne Weekly Times Newspaper Article
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, WEDNESDAY MORNING

CORRESPONDENCE,

CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO, TENN. January 9, 1863.

EDS. FT. WAYNE TIMES – Messrs [sic]: For the benefit of the friends of the 2d Brigade, I hastily drop a word in regard to the advance upon and recent battle at Murfreesboro, Tenn.

On the morning of the 26th of December, orders were received to march. The troops to move to the front and the teams to the rear, and in a few moments the line was formed and the march commenced, some down the Franklin, some down the Murfreesboro and some down the Nolinsville [sic] pikes. General Jeff C. Davis, of McCook's corps, led the advance, Gen. Sheridan, the centre [sic], and Gen. Johnson, the rear. Of our Division, the 1st brigade, Gen. Willick [sic] led the advance, 3d Brigade, the centre [sic], and the 2d Brigade, Gen. E.A. Kirk, the rear. The 80th Indiana led the advance of the 2d brigade, the 34th Illinois next, 29th Indiana next, Battery "3", 1st Ohio Vol. Art., Captain Edgerton, next, 77th Pennsylvania and 79th Illinois following in rear of the battery.

In this order we marched one and a half miles beyond Nollinsville [sic] where we rested for the night. The following morning Gen. Johnson led the advance, Gen. Davis the centre [sic] and Gen. Sheridan the rear of the corps. Of the Division, Gen. Kirk, the advance, Gen. Willich, the centre [sic], and Col. Baldwin, the rear. The 34th Illinois led the advance of the brigade, and so on in regular order, the 30th Indiana following to the rear of the brigade. We had scarcely gone one mile when the report of small arms broke upon the ear with rapid acelleration [sic]. Then all was life and excitement, The advance pushing hastily forward soon gained the summit of a ridge, though, in the meantime were exposed to a heavy fire of grape and shell, from a masked battery of the enemy, but sustained no very serious damage. Then the regiments in the rear formed into line and moved forward in support of the pickets, who, by this time had driven the enemy to the top of another ridge, divided by a narrow valley from the rebel battery. Here, a halt was ordered, and Capt. Edgerton's battery opened fire upon that of the enemy, causing it to haul off at "double quick." It had not yet become light enough to render a speedy pursuit practicable, there being a very dense fog, consequently our forces were obliged to remain still until the misty curtain had partially flown. When, again out troops moved forward, but, saw nothing more of the Confederates until they had reached the summit of a large hill, over looking the town of "Triune," in which were posted large bodies of the enemy's cavalry. Immediately our battery opened fire upon them, who, upon the approach of a few shells beat a hurried retreat towards their artillery, who, upon our advance opened a terrific fire of grape and shell. Their cavalry, in the meantime, hurriedly quickly to a large hill on our left and formed in line under cover of a large body of timber in the rear of the hill, dismounted and commenced paying their compliments to our skirmishers. Soon, however, they were renumerated with increased velocity and

telling effect. Our skirmishers were then ordered to charge their battery, but, owing to the depth of the mud having to pass through a corn field and the heft of their bundles, which were soaking wet, the battery was withdrawn before our boys could reach it.

Every advantage was taken by the enemy to shell our forces as we closely pressed their rear. Shells burst over head and in the ranks. Our artillery replied at every convenience which made the enemy resume his rearward move. On we marched in this manner until the sombre [sic] clouds of evening bade us await the morning light.

The 30th Indiana were now dispatched as sentinels and the remainder of the Brigade prepared their frugal meal and stretched them then were ordered to the right, to take our place in battle line. We now rested on the extreme right – the post of honor – and bivouacked for the night in a beautiful cedar grove, within a half mile of 30,000 ragged dupes. From the numerous picket fires of the enemy it was learned that he was massing his forces in our front, consequently prompt measures were taken to avoid a surprise. Our picket line was strengthened, and instructions given for them to act as skirmishers, should the enemy appear, after which, our troops, though within so short a distance of the wily foe, stretched their wearied forms to rest beneath the canopy of heaven. Everything was still, save the moaning of the forest winds through the branches of the distant trees, which breathed a low and plaintive wail; and seemed proaching [sic] [illegible].

The sentinels stood motionless, peering with anxious eyes into the curtain of light, watching the many manoeuvres [sic] of the mighty force which were now taking position in front with a view of attacking our small force.

All passed smoothly and quietly, until about 3 a.m. when a shot from one of the sentries on our right brought our whole force into line, in which position they remained an hour, and then withdrew to prepare their morning meal. While the sombre [sic] clouds were vanishing a sharp fire broke out on our right, sweeping down our line like a hurricane. Our reserve now snatched their guns and again formed into line, meantime Gen. Kirk and others moved up to the line to ascertain the meaning of this sharp clatter, and upon looking a few rods beyond our lie saw columns by battalions, six battalions deep, rushing with hurried steps on our line, here we lay, no support to fall back on.

Gen. Johnson was no where to be found, consequently our little force were obliged to do as best they could. They bravely bared their bosoms to the storm of lead, which swept through the ranks like hail, carrying to earth its hundreds; but our men stood like marble walls, and never gave an inch until they were within almost grasping distance; - then we fell back like soldiers, slowly and steadily, firing at every opportunity, until we had gone a half a mile to the rear, where we formed a line under cover of a fence, behind a corn field. Here we lay and fired until the rebels reached the opposite side of the fence, when it was discovered that the last round had been fired whereupon we were again ordered back, which was executed in "double quick" time, having to retreat through an open field, exposed all the time to a galling cross fire from the pursuing foe.

Our brigade lost over 200 men before getting out of range of their infantry. On, and on, rushed the haughty foe; keeping up in his advance an incessant fire, the balls filling the air with “whizzing music. Our troops now bore in direction of a section of a section [sic] of Simonson’s battery, which was posted on a slight elevation a short distance off, and which opened a most terrible fire upon their advancing lines, sending them reeling to the ground. Here we received reinforcements who poured volley after volley into the enemy’s ranks. Now they faltered, reeled and gave way; our boys caught the sight, and like a vivid flash, hope inspired their hearts, and they now pursued the flying foe, sending volley after volley, and shout upon shout from their ranks.

Now the scene had changed, and victory perched upon the banner of the free. At this moment our centre [sic] made desperate strike reeling and leveling the foe, capturing many prisoners; and ‘twas now that our cavalry (4th Regulars) completely annihilated the Texan bravos. Our entire line now pushed onward, buying the victory with the life blood of brave men. The heroes who had quietly rested the previous night on the ground they now passed over, found nearly half their number quietly reclining their mangled forms on the icy bosom of death – a ghastly field of dead. Here lay the sacrifice for the victory we had achieved; the life blood of fathers, brothers and sons swallowed by the hungry earth; they were the victims of rebel fury. In the 2d brigade the losses are in killed, wounded and missing 847, which is nearly half their number. We have won a brilliant victory, but paid a dear price for it. Sadness and sorrow must inevitably visit the hearthstone of almost every Northern fireside; a sister has lost a brother, a father a son, and alas, a wife a husband, - all must feel the shock, though separated from the deafening roar of battle.

The dead are all buried [sic], and the wounded all tenderly cared for by their soldier comrades; but we will weep with you for the brave departed, and consign them to the God that noteth [sic] even the fall of a sparrow.

W.A.O.