

GILBERT M. PETTYS
Corporal, 101st Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Co. H

Prepared for the first reunion of descendants of Union and Confederate soldiers, sponsored by the Friends of Stones River National Battlefield, December, 2002, by Richard R. Pettys, Sr. (Gilbert's first cousin - twice removed. See page 6 for contact information.)

In the summer of 1862, 23-year-old Gilbert M. Pettys left his home in northern Ohio, kissed his wife and baby daughters goodbye and enlisted for three years _ or the duration of the war _ in the 101st Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment, where he was made a corporal in Company H. The regiment was composed largely of his friends and neighbors from Ohio's Seneca County. It remained on active duty throughout the war, but Gilbert did not live long enough to see most of the engagements. Two months after the Battle of Stones River, he died of what almost certainly was pneumonia and is buried at Stones River National Cemetery in Section O, Grave No. 5854.

My interest in Gilbert was kindled two years ago when I decided to print a new edition of the family genealogy which my father first published in the 1950s. Born in the South and, like most Southerners, addicted to Civil War history, I was intrigued to find a relative who wore the blue. But the details in my father's book were sketchy and told me only that Gilbert died March 29, 1863 at a place called "Murphies Ford, Tenn.," which I knew must have been Murfreesboro. I have since uncovered a few more details about Gilbert, though not as many as I might wish, and I have had the opportunity to visit his final resting place.

I expect Gilbert was pretty typical of the enlisted men on both sides - young, not particularly well-traveled, pretty naive about the realities of war and, at the outset, filled with patriotic fervor and a desire to embark on a grand adventure.

The regiment was mustered into service at Monroeville, Ohio. Here is how that day was described by L.W. Day in his book, *Story of the One Hundred and First Ohio Infantry, A Memorial Volume* (Cleveland, 1894, the W.M. Bayne Printing Co.)

The thirtieth of August, 1862, dawned bright and beautiful, glorious in all that goes to make a perfect day. From early dawn our camp had been astir, for on that day we were to lay aside - for a time at least, and many of us forever - the garb of civil life, and, donning the blue, were to become the sworn and active defenders of the old Flag and the Nation which it represented. It was a day and an occasion long to be remembered - an epoch in the lives of us all.

The call of the Government in the hour of National distress and danger for strong arms and willing hearts had been sounded, and the response of the loyal North had been so prompt and generous as to be almost *en masse*. From city, town and country, strong-limbed, able-bodied, determined men left home and kindred and business and gave themselves to the service of the Nation in such great numbers as to make it almost impossible to equip them. A thousand such men, enthusiastic and true, were assembled at Monroeville under the old flag, ready to follow wherever

it might lead, and to carry it wherever duty and loyalty might require. An observer scanning our ranks as we stood in line would readily have seen that our men came from farm and workshop, office and school, store and factory.

With restraint and a touch of humor, Day paints this picture of the regiment in its formative stages:

The scenes in and about camp from day to day, as the various companies arrived, almost beggar description. Many of the men had not been much from home, and to say they were homesick is to state the fact very mildly. Others, throwing off the restraints of home, acted more like wild colts than anything else. A very large majority were, however, steady, earnest men, as reliable in camp as out of it. Our surroundings were utterly at variance with any experience we had ever had before, and it took time to get our bearings.

Captain Jones of the Regular Army was Commandant of the Post until the Regiment was mustered in, and did all in his power to meet the demands made upon him by the men and officers. True, he was a trifle gruff sometimes, but that was only amusing for we considered ourselves his equal. We learned better a little later on. None of us, except a few who had "seen service," had any correct idea of what we ought to expect, or what others had a right to expect of us. We wanted everything, wanted it right away, and of the best quality, and plenty of it. The cooking bothered us; but to simplify matters, each Company divided itself up into "messes" of ten or more men each, endeavoring to include in each "mess" someone capable of running the kitchen department. There were a few notable successes, but there were many gloomy failures.

I have no photographs, letters written home or diaries which Gilbert might have kept, so I must rely on the government for the few personal details about him that I have. A document exchanged between the War Department and the Pension Office describes Gilbert as 5-foot-11 with a dark complexion, dark hair and blue eyes, and lists his civilian occupation as a mechanic.

Whether he knew it or not, his bloodline was from New England and included more than a few ancestors who were Quakers and might have been distressed that he chose to bear arms. His grandfather, Job Pettys, was born in Massachusetts, where most of his Pettys (often spelled Petty) ancestors had lived since at least 1662. His grandmother, Hannah Kirby, traced her heritage to the Kirby and Howland families of New England, many of them Quakers. His grandmother's various lines also connected directly to six Mayflower passengers.

By the time Gilbert was born 16 June 1839, the family had moved west to Republic, Seneca County, Ohio. He was 20 when he married Sarah Thompson on 10 Nov. 1859, and two little girls followed: Emma M. Pettys, born July 10, 1860, and Clemmie R. Pettys, born March 28, 1862, just five months before he marched off to a war from which he did not return.

The 101st broke camp on Sept. 4, 1862 and was moved by train to Cincinnati, where it arrived the next day. The regiment crossed the Ohio on a pontoon bridge "and found ourselves in Dixie shortly before noon," Day wrote. "We gave a loud, long, defiant shout as we reached the Southern shore, and at once proceeded to 'invade' the sacred soil of Kentucky for the distance of about four miles in a southwesterly direction, going into camp about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, tired and dirty."

Helping to pursue Bragg in Kentucky, the unit participated in the battle of Perryville Oct. 8, then

marched to Nashville, where it was stationed until joining the advance on Murfreesboro Dec. 26.

The 101st Ohio was under the command of Col. Leander Stem. It was assigned to the Second Brigade (Col. William P. Carlin commanding) of the First Division (Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis) of Maj. Gen. Alexander McD. McCook's Right Wing of the Army of the Cumberland.

During the march to Murfreesboro, McCook mentioned the regiment in the following action report, as found in the Official Records (*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Government Printing Office, 1880, Series I, Volume XX/1 (S #29):

HEADQUARTERS RIGHT WING
One Mile in advance of Nolensville, December 27, 1862

Colonel GARESCHE: [Rosecrans' chief of staff]

COLONEL: I am here with my wing in camp. There is very strong ground in front of my main camp. I have all the crests heavily defended. The enemy resisted my advance all day with cavalry and artillery. My casualties are very few. The **One hundred and first Ohio** charged one battery, and captured one gun and caisson, with teams. The men in glorious spirits, and only want a chance. Negley is here with his division. General Thomas sent a courier here; states that he is somewhere on the Wilson pike. Hardee had a dance given him at Triune last night.

A. McD. McCOOK
Major-general

According to the War Department ¹, Gilbert was recorded as "present" with his regiment for the period encompassing the Stone's River campaign, so we can assume he came through the carnage unscathed. But just a few weeks after the battle, his unit was marched to Franklin, Tenn., and back to Murfreesboro in cold, stormy weather, and Gilbert became ill, according to statements filed by two of his fellow soldiers in connection with his widow's subsequent pension claim.

Gilbert died 29 March 1863 at a field hospital in Murfreesboro, Tenn., of what almost certainly was pneumonia caused by exposure, although the surgeon, one J.J. Finley, reported the cause of death as consumption.² That seems questionable since two of his comrades stated that he was in good health prior to the march, and consumption - which we know as tuberculosis - usually is a prolonged disease of many years' duration.

Recovering from a wound he received at Chickamauga months later, Pvt. George W. Sparks gave a deposition for Gilbert's widow in which he described the circumstances of Gilbert's death. He told

Justice of the Peace J.W. Mills:

" ... Pettys enjoyed good health the most of the time while in service until about the first of February 1863 at which time the Regiment marched from Murfreesborough to Franklin and back during verry cold & stormy weather when said Pettys took cold was taken sick on our march back. Had a hard cough with inflammation or affliction of the lungs from the time he was taken sick about the middle of February 1863 and remained sick until he died about the last of March 1863. He was with us in camp until a few days before he died when he was removed to the general field hospital near Murfreesborough, Tennessee, where he died from effects of sickness brought on by taking cold and fatigue on said march to Franklin and back to Murfreesborough. "

Another of Gilbert's comrades, G.H. Richey, told the same justice of the peace that:

"he was well acquainted with Corporal Gilbert M. Pettys who enlisted and was mustered into service at the same time that the deponant was, and that they were together and messed together from the time of their enlistment until the death of said Gilbert M. Pettys, except six or seven days that said Pettys was in the field Hospital, and that the deponant took care of said Pettys in his last Sickness and took him to the Hospital six or seven days before his death. Went to the hospital, got his clothes and effects the day after he was buried, when he talked with the Physician in charge of the Hospital relative to his Sickness and death.

Deponent further says that Corporal Gilbert M. Pettys died at the General field Hospital near Murfreesborough, Tennessee, on or about the last day of March 1863 with Quick (?) Consumption, or affliction of the lungs, produced by overexertion and exposure at the Battle of Murfreesborough on the last day of Dec. 1862 and first 2 days of January 1863 and a march of 80 or 100 miles from Murfreesborough, Tennessee to Franklin, Tennessee and back again during very cold and stormy weather in the month of February 1863.

All of which deponent knows from his own observation and the assersions of the Physicians in Charge of the Hospital where Said Pettys died."

Aside from listing Gilbert on the regimental roster, Day's book doesn't mention him. But it does include some details about the march which appears to have cost him his life. The following is an excerpt from Chapter 10, titled "In Camp at Murfreesboro," from pages 117-121:

Our Division Commander, Gen. Jeff. C. Davis, soon tired of the routine of camp life and longed to roam around the country in search of an enemy. We fully sympathized with him in the matter of camp routine, but not in the roaming. In the latter part of January the Confederate cavalry under Wheeler occupied Triune and Franklin. This made our Division General wild. He asked and received permission to take his command out that way to act in conjunction with our cavalry and a small force to be sent down from Nashville for the capture of this impertinent rebel force.

On the evening of the 29th of January we received orders to march at 5 o'clock next morning. Each man was to take three days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition with him. Of course it began to rain before we started, and when, just at daylight next morning, we filed out of camp, it fairly poured. It was one of those cold, drizzling, disagreeable, discouraging, unsatisfactory mornings so common to this climate and section. We soon passed the picket station, said good-bye to the

videttes, and bore off toward Versailles, marching rapidly through the slippery mud until near nightfall, when we went into camp near the last mentioned place. It was a dreary, homesick night. We were tired, wet, muddy and ill-natured, but fires were permitted and we were soon in better humor. Two Brigades of cavalry under Colonel Minty accompanied us on the expedition. At this point the two forces were to separate -- the cavalry going almost directly south from Versailles, some six miles to gain the rear of the rebel force at Triune, while we (Davis' Division) were to advance directly upon the latter place. It was thought that Wheeler would immediately retreat when he discovered the strength of the infantry force sent against him. Moreover, while our two forces were executing these movements, General Steedman, who had advanced from Nashville with a neat little force, was to take position at Nolensville, a few miles north of Triune. Thus hemmed in on three sides, Wheeler had but two alternatives -- he must either surrender, or continue his march to the west and north. He was not a man given to much surrendering, consequently he continued his march. Our command arrived at Eagleville on the evening of February 1st, and went into camp for the night. Colonel Minty in the meantime had captured a rebel regiment of 350 men near Unionville, but the grand prize had eluded us. Early next morning we resumed our march at a very rapid rate toward the northwest, finally bringing up at Franklin. But Wheeler had the start of us and soon appeared before Fort Donelson. Failing in the capture of this place and being hotly pursued, he returned, bearing far to the west to avoid General Davis, who had received a large cavalry reinforcement. It had been a fruitless though exciting raid for the rebel.

An Amusing incident occurred at Versailles the first evening out. General Davis, with a portion of his staff, was riding about rather rashly, as was his custom, and finally got outside our lines before our pickets were fairly established. He was halted, of course, when he attempted to come in.

"Who comes there?" said the sentinel.

"Federals," replied Davis. But the soldier on duty understood the answer to be "Confederates," and the night being very dark and rainy, he fired, as did one or two guards with him. Explanations were soon made and General Davis was admitted, but he was "hot." He was so angry he nearly had a fit. He couldn't get over it. He always carried with him a large and carefully selected vocabulary of "swear words," but the list was not sufficient for this occasion.

Although we were in the midst of a stirring campaign, nothing of especial interest occurred to break the monotony of the dreary tramp. We crossed the Harpeth river at Franklin, marched up through the town and went into camp just south of the village, on the very ground on which the great battle of Franklin was fought a year and a half later.

We settled down as though we were to stay awhile. It turned very cold and snowed and "blowed" furiously. This seemed greatly to satisfy many of the citizens, who were Sesech through and through.

"You'ns are going to freeze if you stay here," with a sardonic smile which revealed the actual state of mind within and which we well understood. "You'ns 'll freeze dead, sure."

"Not a bit of it. We have this kind of weather the year round at home. But if it should get cold, we'll call on you fellows for blankets, or maybe beds," said some of our boys. But the citizens thought perhaps it would not get much colder.

We had no shelter with us except our pup tents, which, in a storm, were little better than nothing. In pleasant, or even moderate weather they were very good. Especially did we find them excellent on picket duty. They would at least keep the dew off, and would indicate "headquarters." In a storm a pup tent stood no show.

We remained at Franklin, picketing and scouting, until February 12th, when we returned to our old quarters at Murfreesboro'. While at Franklin the boys raided several old tobacco dry-houses and returned well laden with great burdens of half-dried leaves. These were carefully concealed under blouses and overcoats, fearing the wrath of the Division Commander, but still more the confiscation of their property."

Life was hard for Gilbert's widow, Sarah Thompson Pettys, who was born at Painted Post, Stueben County, N.Y. Feb. 7, 1842. A wife at 17, a mother at 18, a widow at 21, Sarah married and lost two more husbands before her own death on Oct. 16, 1930. The pension record is full of documents showing she battled government bureaucrats for many years, first to show her husband's death was service-connected rather than the result of a pre-existing disease and then to get her widow's benefits reinstated following the deaths of her subsequent husbands.

Because I have no further details about Gilbert and his life, I have relied heavily on Day's book about the 101st for insight into what Gilbert must have experienced as a young Ohio boy far away from home for probably the first time in his life, fighting for his country. Day's book doesn't seem to be readily available anymore. At least I couldn't find it. Fortunately, my wife obtained a copy for me last Christmas. The pages which follow contain the complete text of Day's chapter on the Stones River engagement. Following that is the official report from Col. William P. Carlin, commander of the Second Brigade of which Gilbert's unit was a part.

Contact information for Richard R. Pettys, Sr.
Address: 1684 N. Rock Springs Rd., Atlanta, Ga., 30324
Telephone: (404) 874 0585
E-mail: rpettys@bellsouth.net
My 101st Regiment Web Page: <http://bellsouthpwp.net/r/p/rpettys/101st.html>

Genealogical information about Gilbert can be found at:
<http://bellsouthpwp.net/r/p/rpettys/genealogy.html>

Footnotes

1 Inter-agency memo between the War Department and the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, dated Jun 19, 1908. Written on the document by hand: "Rolls Oct 31/62 to Feby 28/63 show him present."

2 Document on letterhead of Surgeon General's Office, Record and Pension Bureau, dated May 12, 1864, which is at odds with an earlier document from the Adjutant General's Office, dated Nov. 24, 1863, which declares "cause of death not stated."

Day, L.W., *Story of the One Hundred and First Ohio Infantry, A Memorial Volume*
Cleveland, 1894, the W.M. Bayne Printing Co.

Chapter IX Battle of Stone's River

If, leaving our biscuit-making for a moment, we could have looked over into the Confederate camp in front of Murfreesboro', we should have been well satisfied that Bragg intended to fight. All that Sunday (Dec. 28th) he was busy establishing and strengthening his lines, and preparing for our coming. His troops had been called in from Bradyville, Readyville, Shelbyville, and Eagleville _ his whole army was going into position.

Early on the morning of the 29th, we took up our line of march toward our left, moving by way of the Bole-Jack road. We knew immediately that we were headed for Murfreesboro' - Speculation ran high among the boys as to whether Bragg would wait for us. On the whole we rather thought he would. The recent rains had rendered this road almost impassable in some places, and many a time we were obliged to put our shoulders to the wheel and help the artillery out of the mud. At length, after a toilsome day's march we went into camp quite late. Our advance had met with considerable resistance, especially for an hour or two before dark. The possession of the bridge over Overall's Creek had cost a severe struggle, but it remained with us. We went into camp Monday night between Overall's Creek and the rebel line of battle, Woodruff's brigade guarding the bridge. Johnson's Division was on the right. We had marched across the fields in which our cavalry had assailed and defeated the Confederate cavalry, and rumors of the conflict were confirmed by the generally demolished condition of things. All were agreed by this time that Bragg was going to fight.

About the first thing we did after going into camp, was to "put our houses in order." Many of us went through our knapsacks and removed letters and mementos which we would not wish to have fall into rebel hands, for who could tell what the next day might bring forth. Tired and hungry, we lay down without shelter and waited for the morning.

Reveille did not sound on the morning of the 30th. At three o'clock we were quietly wakened and immediately formed into line. Here we stood in almost dead silence until daylight. We were then allowed very small fires carefully concealed, with which to prepare breakfast. This was soon over, and in a short time we were ordered forward. With the early dawn came the occasional crack of musketry, as pickets exchanged compliments, and now and then the heavy boom of cannon off to our left. We expected trouble the moment we attempted to advance. In front of us was a large open field bordered on the east and south by very dense woods. The trees were large and very close together, admirably adapted for purposes of defense. Before advancing into these woods, a strong skirmish line selected from the 15th Wisconsin, under command of Colonel McKee of that regiment, was sent forward to clear the way. We followed at a proper distance. This skirmish line had hot work of it, before we had gone far. The rebels contested every inch of ground, and fell back only when compelled to do so. It was very evident that we were nearing the position selected by Bragg for his final stand. So exceedingly severe was this skirmish in the woods, that we were ordered to pile our

knapsacks, reserving only our overcoats which we wore, and blankets. We never saw nor heard of our knapsacks again. They fell into the hands of the rebels the next morning. Our skirmish line was relieved soon after noon by a fresh detail from the 21st Illinois, under command of Lieutenant Colonel McMackin. As we advanced the resistance increased. Many wounded were carried to the rear borne on stretchers or supported on the arms of comrades. A riderless white horse dripping with blood, came rushing wildly back from the front, and rumors of the most desperate fighting in Sheridan's front reached us constantly. But in the face of it all we steadily advanced. The character of the woods in our front prevented the use of artillery until we had driven the enemy some distance. Along the pike, and on Sheridan's front, cannon were freely used. As we advanced we gradually came into a dense cedar thicket, in which the defending party had all the advantage. Peering through this underbrush, he could generally get the first sight of his opponent. Many an encounter amounting to a hand to hand struggle for life took place in these bushes, the history of which will never be written. The result depended largely on nerve and dexterity after discovery. Such warfare seemed almost like murder. But finally we had them out of the woods and forced them back far enough to reveal their line of battle. In doing this we had come into the vicinity of the Widow Smith's house, near the Franklin or Triune Road. The road near the house runs through a cut and is otherwise protected by a ridge or bank. Back of this bank and in the cut, a force of rebels had been secreted. When we reached the opening in front of the Smith house these rascals gave us a volley which, for a moment, staggered the 21st Illinois, which received the most of it. As soon as the rebels had been forced out of the thickets, our Second Minnesota battery galloped into position and began to drum the main Confederate line. A rebel battery well posted near the Smith house replied with great vigor, and fearing our artillery might be charged, our Regiment was pushed close up to our battery as support. At Perryville and Knob Gap, the shells went over our heads; here they came down alarmingly close. We hugged the earth upon which we were lying, and made ourselves as small as possible. Brave Colonel Stem stood his ground, nor flinched. Dear, noble man, he was to fall next morning. At dark we fell back a hundred feet and took our place in the line of battle which was soon established. It fell to the lot of Company E, Captain Parcher, to picket in front of our Regiment that night. The two armies _ their battle lines _ were less than fifteen hundred feet apart. It was a very delicate matter to establish and post the pickets, but by the exercise of great care and by going "on all fours" part of the way, we were finally in proper shape. By mutual, though tacit consent, there was no firing during the night.

All night long we could hear the movement of troops and artillery to our right. So serious did this seem to us that we several times sent word to Regimental headquarters calling attention to the fact. Colonel Stem forwarded the report to Brigade, Division and Corps headquarters, but nothing was done about it. Similar reports were sent from other parts of the picket line, but to no effect. To this day it seems strange that no attention was given this matter. The very existence of the army was jeopardized by the failure to do so.

Rosecrans announced his plan of battle for the next day to his Corps commanders who met him about 11 o'clock on the night of the 30th. McCook was to hold the enemy in check, and if necessary, he was to fall slowly back. With our Left, Crittenden was to attack the rebel Right, drive it back from the river, and press them into and through Murfreesboro'. As soon as Crittenden was well started, our

Center, under Thomas, was to advance stoutly, and aid in the rout of the enemy. They were to be swung around and cornered between McCook and Overall's Creek. This move was to commence sharply at 7 o'clock. McCook was especially cautioned to look to his lines, as he was depended on to hold the rebel Left, while Crittenden and the rest rolled their Right back to disaster.

The day's developments had convinced the rebel Commander that he could crush our Right and roll it back in disaster cornering our army between Stone's River and Overall's Creek. This plan was announced to Bragg's Corps commanders about the same hour that Rosecrans announced his. It will be seen that his plan was the exact counter-part of Rosecrans'. But Bragg ordered the assault to be made at daylight. He thus got the start and viciously held it all day. Rosecrans, in order to induce Bragg to weaken his force in front of our Left, ordered McCook to build fires far to our Right, to give the impression that our lines extended further in that direction than they really did. Bragg, in order to have troops in readiness at daylight, to crush our Right sent a large force in that direction, whether fooled by our fires or not, does not appear.

These meetings broke up _ the Corps commanders on each side went to their respective headquarters, communicated with their Division commanders, and at daylight, instead of 7 o'clock, the ball was opened by Bragg and not by Rosecrans, though at the appointed hour Crittended advanced, cleared his front, and was carrying everything before him toward Murfreesboro'. Depending on McCook to hold our Right, Rosecrans saw his plan working like a charm. Our Center was firm, but the sound of heavy fighting far to our right disturbed the Commander-in-Chief. There was too much of it. The roar of Artillery seemed to be growing further to the westward and nearer. Soon a messenger brought the news of the crushing of our Right. Our victorious Left had to be recalled, and dispositions instantly made to stem the tide of defeat.

On the Right, matters had indeed taken a most serious turn. The tacit armistice between our pickets and the rebels in our immediate front, was dissolved with the first rays of the morning. Each man took to his tree or his log and warily "looked out" both for himself and his antagonist. The firing was brisk as soon as we could see. The early and vigorous advance of the rebel line made it necessary to recall our picket line _ indeed we were unceremoniously driven in, a number of our boys being badly wounded before we reached our place in the line of battle, a few hundred feet back of us. Although the rebel line did not at once assail us _ they were awaiting further developments on our right _ their sharpshooters and a heavy skirmish line poured a destructive fire into us. Colonel Stem called for volunteers to silence them. Several arose (we were lying flat on the ground), one of whom, Adam Sherer, was shot and instantly killed, and a number of others were more or less seriously wounded. At the same instant, the rebel main line advanced and opened on us at short range. Their fire was terrible, but ours must have been more more so, for we repulsed them in fine shape. But many of our boys were down.

In the few minutes' lull that followed, we could hear all too distinctly the roar of the fight on our right. Knowing that large masses of troops and artillery had been sent in that direction by the enemy during the night, we feared the ominous sounds that rolled up through the woods from that part of the field.

But the foe in our front was upon us again like demons _ and again we sent them back after a half hour's contest. The few minutes' lull that ensued revealed to us the fact that the fighting far to our right was still further to the rear. We realized that Johnson was giving way. The heavy roll of cannon on Crittenden's front came to us, also, from the extreme left of our army.

For some reason we were moved a short distance to our left, not many rods, however. Our new position brought the line of our Regiment across a great flat rock, as level as a floor almost, and flush with the surface of the ground. There were loose rocks also lying around. Before we had fully reached our new position, the rebel lines again advanced, but were rather more respectful _ they did not come so close. We opened up a galling and to all appearances a very discouraging fire upon them. The affair was exceedingly hot, the firing being almost continuous for what seemed to be a long time.

It was during this terrible assault that Colonel Stem fell at the head of his Regiment, mortally wounded. Brave, unflinching, cool, and determined, his was an example of devotion and daring worthy the emulation of the bravest of the brave. A heroic effort was made to bear him from the field, but he was too badly wounded, and the almost unheard of fierceness of the assault made this impossible.

In one of the few lulls, the roaring of the battle close at hand on our left, under Sheridan, inspired us. Some of us listened for the sounds on the right, but there was an ominous silence in that direction at that moment. The time for such reflections and observations was but momentary, for again the conflict was on in our own front. We held our ground, not yielding one inch until we were assailed on our right flank, and until we were fired upon from the rear. It would be madness to remain longer, and the order was given to fall back. It was during this fierce struggle that Lieutenant Colonel Wooster fell wounded unto death. He was borne some distance to the rear, but the flank movement of the enemy made it impossible to take him far. "Put me down, boys, and rally to the support of the flag," said he. Circumstances which we were powerless to control, made this necessary, and he, too, fell into the hands of the enemy. Comrade Lepper of Company I, who was also wounded, was captured with him, and remained with him until he died.

The history of the disaster to our extreme Right is known to all. With the routing of Johnson, Davis' right was exposed. Post's Brigade, forming the right of Davis' line, fought stubbornly but was compelled to give way. This exposed Carlin's right, and enabled the rebels to fire upon us almost from the rear. We had all we could take care of directly in front of us, and we would have held that line until now _ but assailed in front, flank and rear, we did well to fall back when we died. Woodruff at once followed. All this endangered Sheridan's right, and soon made it necessary from him to readjust his line, throwing his right Brigade considerably back, and facing it more to the south. He was soon compelled to readjust his whole line, pivoting it on his left.

Thus far we had been fighting in the woods. Back of us an eighth of a mile was an open cotton field, extending westerly and northerly to woods that bordered it on these two sides. In the southern edge of this field, just back of a fence which separated it from the woods, we formed our second line. It proved, however, to be as untenable as our former position, and for the same reason. The

Confederates were squarely on our flank, and were protected by the fence along the Griscom road, behind which they were sheltering themselves, and from between the rails of which they were deliberately murdering us. We were also followed through the woods by the troops with which we had fought before falling back. As we formed our second line, two of our batteries, the Second Minnesota and Houghtelling's, took position on an eminence on the northern edge of the cotton field. We were soon ordered to fall back to the woods near the batteries. It took a deal of pluck to do this with the enemy on two sides of us, flushed with victory and numbering three to our one at this stage of the game. We reached the other side in good time, and promptly formed our line. Our Brigade was honored at this moment by the presence of Generals Carlin, Davis and McCook. The latter bravely encouraged the boys to hold the line at all hazards _ said he had sent for re-enforcements and that we should soon drive the rascals back. Scarcely had he uttered his words of cheer when a rebel bullet struck his horse's shoulder, causing the blood to spurt over the general's lap and legs. He was a large, fleshy man, slow of motion, but he dismounted as quickly as the lightest trooper a-horse. Our battery pounded the rebels terribly, but on they came, great columns of them still further to our right and rear. They were within easy musket range, but our ammunition was running low. With the falling back of Post's and Carlin's Brigades, Woodruff's lines were doubled up and his position so changed that Carlin's left no longer touched his right. There was serious danger that Carlin might be cut off from the possibility of retreat. Two rebel batteries wheeled into position at this instant near the Griscom road, and raked our lines and hammered our batteries in a terrible way.

Our artillery replied with great spirit, and we gave their infantry the best the range would allow. The rascals in front of us were in no hurry to charge across the open cotton field, and, to tell the truth, we were not at all anxious to have them do so. Johnson's whole Division was out of sight; Post had been driven off the field; Carlin was the extreme right of the Union army, and was greatly outnumbered in flank and in front. There was but one thing to do, and we did it _ we fell back. We did so in an ordely way _ acting deliberately and according to orders. But how or when our trouble would end, we had not the slightest idea. Off to the west of our organized lines, across an open field, we could see bodies of troops which we took to be rebels, as they doubtless were. The fear of a rush by the enemy's cavalry caused considerable excitement at one time, but such a calamity was not added to our misfortunes. The line of our retreat seemed to be guided by the noise of the battle raging in great fury along the center of our army. In view of the terrible experiences of the morning we listened in dismay to the dreadful roar of the conflict that seemed to shake both earth and heaven. In this horrid din, the most horrid of all was the unearthly yelling of charging columns as they rushed upon each other with bayonet and sword. We seemed to have been transported from earth to the very gates of Hell, toward the open portals of which we seemed to be forced by the still greater danger that lurked in the woods and fields to the south and west of us.

Our batteries, of course, retreated when we withdrew from our third position _ one of them, Houghtelling's, soon after fell into the hands of the enemy. Our retreat was beset with dangers on every hand, and had to be conducted with great skill and caution. Reaching the Wilkinson Pike, we formed our line of battle, our fourth position, under the shelter of a rail fence, and determined again to give battle to the enemy still crowding us on flank and front. It seemed useless _ our line was so short, so light every way. But it was against nature to go one step further without stopping to show

our teeth, and if possible check the victorious foe. We knew well, and so did they, that our Right was crushed, that it was all important for them to gain the Nashville Pike, on which were huddled our ammunition trains, the destruction of which would most effectively quiet our guns and make us their prisoners. What wonder, then, that they should advance in such force and with such confidence. The final victory seemed to them to be almost within grasp. At the word of command, our line of battle was formed for the fourth time on that dreadful morning. There was no excitement _ we were not panic stricken. Each man looked deliberately to his gun and awaited the storm which was sure to fall. Our ammunition was scarce, and we were ordered to fire only at very close range. The sharpshooters and skirmishers soon appeared in view, closely followed by the rebel line of battle. On they came, nor halted until they were within easy range. On their left were other columns, still continuing that flank movement that had proved so eminently successful since daylight. For our light line, consisting of a few hundred men, to attempt to check such a host were madness. The Confederate line was so close that we could distinctly hear the commands of the loud-mouthed colonel conducting the column. He was one of the most profane wretches we had ever heard. Every order was profusely garnished with great, full-grown oaths of pure Southern extraction, even to the accent. We were almost terrified at such language, but every man in his command obeyed as promptly as a whipped spaniel. Seeing the hopelessness of our position, we gave them one deliberate volley, then continued our retreat. Our pace was doubtless somewhat accelerated by the volley which the profane rebel commander was swearing out when we left him.

The line of our retreat carried us in a northerly direction. We were constantly in the presence of the enemy, with more or less skirmishing, usually at long range, until we reached the Nashville Pike. Approaching this, they very properly halted, readjusted their lines and prepared for serious business. Our swearing colonel was not within hearing distance for some little time.

As we emerged from the woods and crossed the pike, a half mile west of the intersection of the pike and the railroad, we felt a sense of relief. Surely we had finally reached the utmost limit to which the Lord would allow us to be driven. Moreover, the most vigorous preparations were being made to check the tide of defeat on our right. We halted between the pike and the railroad, and awaited developments. Of the four hundred brave boys who had stood shoulder to shoulder early in the morning, many were dead, many others were dying, hundreds were wounded or prisoners, scores were missing _ only eighteen were with the colors as we stood there, Major Kirby at that hour in command of the regiment, and Adjutant Len D. Smith being of the number. The dear old Regiment had been hammered front and flank and rear, until scarcely a color-guard remained. It was not yet noon.

Almost at the same instant that we crossed the pike Beatty's Brigade of Van Cleve's Division came dashing down from the left at double quick, and formed instantly a few rods south of the pike. Fixing bayonets, they waited, but not long. Our little Regiment _ its numbers slowly increasing by the arrival of boys who in retreating had swung too far to the west to keep with the colors _ joined Beatty's right, determined to share their fate, come what would. Harker's Brigade had already passed still further to the right. On the left of Beatty's splendid column was the remainder of Van Cleve's Division, and on Van Cleve's left was Rousseau. The new line thus quickly formed was destined soon

to engage in some of the severest fighting of that bloody day. The crushing of our Right had so exposed Sheridan that he was compelled to face almost south, instead of east as at the beginning. Indeed his extreme right faced the west, and the movements of the enemy soon made even this position untenable. He established a new line still further back, facing almost south, and nearly at right angles with Thomas' line, to meet which, the Center was thrown considerably back..

The genius of Rosecrans was nowhere more conspicuously displayed than in the establishment of his new line in the face of the most desperate fighting, and in spite of a victorious foe. Rouseau first flying into the face of the enemy and staggering him, fell quickly into his new position; the Left under Crittenden adjusted itself to its shortened line, and sent Harker's Brigade and Van Cleve's Division to the right, as detailed above.

The new lines thus hastily but most splendidly formed, had not long to wait. Cleburne's Division, fresh and confident, was in position and ready for assault. To his right and facing Rouseau's left was McCown's Division flushed with victory and ready for the final and crowning assault. Soon after noon the storm broke. With a wild yell, the enemy debouched from the cedar thickets in our front, forming as they came. The left of their line charged first, the assault falling upon Harker. His command was ready and waiting. Then Beatty, with words more forcible than elegant, encouraged and threatened his men. Not a man was to fire until he gave the command. He who disobeyed would instantly die. An officer who would permit disobedience would suffer the same fate. On came the same insolent foe that had driven us all the morning. Beatty's men stood at a "ready" and although many of them were falling, not a man discharged a musket. The enemy was alarmingly near when the order to fire was given. The aim had been deliberate and deadly, and great numbers of the enemy bit the dust when the volley was delivered.

"Forward _ Charge!" and the splendid line leaped forward, the remnants of our own good Regiment, joining their right. The Confederate line halted _ it looked surprised, but fought viciously. The officers made great efforts to move them forward. With a yell as unearthly as ever escaped from human throats, Beatty rushed upon them with the bayonet. Not even our swearing rebel Colonel could hold his men. The line broke and fled in confusion _ Beatty at their heels at every jump.

At the same time that Beatty so effectually astonished that part of Cleburn's line, which came at him on the pike, the troops both to the right and left of him, assailed the enemy with equal force, and immediately the rebel advance came to an end _ indeed they were rolled back in considerable haste and not a little confusion. It was a critical moment and the Union boys fought like tigers; the Confederates understood it too, and fought most desperately. There was no straggling, no hesitation. It was cold blooded pluck and irresistible dash with bayonet and sword. But victory rested with the Stars and Stripes, and the hateful rebel flag finally went down on our Right. Thank God, a remnant of the 101st was in at the death.

Later in the afternoon Breckenridge attempting to advance his lines, got into trouble, was whipped, and fell back into his old position near the redout. It was now night, and the troops of both armies slept in line without fires. The night was cold and clear, and we suffered quite severely. Our number

had increased so that we had by this time about one hundred and fifty men in line.

Immediately after the repulse referred to above, General Rosecrans sought to further improve his line of battle. It was therefore moved forward until it extended around the base of a slight eminence, and from the railroad on the right, around to a point about 250 yards in rear of the position held by Thomas during the day. From here the line extended northerly to the river, with strong guards at the fords. This arrangement greatly concentrated the Union lines, and made it possible to use the artillery to excellent advantage. The fighting on the right had been largely in the woods where artillery could not be used to any great extent.

A large Confederate force, had made itself very objectionable in the rear of our army. These rascals had deliberately ridden around our flank and had struck the line of our communication with Nashville, spreading consternation among the teamsters, and the small guards accompanying the different sections of the train. Charging, they easily captured a portion of the train, burning many wagons and destroying many supplies, among which were the rations of the 101st for the next three days. The rebel victory here was, however, of short duration, for our own cavalry happened that way and entered so urgent a protest that our friends, the enemy, were glad to get away alive _ they did not all succeed even in that. Quite a number of our boys, who had been captured, were very fortunately for them, recaptured. The rebels had, however, done great damage before they had been driven off. I have since made the personal acquaintance of one of the Captains of the Confederate cavalry, engaged in this piece of business, and find him to be a most generous and refined gentleman, far above doing such things now days.

Our hearts were filled with great sadness as we looked up and down the shortened line that cold evening. Each man contributed his item of information as to the cause of this one's and that one's absence from the ranks. We could account for many, but not for all. Colonels Stem and Wooster, and Lieutenants Biddle and Hillyear, and many, very many of the boys were dead or mortally wounded, scores were reported as being more or less seriously wounded or captured. Many were in hospital, and not a few were missing.

Our Division _ a shadow of its former self _ occupied the extreme right of our new line.

The night was bitter cold _ we could have no fires, but for that matter the Johnnies couldn't either. Some of our boys thought to have a small one _ and gathering closely around the spot selected, started it. General McCook happened to be passing that way, saw the blaze, and rode up to make a fuss about it. He ordered it out instantly and threatened the arrest of every man engaged in the affair.

At the same instant a rebel shell came sailing up out of the darkness, and gave decided emphasis to the General's orders. The fire went out and we continued to shake with the cold. Another little company was more successful about 2 o'clock in the morning. We were almost stiff with the cold. Digging a hole in the ground about eighteen inches deep and two feet square, we started a fire in it, taking as much care to guard it from the eyes of our own officers as from the rebel gunners. It was not very satisfactory, but was very much better than nothing. Captain Parcher told us how the thing

had once been done by some soldiers who ought to have been sent to the guard-house for it. He called several times to order the fire out, stopping each time long enough to toast his shins and warm his hands.

“I’ll be back again after a little, boys, and if this fire is not out _” with threatening tones.

“All right, Captain, we’ll always have a place for you. But don’t tell anyone.”

Sure enough, he came in a short time, shivering with the cold but trying to glower at us.

“Did I not order you to put the fire out?” said he, standing astride the “furnace” and rubbing his hands at the same time.

“Tell us about the Battle of Pea Ridge and your fighting mit Siegel,” said some thoughtful soul among us. This started him and our fire was safe. Shortly before daylight, he aided us to put out the fire and fill the hole. We hadn’t slept much, but we had kept comparatively warm, and better yet, we had broken a positive order.

The night had not been entirely without incident. Occasionally, a crazy rebel gunner would send a shell over our way, and occasionally a shot or two would be sent their way. Around toward our center there was a little musketry at one time, but nothing especially came of it. Between the lines lay a few wounded men whose cries, as their bloody wounds stiffened in the cold, excited our sympathy. We tried to relieve them, but were fired upon, and had to give it up. After daylight tacit consent was given by both sides, and the poor fellows were cared for. In the afternoon a portion of the Regiment was sent off toward the left, to strengthen the picket-skirmish line in that quarter. The boys on post did their whole duty, but those at the picket station worked hard to keep warm around a little fire in a great chimney in a log hut. Some climbed into the loft, kicked a hole through the sticks of which the chimney was built, and with their feet and legs hanging down in the smoke, lay back and slept until after roll-call next morning. The entire day, New Year’s, had been comparatively quiet, although Bragg had been “trying” our lines to satisfy himself that Rosecrans was really present in force. Thomas, and our Right responded in such a manner as to satisfy him, for the time being, at least.

After aiding most gloriously in repelling the Confederate assault on our Right Wednesday afternoon, Harker and Van Cleve were returned to the Left, their places being taken by Starkweather and Walker, who had been doing duty in the rear.

Crittenden was ordered on Thursday, January 1st, to send Van Cleve’s Division, now under the command of Colonel Samuel Beatty, across the river to occupy a crest near the lower ford, from which, if in the hands of the enemy, great damage might be done our Left. To the surprise of all, this movement and occupation was effected without opposition on the part of the enemy. Indeed, the enemy were not aware of the change of our line until several hours after it had been made.

The next morning, January 2nd, Bragg determined to ascertain again, whether Rosecrans were present in force, or whether after all, he were not playing a huge bluff. When the Reverend General Polk organized his force to see whether Thomas was there or not, the latter General proved to be so much there that the Reverend General could not even get his assaulting column out of the woods. He reported to Bragg that he thought Thomas was still there. Cleburne and McCown were able to make the same report concerning our Right. Bragg was now fully satisfied that Rosecrans had not even tried to run away. What he was to do under the circumstances was a conundrum. He must do something, and that right away. He had driven our Right terribly on Wednesday morning, but aside from that and since that time he had accomplished not one thing. He at once decided to assail our Left. To insure success he would make as much noise as possible along our Center and Right, so as to hold our present forces there, while with all the troops he could possibly gather, he would fall upon Crittenden, crush our Left, fall upon our rear, and finish us up in great shape. Just what the Union army was to do while he was accomplishing all this we were not informed by the Confederate Commander.

It was arranged that Breckinridge, who was on the east side of the river, facing our Left, whose Corps had not been very seriously engaged in battle thus far, although they had done some marching, was to undertake the great movement referred to, that of crushing Crittenden. Fearing that Rosecrans might attempt to assume the aggressive and carry out his original plan of battle, Bragg had as early as Wednesday night, the 31st, ordered two Divisions over to his right to strengthen Breckinridge in that quarter. On the afternoon of the 2nd, he ordered several other Brigades to the same part of the field, preparatory to the grand assault set for the afternoon. As an initiatory step, the Confederate cavalry was sent off to our extreme Left for the purpose of threatening something or somebody. It went so far as to be entirely out of the way. While making this move, some of the officers discovered Beatty's Division in line on the east side of Stone's River. This was immediately reported to Bragg, who is said to have become quite excited over the affair. The surface of the country in Breckinridge's vicinity was such that he could not hide his movements. His purposes were at once divined by Rosecrans and vigorous steps were taken to match him. Rosecrans, possessing this information, was not alarmed at the feints of Polk and McCown later on when Breckinridge was ready to move. Indeed these feints were a notice to him that the Confederate column was ready to storm our position. In the midst of the bluster on our own front he had no hesitation in ordering Davis' Division over to the Left on the double quick. We arrived there in time to take an important part in the great game.

Breckinridge formed his assaulting column in two lines _ the first in a strip of woods, the second a few hundred feet back of the first. Both lines moved to the assault in this relative position. This charging column was made up mostly of men who were fresh and eager. They expected to win. They were harranged by their officers, who pointed out the very importance of the move, and the glory and honor of success. It was to be the greatest military charge of modern times. Battery after battery wheeled into position, and still others were there to take advanced positions as the column cleared the way. A cavalry force was sent around to their right to keep Van Cleve's men and others from running off in that direction.

While all those arrangements were being made by the Confederates, General Rosecrans was also

busy. Van Cleve's Division under Beatty was across the river. It must stay there, even if it had to face the whole Confederate charging column. It was impossible to send over to the east bank of the river and post a sufficient force to meet and defeat the great assault that was being prepared. Near the lower ford, in the space between the river and the road which here crosses the stream, is a crest which overlooks the open field across which Brekinridge must pass in falling upon Van Cleve, or in attempting to reach the ford, both of which he would undoubtedly attempt. Every cannon belonging to our Left, and several of those belonging to the Center was hurried to this elevation and rapidly placed in position. Fifty-eight guns were thus trained upon the fatal field. Each gun was loaded with grape, cannister, shot or shell, as its position or range would best indicate. A clump of trees in the bend of the river effectually hid these guns and these important preparations from rebel sight and sense.

With delight, Breckinridge saw only one poor Division in his front. On the preceding afternoon he had massed a large force in plain sight, and Rosecrans had paid no attention to it. He flattered himself that the same game was working this afternoon, and that an easy victory awaited him. He would brush away the slight force, and then crossing the river he would take our army in reverse and soon end the agony. It was a grand scheme and Breckinridge was glad that he was alive on that immortal afternoon.

At length the order was given and the charging column moved forward. The moment it was absolutely certain that Brekinridge would attempt the assault, our Division _ Davis' _ was hurried off on double quick, to the left, to aid in repelling the charge. As soon as Breckinridge's lines had debouched from the woods, Van Cleve's batteries opened a rapid and accurate fire. The infantry fire was held for closer work. Beatty and all the men in Van Cleve's command knew that unless our battery on the crest could hold the enemy, defeat and destruction were surely theirs. But not a man flinched. The Confederate force came steadily on, neither hurrying nor hesitating. With the opening of Van Cleve's accurate artillery fire, they staggered for a moment, then came on like an avalanche. A little further and they saw the line of iron and brass that fringed the crest of the hill on the west bank of the river, each gun of which seemed to grin with malicious satisfaction and self-complacency. The sight astonished them and filled them with horror and dismay. But it was too late to change the plan or direction of assault; the river was between them and the battery, making it impossible for them to charge and silence it _ they must go straight on or beat a cowardly retreat. Everybody saw that the lines would be enfiladed, and the officers knew perfectly well that the only way to hold the men and prevent a stampede was to order a charge at once, including both columns. With the giving of this order there straightaway arose a yell uttered by no living creatures save a charging column of Confederate soldiers. Our own yell was an awful thing, born low down in Hell, but theirs was a hundred fold worse, especially when they had a desperate job on hand with the odds against them. Their yelling lines came madly on. Van Cleve's men cowered before the impending storm, yet flinched not.

Our guns on the heights were still silent. Crazed by their yelling and made hideously frantic by it, the rebel host rushed on. The rest of the army seemed to be holding its breath _ operations elsewhere seemed to be suspended for the moment. Both lines of the assaulting host were now free from the

woods and charging forward across the open corn field. Van Cleve's artillery cut great swaths in their lines, as was attested by the numerous dead and wounded that marked the way back to the woods. Every gap was instantly closed, and no attention paid to dead or wounded.

A moment later and the very heavens seemed to burst with an awful explosion, as every gun in that vast battery poured its contents directly upon the Confederate mass as it rushed upon Van Cleve. Such slaughter! Every gun had been definitely trained upon a particular mass of men, and the great number of dead and dying, wounded and fleeing, told only too plainly how accurate had been the aim. The column of course staggered _ it halted a moment, amazed and stricken. Van Cleve poured volley after volley into the writhing mass. The Confederate officers by almost superhuman efforts moved the column forward to the assault. By this time our Battery on the crest was again ready for action and again it poured its contents upon the yelling mass below. Hundreds more went down, but the lines rushed on, feeling sure that the greatest safety was in close contact with our line, under which circumstances the great battery could not play. It was impossible for Van Cleve's men to stand against such a host and such a rush. They broke and fled toward the ford, closely followed by Breckinridge, over-anxious to get out of range of our batteries. He followed our troops across the river, where he halted for only a partial re-formation of his lines, then rushed on up the hill with visions of victory every brightening.

General Negley's Division, for the time under the command of Colonel Miller, was stationed just at the top of the hill to the north of our great Battery. He ordered his men down upon their faces that the Confederates might not see them. Van Cleve's men were permitted to pass hurriedly through. By this time Breckinridge's line was rushing rapidly up the hill, or rather bank, when the Division at Miller's command arose and, at short range, poured a terribly destructive volley into their very faces. It was too much. They recoiled, fled, rushing upon their companions who were vainly trying to pass the ford. Miller threw his Division upon the confused mass and put them into a panic. At this moment our Division _ Davis' _ came upon the ground and immediately took a hand. We plunged into and across the river, and charged the enemy. No sooner had they gained the open field than our great battery on the crest gave them another terrific tempest of iron, sending many hundreds to their long home. But our charging columns were so close upon them that the battery could do no more. The chase was kept up until they had reached the woods in which they had so proudly and so confidently formed for the assault an hour and a half before.

General Cleburne had been rushed from Bragg's extreme Left over to their extreme Right, to assist in staying the flood of disaster that had overtaken Breckinridge. He arrived there in time only to form in front of their used-up columns and protect them from further pursuit.

We halted in the open field before reaching the woods, and, as we did so we demolished every fence in the vicinity, using the rails for protection. These frail breastworks stopped many a bullet.

No sooner had Cleburne taken his position than he arranged to attack us. His officers harranged their men _ we could hear them, but could not distinguish their words. All this resulted in a night attack, for it was now dark. Our batteries had been well posted and doubled shotted. Every man in

our line knew the range, and just what to do if the rebels should attempt to come at us, as we imagined they would. When Cleburne made his foolish night attack, his men raised the yell which told our gunners and the rest of us just where they were. Our batteries raked them dreadfully. The infantry firing was deafening for a few moments, but the enemy soon found it impossible to handle us, and retired into the woods. There was a great deal of random firing during the night, on both sides, but no especial harm was done anyone so far as I know. It began to rain in the night, which soon rendered the cornfield across which our lines extended almost impassable. The mud was ankle-deep everywhere. It was soft enough, but a little too plentiful to sleep in, though many of the boys tried it.

The field over which we had charged in following Breckinridge was very thickly strewn with his dead and wounded, so much so that we really had to pick our way at times to avoid treading upon the poor fellows.

The morning _ Saturday, the 3rd _ found us literally stuck in the mud; we hugged our little sections of rail fence and lay flat upon the muddy ground to be as safe as possible from Cleburne's sharpshooters. Our batteries soon shelled the woods and taught them to respect us by keeping further away.

About 8 o'clock in the morning, a portion at least of the 101st was sent off to the left and front to act as a sort of picket-skirmish line. The drizzling rain continued to fall and the day was dark and lowering. There was little heavy fighting on our part of the field, though Bragg frequently tested our lines to see whether Rosecrans were really still in front. The responses that he received finally convinced him and his generals that our lines were strongest everywhere, and weakest nowhere.

We found our picket-skirmish line a most exciting affair. We were in the woods near the small stream that flows into the river further north. The ground was strewn with guns, and bayonets, and clothing, and knapsacks, and even haversacks. But behind every large tree there seemed to lurk a vicious rebel, but we finally reached our trees, running the gauntlet of many a bullet in doing so. The trees were close together and the runs were short.

Off to our left on the edge of a little stream there was an old cotton shed. This was at first held by the Johnnies, but we found time to send so many bullets into it that they left it. A stirring incident occurred at the picket reserve, just at dark. The men were cold and wet, and wanted something warm. They had been ordered not to have a fire under any circumstances. They huddled closely together, however, and decided to boil a cup of coffee. Very thoughtlessly one of them left his place just as the coffee began to boil. Instantly a rebel bullet struck the fire, overturned the coffee and scattered the boys in great shape. The officer in command found relief in profanity, and darkness again prevailed.

We were relieved about this time, and as we went back to our place in the line we witnessed an assault made by the enemy, probably to cover his withdrawal from our front. We had a kind of enfilading view of the conflict. The flashing of several thousand muskets on either side, and a

broadside or two of our artillery, made it a much pleasanter affair to look at than to be in. The Johnnies soon fell back to the cover of the woods, and comparative silence again prevailed, broken only by the nervous rattle along the picket line.

About 2 o'clock in the morning we recrossed the river which was considerably swollen by the recent rains, and wading through the mud in many places actually knee deep, went into camp on our extreme right, just back of the railroad. It seemed an unspeakable relief to get our harness off. We had worn our belts almost incessantly since the opening of the fight, and had scarcely dared to put our guns out of our hands. We sprawled out on the wet ground and slept until daylight, then waded into a pond near by, washed up and lay around to dry. The noise of the conflict had ceased. Bragg had retreated and Rosecrans was in possession of the field.

Our regimental losses were heavy. Out of four hundred and twenty men who stood in line at daylight on the 31st, two hundred and twelve were either dead, mortally wounded, or captured. Nearly all this occurred on the first day. The following list of those who were either killed outright or mortally wounded, tells a sad story, but only a part of it. The boys were mangled and torn in every conceivable way. Death came instantly to many, and many others lingered in awful torture. Many of those who were captured endured suffering which can never be described. Andersonville, Columbia, Florence and Libby, received them into their horrors, and gloated over their miseries

[Note: the next page of the book includes a list of 39 officers and soldiers killed or mortally wounded during the engagement. It is not included in this transcript.]

Under cover of darkness the once great Confederate army, no longer able to defend itself against our sturdy lines of blue, sought safety in flight, nor halted until the shelter of Duck River had been reached.

A large part of Sunday was spent in gathering and compiling information relative to our dead, wounded and missing, and in writing letters home. In the afternoon we received mail _ the first since leaving Nashville, December 26th. On Monday morning, January 5th, a detail of two men from each company was made to bury our dead. The field of the first day's conflict, had remained in the hands of the enemy until Sunday morning. The Confederates had gathered, with but little care, most of our dead and placed them in heaps, in some instances building a rail pen around them to protect them from possible roving swine, belonging to some of the residents of the vicinity. Before leaving camp, our little burying party had a full list of the dead.

Many of the boys made donations of blankets, in which to wrap the bodies of their friends and comrades, feeling sure that relatives and friends would desire to remove the remains to their peaceful homes in the North as soon as circumstances would allow. No caskets were to be had _ not even rough boxes.

Arriving upon the field we selected our fallen comrades from the several piles, found one or two where they fell, carried a strange dead comrade or two to heaps of other dead, and then began the

excavation of the trench, selecting a beautiful location beneath the boughs of a great tree, just within the edge of the woods near the cotton field where we formed our second line of battle on the 31st. We dug a trench six feet wide, five feet deep and long enough to contain all the bodies lying side by side. Then wrapping each poor boy in the blanket donated him by a comrade friend, we reverently lowered the bodies into the trench, and having covered each with branches cut from the adjacent cotton, to break in appearance at least, the fall of the ground upon their bodies, we buried them in unbroken silence. Many a stout heart that had not for a moment quailed before the presence of the destroying enemy, broke down entirely in the presence of this sad sight. Deep but not loud were the imprecations heaped upon the heads of the responsible leaders of the rebellion which made such sacrifices necessary.

While the trench was being dug, a few of us passed on through the woods to the place where our lines had been formed on the morning of the 31st. Everywhere there were unmistakable evidences of the fierceness of the struggle. Broken guns, bayonets, swords, sabers, belts and accouterments of all kinds belonging to both armies, lay scattered about in great abundance. Worn out articles of clothing, pieces of knapsacks, haversacks, tin cups and spiders, fragments of shells, solid shot and unexploded shells, dead horses and broken cannon carriages, drums and worthless stretchers, slight depressions in the ground marking the place where many heroes had fallen and lain for days, great splotches of blood showing where the lives of many patriots had slowly ebbed away in the terrible silence that succeeded the rush of the whirlwind, broken branches and splintered trees, shells buried deep in the trunks of the giants of the forest _ all this and a thousand things beside bore indubitable marks of the desperate nature of the conflict.

Placing a rude board on which was carved his name and the number of our Regiment, at the head of each buried comrade, we returned in the afternoon to find that the Regiment, during our absence, had marched across the river, up through the town and out the Shelbyville Pike a couple of miles. We immediately followed, passing down the railroad and over the bridge which the rebels had attempted to destroy. The whole town was a hospital and we gladly hurried through into the country beyond. We experienced little difficulty in finding the Regiment, and were soon as busy as the rest arranging for the night.

Within a day or two we were moved in the midst of a blinding snowstorm to a new and permanent position near the river which gives its name to the great battle out of the smoke and chaos of which we had just come.

[End of Chapter 9]

O. R. -- SERIES I--VOLUME XX/1 [S# 29]

DECEMBER 26, 1862-JANUARY 5, 1863
The Stone's River or Murfreesborough, Tenn., Campaign.

No. 25.--Report of Col. William P. Carlin, Thirty-eighth Illinois Infantry,
commanding Second Brigade

HEADQUARTERS SECOND BRIGADE, FIRST DIVISION,
RIGHT WING, FOURTEENTH ARMY CORPS,

January 6, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of this brigade since leaving Knob Gap, near Nolensville, December 27, 1862:

The brigade took up the line of march on the morning of the 27th, in a heavy rain, in the direction of Triune, bivouacking within 1 mile of that place, where it remained during the 28th, moving on the morning of the 29th in the direction of Murfreesborough.

That night we bivouacked on Blackman's farm, 4½ miles west of that town. Early on the morning of the 30th we crossed Overall's Creek, on the right of the Wilkinson pike, and took up position in a heavy wood south of Ass Griscom's house. At 2 p.m. I was ordered to advance.; passed through a corn-field, entering another heavy wood, where my skirmishers first met those of the enemy. Before making this advance, Brigadier-General Davis, commanding division, informed me that my brigade was to direct the movements of the division, and that Colonels Post and Woodruff, commanding, respectively, the First and Third Brigades, were ordered to keep on a line with me. My skirmishers, under Lieutenant-Colonel McKee, Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, continued to drive those of the enemy through the wood for about one-fourth of a mile when I halted and sent a request to Colonels Post and Woodruff to keep pace with my advance.

At this point my skirmishers, having suffered severely, were withdrawn, and my battery (Second Minnesota, Capt. W. A. Hotchkiss) opened on the enemy with canister and spherical case, inflicting serious damage. I then threw forward another line of skirmishers, under Lieutenant-Colonel McMackin, Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, which advanced so slowly that my front line of battle soon closed upon it, driving in, however, the skirmishers of the enemy.

My first line of battle was now within 180 yards of the enemy's line, at the house of Mrs. William Smith. At this point a battery, about 100 yards west of the house, opened with canister upon the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, and another, on the east of the house, 250 yards distant, on the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, killing and wounding a number of my men. Here it was my intention to halt until the First and Third Brigades should come up, on my right and left, respectively; but Col. J. W. S. Alexander, commanding Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, without instructions from me,

ordered his regiment to charge on the battery in his front. His command was moving, with a shout, at double-quick step, within 80 yards of the battery, already abandoned by its cannoneers, when a very heavy fire was opened upon it by infantry, which lay concealed behind fences and outhouses, on the right and left of the battery. This fire killed and wounded a large number of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, and threw the left companies into some disorder, when the regiment was halted and formed on the right of the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers.

The fight was now fairly opened, and continued vigorously until night by the front line of my infantry and the battery which had been placed between the two regiments. The batteries in our front were soon silenced, but another was then opened on my right flank, distant about 500 yards, which completely enfiladed my lines and considerably injured us ; but this, too, was driven out of sight by Captain Hotchkiss, after a vigorous and well-directed fire.

Again I sent a request to Colonels Post and Woodruff to come up, but they continued to remain in rear of my lines.

I maintained my position during the night, having at dark relieved my front line by the Thirty-eighth Illinois and **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers. My loss during this day, in killed, wounded, and missing, was about 175 officers and men.

Before daylight on the morning of December 31, perceiving indications of an advance by the enemy, I retired my battery about 200 yards. At daylight the enemy advanced. Seeing that the troops on the right and left of my line would not come up, I fell back, with my infantry on a line with my battery, and made a stand; the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers about 200 yards to the rear, and on the right of **the One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers; the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers were posted on the rocks in front of my battery, and the Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers on the left of **the One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers.

My men were falling rapidly on the front line, and, wishing to increase the fire on the enemy, I sent an order to Colonel Alexander to advance and form on the right of the **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers, and to Colonel Heg, Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, to form on the left of the Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, and to my battery to retire. To my surprise, I received a reply from Colonel Alexander that he was already so hotly engaged that he could not come forward. The startling intelligence was also at this moment communicated to me, by one of my orderlies, that all our forces on our right had left the ground. Immediately afterward a heavy fire of musketry and artillery from the enemy, from my right flank and rear, unmistakably announced that I was also attacked from that direction.

On my left Woodruff's brigade had left the ground. My command was thus exposed to fire from all points, except the left of my rear. When too late to retire in good order, I found that I was overpowered, and but a moment was wanting to place my brigade in the hands of the foe. I decided to retreat by the left flank, when my horse was shot under me and myself struck, and all my staff and orderlies dismounted or otherwise engaged, which prevented me from communicating the order to the regimental commanders. The rear line, then consisting of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, was

the first to withdraw, by the order of Lieutenant-Colonel McMackin, then commanding, Colonel Alexander having been wounded. Colonel Stem and Lieutenant-Colonel Wooster, of the **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers, having been shot down, and the ranks of the regiment dreadfully thinned by the fire of the enemy, it gave way and retreated.

The Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers held its position until the enemy was within a few steps, and then retired. This regiment would have suffered far more severely in its retreat had not a heavy fire from the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, judiciously posted by Colonel Heg to its left and rear, kept the enemy in check until it had left the wood and partially reformed along the fence, on the right of the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, where an effective fire was kept up, holding the enemy at bay. This only gave the foe on our right and left the more time to envelop us. All that now remained of my brigade crossed two open fields and entered a wood about 200 yards east of Griscom's house. The regiments were painfully reduced in numbers, but I formed a line at this point, and several volleys of musketry and artillery were fired with destructive effect upon the ranks of the enemy; but the foe was still on our right at Griscom's house, with none of our forces at that point to oppose them, and being informed that General Davis had ordered a still farther withdrawal, I retired my command about half a mile to our rear, and again endeavored to rally the men, but it was evident that they were so utterly discouraged that no substantial good could result, while no supports were in sight.

At another point, about half a mile farther to our rear, I rallied all who could be found, and took a strong position in the edge of a cedar grove, holding it until the enemy came up, when my men fired one volley, and broke without orders. I conducted them to the rear, passing through the lines of our reserves, and halted at the railroad, where we remained during the afternoon collecting our scattered men.

During the two days' fight the loss of officers was so great that some companies had not one to command them, and others not even a sergeant. Our regimental colors were all borne off the field flying, though four color-bearers in succession, of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, were shot down, and two of the color-guard of the Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, three of the color-guard of the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, and four of the color-guard of the **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers fell. Our artillery was all brought off in safety.

I have to report the loss of many officers, who were ornaments to our army, and who will be mourned by all who knew them. Col. L. Stem, **One hundred and first Ohio Volunteers**; Lieut. Col. David McKee, Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, and Lieut. Col. M. F. Wooster, **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers, were unsurpassed in all the qualities that make up the brave soldier, the true gentleman, and the pure patriot. Capt. James P. Mead, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, fell, shot three times, while bravely fighting the enemy with his revolver after his regiment had retired. Lieut. John L. Dillon, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, commanding Company E, fought with a musket until he was shot once, when he drew his sword and cheered on his men till he fell dead. Other instances of equal gallantry were observed in the other regiments, but to recount all would give my report an undue length. The long, sad list of killed and wounded forms the truest eulogium on the conduct of the troops composing this brigade, and it is by that list I wish it to be judged.

Of the 10 field officers of the regiments, 3 were killed and 2 wounded. Seven horses were shot under the regimental, field, and staff officers. Of my orderlies, Private Pease, Company B, Thirty-sixth Illinois Volunteers, had his horse shot under him while carrying my orders. Private Knox, same company, also had his horse shot under him, and while endeavoring to procure another horse for me was wounded by a grape-shot and again by a Minié ball, and Corporal Hart, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, was stunned and disabled by a cannon ball.

I deem it my duty to call the special attention of the general commanding the Fourteenth Army Corps to Col. John W. S. Alexander, Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, and Col. Hans C. Heg, Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers. While every field officer under my command did his duty faithfully, Colonels Alexander and Heg, in my opinion, proved themselves the bravest of the brave. Had such men as these been in command of some of our brigades, we should have been spared the shame of witnessing the rout of our troops and the disgraceful panic, encouraged, at least, by the example and advice of officers high in command.

Lieut. Col. D. H. Gilmer, commanding Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, was always at his post and attending to his duty. Maj. Isaac M. Kirby, **One hundred and first Ohio Volunteers**, took command of the regiment after the fall of the brave Colonels Stem and Wooster, and conducted it to the rear, reduced to about 100 men.

Capt. W. A. Hotchkiss, commanding Second Minnesota Battery, and all his officers and men, deserve credit for their gallantry in the fight, and energy in preventing the loss of the battery. Among the staff officers of this army who made themselves useful in rallying the scattered men, Dr. L. F. Russell, Second Minnesota Battery; Lieut. S. M. Jones, Fifty-ninth Illinois Volunteers; Captain Thruston, aide-de-camp to Major-General McCook, and Chaplain Wilkins, Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, came especially under my observation.

On the night of December 31 this brigade was ordered to take up position near the Nashville pike, 4 miles from Murfreesborough. January 1, 1863, slight skirmishing with the enemy continued during the day, in which we killed several, capturing 13 prisoners and paroling 11 others, wounded. At 3.30 p.m. January 2, while hard fighting was progressing on our left, I received orders from General Rosecrans to report to him in person. He directed me to take my command to the left, form it in two lines, and, should I find our forces repulsed by the enemy, to allow our men to pass through my lines, and, on the approach of the enemy, give a whoop and a yell, and go at 'em. With a brigade which, in three days' hard fighting, had been reduced from 2,000 to 700 and greatly discouraged, I felt serious apprehension that I would not be able to fulfill the expectations of the general, and, to prepare him for such a result, I informed him of the condition of my brigade. He said, "Tell them they must do it for us and for the country." I told him I would do my best. My men fell into ranks with the utmost alacrity and marched to the scene of the conflict, a great portion of the way on the double-quick, crossing Stone's River at a ford. All apprehensions that I had previously entertained now vanished. I felt confident that they would not only charge the enemy, but would repulse them.

Before reaching the ground designated, however, I learned that the enemy had already been driven back in confusion. I continued my march, and, under the direction of Brigadier-General Davis, placed

my command in the advance, relieving the command of Colonel Hazen. It was now dark. We maintained our ground till the morning of January 4, when we returned to our position on the right. My loss in killed, wounded, and missing in the engagement at Knob Gap, near Nolensville, December 26, and the battles of December 30 and 31, 1862, and in front of the enemy east of Stone's River, January 2 and 3, 1863, is as follows:

O **Officers.**
M **Enlisted Men.**
A **Aggregate**

Command.	--Killed--		-Wounded-		Missing.		
	O	M	O	M	O	M	A
21st Illinois	2	55	7	180	....	59	303
38th Illinois	2	32	5	104	....	34	177
101st Ohio	4	19	2	121	....	66	212
15th Wisconsin	2	13	5	65	1	33	119
2d Minnesota Battery	....	3	1	5	....	1	10
Total	10	122	20	475	1	193	821

I cannot close this report without expressing my obligations to the following named officers of my staff for their zeal, fidelity, and courage in all the severe engagements embraced in this report, viz: Capt. S. P. Voris, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, acting assistant adjutant-general; Capt. W. C. Harris, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers; Lieut. Albert Woodbury, Second Minnesota Battery, and Lieut. Walter E. Carlin, Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers. Also to my faithful orderlies, Pease, Knox, Amick, and Hart. Private Alexander C. Hosmer, **One hundred and first Ohio** Volunteers, my clerk, though not required to go into the battle, was constantly at my side to carry my orders.

Regimental reports and lists of casualties are herewith inclosed; also a report of the engagement at Knob Gap, near Nolensville, December 26, 1862.

A topographical sketch, showing the ground passed over and positions occupied by this brigade on December 30 and 31, 1862, is herewith inclosed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. P. CARLIN,
Colonel Thirty-eighth Illinois Volunteers, Commanding.

Lieut. T. W. MORRISON,
Acting Assistant Adjutant-General.