

THE  
SEVENTY-SEVENTH PENNSYLVANIA

AT SHILOH.

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HISTORY OF THE REGIMENT.

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THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.

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1905.

## CHAPTER IV.

Buell relieved from command—Rosecrans succeeds him—Reconnoissance to Lavergne—Re-organization of the Army—On to Murfreesborough—The Battle of Stone River—Review of the Army.

War Department,  
Adjutant General's Office,  
Washington, October 24, 1862.

(General Orders No. 168.)

I. By direction of the President, the State of Tennessee, east of the Tennessee river, and such parts of Northern Alabama and Georgia as may be taken possession of by United States troops, will constitute the Department of the Cumberland.

II. Major General W. S. Rosecrans is assigned to the Department of the Cumberland.

III. The troops under the command of Major General Grant will constitute the Thirteenth Army Corps; and those assigned to the command of Major General Rosecrans, will constitute the Fourteenth Army Corps.

By order of the Secretary of War.

L. THOMAS,  
Adjutant General.

PURSUANT to this order General Rosecrans reached Louisville and assumed command on October thirtieth, and on November seventh, at Nashville, made the following changes in his command: General George H. Thomas was given command of the center; General McCook, of the right wing, and General Crittenden, of the left wing. The divisions constituting the right wing were the Second, to which the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania was attached, commanded by General J. W. Sill; the Ninth Division under General J. C. Davis, and the Eleventh under General P. H. Sheridan. The Second Division remained in camp at Edgefield on the north side of the Cumberland river, opposite to Nashville, until November sixteenth. Then it crossed the river and moved out the Murfreesborough pike six miles beyond Nashville and encamped there. While there, several reconnois-

sances were made to locate the enemy and find out their intentions.

On the nineteenth, Colonel Kirk moved out with two regiments, the Seventy-seventh being one of them, and two pieces of Edgerton's battery. He soon found the enemy and opened fire on them, but received no reply. They were driven several miles, after which Colonel Kirk returned to camp with his command.

The next reconnoissance of the brigade took place on the twenty-seventh, the entire brigade participating, with the exception of the Thirtieth Indiana, which was on picket. About four miles out the enemy was first encountered. A running fight ensued. It was kept up until the brigade reached Lavergne, which was nine miles from camp, and just midway between Nashville and Murfreesborough. Upon the Federal approach toward the town the enemy opened a fierce and well-directed artillery fire. The first shell passed directly over Colonel Kirk's head, the second dropped right in the midst of his staff, and others fell around the line, or passed close above the heads of the men. Kirk at once directed Captain Edgerton to open with his battery. His fire was very rapid and accurate, but the Confederates had a decided advantage, as their guns were fired from the top of a hill. Consequently the recoil would send their guns back below the crest, where they could be reloaded in comparative safety. Kirk, in order to dislodge the enemy, ordered the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania and the Twenty-ninth Indiana to move to the left and front, with a view to charging the battery from the flank.

The Confederates soon discovered the nature of this move, and hurriedly retired upon their reserves. In a few minutes the Federal forces were on the ground the enemy had left. Plenty of blood stains were found there, but the killed or wounded had all been carried off by their comrades. The enemy were driven about one mile farther. Then the brigade was ordered to return to camp. It did so in good order, having sustained a loss of twelve wounded. The command reached camp about four P. M., bringing with it three prisoners, who said that they had been under the command of General Joe Wheeler. They, however, either could not or would not tell the extent of their loss, except that Wheeler

was wounded in the thigh. Several store and other houses, from which shots had been fired at the brigade, were burned.

On November twenty-ninth, Colonel Kirk was commissioned Brigadier General. About this time Colonel F. S. Stumbaugh was compelled by ill-health to retire from military service. He was honorably discharged on December 7, 1862. Pursuant to orders from the Commanding General, General R. W. Johnson took command of the Second Division on December tenth.

Another reorganization of the army followed on the nineteenth, by virtue of these orders:

"I. The numeration of divisions and brigades, now running through the whole army is hereby changed. Divisions will hereafter be known as the first, second and third, etc., of the center or of such wing. Brigades, as the first, second and third, etc., of such division.

II. Brigades in divisions, and divisions in wings, etc., will be numbered from right to left; but in reports of operations they will be designated by the names of their commanders."

The Second Division was, consequently, designated as the Second Division, Right Wing, Army of the Cumberland; and the brigades as follows:

First Brigade (formerly Sixth), Brigadier General A. Willich.

Second Brigade (formerly Fifth), Brigadier General E. N. Kirk, and

Third Brigade (formerly Fourth), Colonel H. M. Buckley.

This was the organization on December twenty-sixth, when the march upon Murfreesborough commenced, the announcement of which was made the previous night. The day dawned very drearily. A heavy fog covered the low lands, and dense clouds hung overhead. However no order came to check the advance. Reveille was sounded all along the lines, rousing up the men. In a short time the army wagons were moving toward Nashville, to be there safely parked, under the protection of the guns of the forts.

The army moved southward, expecting the enemy to offer battle at Stewart's creek, about five miles south of Lavergne on the Murfreesborough pike. Therefore the army moved in three columns, pursuant to the following instructions:

"McCook, with three divisions, to advance by the Nolensville pike to Triune.

Thomas, with two divisions (Negley's and Rousseau's) to advance on his right, by the Franklin and Wilson pikes, threatening Hardee's right, and then to fall in by the cross roads to Nolensville.

Crittenden, with Woods's, Palmer's and Van Cleve's divisions, to advance by the Murfreesborough pike to LaVergne.

With Thomas' two divisions at Nolensville, McCook was to attack Hardee at Triune; and if the enemy re-inforced Hardee, Thomas was to support McCook.

If McCook beat Hardee or Hardee retreated, and the enemy met us at Stewart's creek, five miles south of LaVergne, Crittenden was to attack him. Thomas was to come in on his left flank, and McCook, after detaching a division to pursue or observe Hardee, if retreating southward, was to move with the remainder of his force on his rear."

At six o'clock Davis' Division moved out the Edmonson pike with orders to move to Prim's blacksmith shop, thence by dirt road to Nolensville. Sheridan at the same time moved direct to Nolensville, followed by Johnson with the Second Division. The advance struck the enemy about two miles out, when skirmishing commenced, which was kept up briskly throughout the day. It had rained the entire day, and the roads had become very deep with mud and almost impassable. The corps camped on the hills, south of Nolensville, for the night. At daybreak, on the twenty-seventh, the corps moved forward; General Stanley with the cavalry in advance, closely followed by the second division. A heavy fog covered the whole country, making the movement of troops very difficult. After having proceeded about one and one-half miles, a large force of cavalry, supported by artillery, was encountered. They opened fire on our cavalry, and appeared to be inclined to contest the advance. The skirmishing becoming more animated, the column pushed rapidly on until, ascending higher ground, it was opened on with shot and shell. General Kirk took advantage of the cedars along his front, in which he posted the brigade, together with Edgerton's battery, which opened with every gun upon the Confederate battery, and after a short and spirited contest, drove them out of range.

The third brigade was ordered up, and placed on the right of the road. The first brigade was in reserve. The firing in front became very spirited, but hazardous, as the fog became so dense that it was impossible to see any distance through it. Even our own cavalry on the flanks were mistaken for the enemy, and fired into by our own men. Before attempting any farther advance it was deemed best to await the clearing away of the fog. After which the division moved forward in line, skirmishing with the enemy until about four o'clock P. M., when it reached high ground, overlooking Triune. Here the enemy, in force, was in plain view, drawn up in line of battle.

Our artillery commenced shelling their position. One of Edgerton's first shots disabled one of their pieces. The infantry charged the Confederate batteries, which did not await their coming, but fled. The rain now came down in torrents, and the pursuit had to be abandoned temporarily. An hour later it was resumed, but the enemy had destroyed the bridge across Wilson's creek, which runs by the edge of the town, compelling the Union artillery to cross at a point about one and one-half miles below. The troops pushed on, driving the enemy before them, until darkness put an end to the conflict. The men bivouacked for the night in the mud on the field, without fire or shelter, about a mile south of Triune.

On the twenty-ninth, the right wing moved on the Bolerjack road, the second division being in the rear of the corps. The third brigade was left temporarily at Triune, for the purpose of protecting the right flank of the army. That night was very disagreeable, owing to a cold drenching rain. Kirk's and Willich's brigades bivouacked near the Salem pike, about five miles from Murfreesborough, the men lying on their arms in the rear of Davis' division.

On the thirtieth, McCook formed his corps in line of battle; Sheridan's division covering the Wilkinson pike, with Davis in line on his right. Kirk's and Willich's brigades were in reserve on the pike. Sheridan and Davis were engaged during the day, meeting with some loss, but steadily forcing the enemy back. About one o'clock in the afternoon, Kirk and Willich obliqued to the right, covering Davis' right, as they

moved into position. It being seriously threatened by the Confederate cavalry. Edgerton threw a few shells among them, and they retired. Soon after this two hostile batteries, on the front of the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania, opened fire. Edgerton replied, opening with all his guns upon the nearest one, killing and wounding several of their horses and men, and dismounting one of their pieces. They rapidly withdrew, with the loss of one of their guns, and two or three caissons. His guns were then turned upon the other battery, which, too, was soon driven from the field.

The third brigade (Baldwin's) was ordered up from Triune. It joined the division after dark, and bivouacked near Johnson's headquarters. On the evening of the thirtieth, the left of Rosecrans' line of battle rested on Stone river, about three miles northwest of Murfreesborough. Thence it extended, in a southwesterly direction, fully three miles, to the Franklin pike, about two and three-fourths miles west of Murfreesborough, at the point where a dirt road connects it with the Wilkinson pike. Kirk's brigade was formed on the right of Davis' right. Willich's brigade was on Kirk's right, on the extreme right of the line, facing south. It was thus posted in order to protect that flank. The cavalry was also on the right flank. Kirk's picket, or skirmish line, covering his front, joined Willich's on the right and Davis' on the left. Throughout the night, the pickets observed great activity among the enemy, as of a continuous movement on their part toward the Union right. This was duly reported to Headquarters.

At dawn on the morning of the thirty-first, the skirmishers of the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania saw, in their immediate front, the advancing Confederates, who came up in heavy columns in regimental front and four columns deep, with a strong reserve, massed and advancing in their rear. One column moved directly against the front of the Seventy-seventh, the others against the regiments to the right. The Seventy-seventh skirmishers opened fire upon the advancing foe, as soon as they came within range. They, however, paid not the slightest attention to it, but kept steadily on, singing as they came. Enough words could be distinguished to indicate that the song was something about southern rights.

As they reached the last fence, which was less than fifty yards in front of the Seventy-seventh's skirmish line, their command, "down with the fence," was distinctly heard. After crossing that fence line they opened a fire, which, from the beginning, was very hot. The skirmishers fell back, and the regiment advanced to their support, but it was unavailing. As the enemy was in overwhelming numbers, the regiment was compelled to retire. It did so slowly and in good order, though its loss at this point was very heavy. On reaching the original Union line of battle, it was found that all the regiments to the right of the Seventy-seventh had been struck by the enemy, and driven back, so that they were not then in sight of the Pennsylvanians. After falling back a short distance farther, the regiment formed on the right of Davis' division, which was also retiring. A short distance in front, and in plain view, could be seen the guns of Edgerton's battery, which had been captured by the enemy in their onslaught upon the right, early in the morning. Some idea of the fierceness of the attack can be gained from the experience of the picket posts. A single, typical illustration will suffice. Of the five men at one of these posts, one was killed, another seriously wounded in the breast, and a third was taken prisoner, a loss at that post, in a very few minutes, of sixty per cent. The remaining two succeeded in reaching their proper places in the Union line in safety. The experience of the other picket posts was similar to this one.

Some of the horses of Edgerton's battery had been taken to water. Of those remaining with the battery, at the time of the Confederate advance, so many were killed and disabled by the hostile fire, that the battery became entirely unmanageable and was captured. To the east of Edgerton's guns was a Confederate battery in action. Lieutenant Colonel Housum ordered the regiment to charge these guns. It did so unsupported in good style, driving all the enemy's gunners away. The right of the regiment got right in amongst Edgerton's guns, but for lack of horses, were unable to move them. Suddenly an overwhelming force of infantry confronted the regiment, and it was again forced back. The Confederate gunners at the same time rallied, and opened upon it with all their guns, first with canister, then with grape, and

finally with shrapnel and solid shot. The regiment retired slowly and in good order. At every puff of smoke from the guns, the men dropped to the ground. After the shot had passed over them, they would rise, and retire farther. Thus the regiment finally passed out of range, but not without considerable loss. Here Lieutenant Colonel Housum was mortally wounded by canister, from which he died the following day. Here, too, the color-bearer, who had carried the flag through the Mexican war, received his death wound, as did also numbers of the men.

The regiment, retiring in a northerly direction, was halted upon a slight eminence in the woods, by a mounted officer, and ordered to hold that position. They faced about and stood still, awaiting the oncoming of the enemy. Troops, in great disorder and confusion were streaming northward on all sides of the regiment. It seemed to be a case of every one for himself, and the enemy take the hindmost. Amidst all this confusion, the Seventy-seventh stood still, facing the oncoming storm, until ordered by another mounted officer to retire. He told us that we would all be captured, if we remained there much longer. Then the regiment retired in good order, halting on every favorable piece of ground, to give battle until it finally reached the Murfreesborough pike, where in the woods it found the remnants of the other regiments of the division.

Lieutenant Colonel Housum was the only field officer with the regiment in this engagement. After his fall, the command devolved by seniority upon Captain Thomas E. Rose, of Company B.

At this point, the special part taken by the Seventy-seventh having been just set forth, it becomes necessary to revert back again to the beginning of the battle to show how the other commands fared. In their original attack, the Confederates moved on the right, so as to completely flank Kirk's line, thus rendering his position entirely untenable. On they came like a huge, irresistible tidal wave. The Thirty-fourth Illinois soon became engaged at close quarters, and, in a few moments, lost a dozen killed and five times that number wounded. Over its colors the strife was terrible. Five color-bearers fell in rapid succession. At last their colors were

handed to one of Edgerton's men, who was mounted, to carry to the rear, but he too was shot. Then the flag fell into the hands of the enemy.

The Confederates now rushed upon Edgerton's battery. He told his men to save themselves, while he, with one of his lieutenants, stood by one of his guns, loading and discharged it into the column as it closed upon him, until he was taken prisoner. Many of his men refused to leave him, and fought the foe with their swords, until they were either killed or captured. General Kirk, having lost his guns, hastily withdrew his regiments to another position, there to renew the contest with the oncoming enemy. He dashed to Willich's brigade, which was also suffering heavily from the enemy's fire, and appealed for aid. A portion of one of his regiments aided in the new defense. The other regiments, while awaiting orders from General Willich, were driven back before such orders could be given. The enemy's fire was so heavy that it soon threw Kirk's ranks into disorder. He had his horse shot from under him at this point. With greatly superior numbers, the Confederates forced the brigade to fall back again. Kirk's second horse was shot under him, and he was himself mortally wounded. Willich, too, while trying to rally his brigade in support of Kirk, had his horse shot under him, was wounded and captured. Back of this point lay a corn field and beyond it was a piece of timber for which, in considerable confusion, the men hastily pressed.

General Kirk followed for a short distance, but soon, from the great loss of blood, his strength failed, and he was borne to the rear. Colonel Dodge, of the Thirtieth Indiana, was notified, and at once assumed command of the brigade. This retreat was disastrous to a further unity of action, during this fearful struggle. A part of the Thirty-fourth Illinois, in its retreat, got mixed up with Willich's men, and was carried too far to the right. Many of them were captured by the Confederate cavalry on the right flank of the Federal troops. Major Dysart, of the Thirty-fourth Illinois, succeeded in rallying about fifty of his men, behind a fence, nearly a mile in the rear of his former position. He opened fire upon some Confederate cavalry, but finding it impossible to hold his position, was compelled to retreat to the Nashville pike.

The Thirtieth Indiana, falling rapidly back to the right and rear, halted for a moment at a fence, and then fell back farther into the woods. Here it was joined by some of its men from its four companies, which had been on picket in the morning. They had lost, among others, Major Fitzsimmons, who was captured. Major Buckner reported to Colonel Dodge that the Seventy-ninth Illinois were present and ready for duty. Dodge ordered it forward across an open field to the right. The regiment was new and this was its first battle, but it advanced steadily under a terribly destructive fire. It came on a double quick, formed on the right of the Thirtieth Indiana, and at once engaged the enemy. General Johnson, seeing the enemy advancing on the remnants of the second brigade, where the Seventy-ninth Illinois joined it, ordered Colonel Baldwin to move the First Ohio and Sixth Indiana on the left of the second brigade. One section of the Fifth Indiana battery was posted between these two regiments. The Fifth Kentucky and Ninety-third Ohio were stationed in support. This line was immediately attacked by the enemy, and a furious fire of artillery and musketry was poured upon it. Here Colonel Read, of the Seventy-ninth Illinois was killed, Lieutenant Colonel Dunn, of the Twenty-ninth Indiana, was captured, and many others of less rank were either killed, wounded or captured. The gallant stand was of no avail as the numbers of the enemy were overwhelming. The Seventy-ninth Illinois broke first, followed immediately by the others. With yells and a most withering fire the enemy charged upon them, capturing two guns from the Fifth Indiana battery.

General Davis' division to the left next gave way. That left but one thing to do; namely, to retreat. Some few hundred yards to the rear an attempt was made to reform the line. Meantime the Confederate artillery were sending shot and shell after the retreating and disorganized soldiers. Some one gave an order for a further retreat, and the men gladly obeyed. On they fled, first at double quick, then on a run as rapidly as they could travel. This wild flight was not checked until the Nashville and Murfreesborough pike was reached. There the men were rallied, and reformed, but their number was pitifully small. They were rejoined at the pike,

sometime later, by the Seventy-seventh, which had, at that time, almost as many men in line, as the other regiments of the brigade combined.

Simonson placed his four remaining guns of the Fifth Indiana battery in line, and the brigade, now about five hundred strong, was ordered to its support. It opened with all its guns upon the enemy, which appeared to somewhat check them. A few minutes later they were observed moving to the right. General Johnson ordered the brigade to move a short distance to the right of the battery, there to await the approach of the enemy, who were the same men that had first attacked the brigade, early in the morning. On they came, as boldly as ever, but this time, the result proved different. At this time Van Cleve moved a part of his division to the left of the second brigade. In another moment one simultaneous fire rolled along this line, cutting down the men in gray by scores. The attack seemed to be entirely unexpected by them. Their line broke, but was soon reformed and again advanced. Then a charge was ordered and the Union line rushed forward. The shock was fearful and grand; the effects on the enemy terrible. They were driven back with bayonets and fled through the woods, across the fields and back over the ground, over which, not more than an hour before, they had so fiercely pursued these same soldiers of the second brigade. Three days later one hundred and seventy-nine Confederate dead were buried in this field on the front where the second brigade had dealt out to them such havoc.

The brigade having replenished its ammunition, again moved to the front, but, as the Confederates made no further attack, it was not again engaged. The right wing was now reformed, nearly parallel with the Nashville pike. The Confederate line was several hundred yards west, on its front. Thus located, both armies bivouacked for the night, throwing up such defensive works as they could.

Davis' and Sheridan's divisions lost very heavily in this fierce battle of the right wing. All of Sheridan's brigade commanders were killed on the field.

McCook's corps held its new line until the end of the battle, and was not again attacked. Most of the heavy fighting on the succeeding days of the conflict occurred on the left.

Heavy fighting practically ended for the Seventy-seventh with the great struggle of the right wing. It was, however, greatly annoyed, till the end of the battle, by sharpshooters, concealed among the trees, about 400 yards in its front. One of them proved particularly annoying, until Captain Rose, of Company B, Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania took a rifle from one of his men, and stepped into plain view. The Confederate fired and missed his mark. Rose fired back, and also missed. A second shot from the sharpshooter missed, but, as Captain Rose fired again, the Confederate was seen to drop out of his tree, to the ground. He was carried to the rear by his companions.

At the beginning of the battle, the enemy's cavalry got in the rear of the Union army and destroyed the supply train of the second division at Lavergne. Consequently the division suffered greatly for want of supplies. During the four days of the engagement, each man received only a half pound of crackers, and a small teacupful of flour. Fortunately nearly all of them had coffee in their haversacks.

On the morning of January fourth, it was ascertained that the enemy had left. The loss of the regiment in this battle, in killed, wounded and missing, was sixty-four, including Lieutenant Colonel P. B. Housum, the only field officer with the regiment at the time. As the ranking officer of the regiment, Captain Thomas E. Rose made the following report, as to the Seventy-seventh's part in this battle of Murfreesborough or Stone river:

Headquarters Seventy-seventh Regt. Pennsylvania Vols.

In Camp near Murfreesborough, January 8, 1863.

Sir: I have the honor to make the following report of the Seventy-seventh Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, from the time of leaving camp near Mill Creek, Tenn., December 26, 1862, to January 3, 1863, viz: We broke up our camp, near Mill Creek, December 26, sent our wagon train to Nashville, and took up our line of march in the direction of Shelbyville, on the Nolensville turnpike, and encamped in the evening a short distance beyond Nolensville. December 27 we continued our march in the same direction, and on the same road. At 8 A. M. we encountered the enemy within two miles of Triune. We were immediately placed in position, with the balance of our brigade on the left of the road. Our front line was composed with the Twenty-ninth Indiana Volunteers on the left, the Thirty-fourth Illinois Volunteers on the right, and the Thirtieth Indiana Volunteers

in the centre. Our regiment and the Seventy-ninth regiment Illinois Volunteers were held in reserve, but were advanced with the brigade, our regiment covering the Twenty-ninth Indiana Volunteers. Skirmishers were thrown forward by each of the three first named regiments, as also were two companies of the Seventy-seventh regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, which occupied the extreme left of the line. In this manner we advanced towards Triune, driving the enemy from his position and took possession of the town, the enemy retreating towards Shelbyville. We encamped about one mile beyond Triune, near the turnpike.

December 28. We remained in camp, where we stopped the evening before.

December 29. We retraced our march, on the same road, for two miles, and turned off on a dirt road, running in an easterly course into the Salem turnpike, at the junction of which two roads we, silently and without fires, encamped for the night.

December 30. We marched towards Murfreesborough, on the Salem turnpike, for about three miles, when we were thrown into column by division, into the woods on the right of the road, with the balance of our brigade and division. At this time heavy skirmishing was going on on our left, and in front. We advanced for a short distance, when our regiment and the Thirtieth Indiana Volunteers were ordered to change front to the right, deploy column and throw out skirmishers. We then advanced, moving towards the right of the general line of battle, for about a quarter of a mile. We then changed front to the left, and occupied a dense cedar grove. The position of our regiment was now on the right of the Twenty-second Indiana Volunteers, of General Davis' division. It was here that we received a heavy fire from a rebel battery, that was stationed to the right, and in front of us, on an open field, by the edge of the woods, at a distance of about 500 yards. After a sharp skirmish it was silenced, when we threw out our pickets and remained for the night. Our position was now on the left of our brigade, and on the right of Davis' division.

December 31. We were under arms at 4 A. M., and, at daylight, we discovered the enemy, in large force, within 60 yards of our pickets, who immediately commenced firing, when the enemy advanced to a furious attack. As the pickets retired, our regiment advanced to meet the enemy, and resisted their attack with desperate valor, repulsing the forces immediately in our front, with great slaughter and compelling them to retire across the brook, where we first found them posted, into a corn field beyond. This was the first attack that was made on our lines; but almost at the same time the enemy's columns, which were directed on those regiments on our right, pressed furiously onward, bearing down everything before them. The regiments on our right fell back after a short but desperate resistance, as was shown by the great mortality on both sides. Soon after this, the regiment on our left changed position to our rear, leaving our regiment completely isolated and battling against great odds, with the danger of being surrounded. We were ordered to retire for about 150 yards, and then march to the right, in order, if possible, to reattach ourselves to the balance of our brigade, which had been driven from its first position.

While doing this we fell in with a portion of General Davis' division, and were advised that we had better co-operate with that division for the present, as our brigade had, by that time, retired so far that it would consume much valuable time in finding it, time that could be used, at this particular juncture to greater advantage by re-inforcing one of his (Davis') brigades. We posted ourselves on the right of Davis' division, in front of which was a rebel battery, at a distance of about 400 yards. A little to the right and in front of this was Edgerton's battery, which had been previously captured by the rebels in the onset and was still in their possession.

It was here that our regiment charged alone, recapturing Edgerton's battery, and up to the guns of the rebel battery, through a hurricane of grape and canister, until we were confronted by several thousand of the rebel infantry, when, as we were unsupported, we were obliged to retire to the line from which we had started on the charge, leaving our much loved battery in the hands of the rebels, as we had no means of moving it off. Yet we were repaid for this desperate charge, as much as for any we made during the day, in damaging the enemy and holding him in check.

We retired in good order, halted and formed in our previous position, on the right of Davis' division. Here Colonel Housum fell. The battle was here hotly contested for some time, when our forces began to give way, fiercely pursued by the enemy, who came near taking a battery of ours at this place.

As soon as the battery was safely off, we retired to the fence on the opposite side of the field, where we stood alone for some time, contending with the rebels, until they commenced scaling the fence on our right and left, when we retired to the woods and again made a stand. We thus continued for some time, taking advantage of everything that came in our way, moving slowly, and our line never broke once throughout the day; but we fought every time we could find a line to rest on, or wherever we could gain a position in which we could, for a minute, successfully make a stand.

When we came near the Nashville and Murfreesborough turnpike we fell in with a portion of the Twenty-ninth Indiana Volunteers, under the gallant Major Collins; also a portion of the Thirtieth Indiana Volunteers. These, with our regiment, were now joined together as a remnant of the old Fifth brigade, under Colonel Dodge, as brigade commander. We were posted, on the edge of the woods, by General Johnson, on the right of General Cleve's division, which had just come up. The rebels were now coming on with tenfold more impetuosity, and our men were ordered to lie down quietly behind a fence, which partly protected us. We waited here until the rebels were within a short distance, when we up and delivered our fire with such great effect that the rebels began to give way.

We now pitched into them with whoop and yell, all the time delivering a most destructive fire, and soon the whole rebel column was in full retreat. We drove them half a mile, when our ammunition gave out and we were relieved, when we retired to the railroad to obtain a fresh supply. This was the first check of importance that the rebels received, as it saved our ammunition train and secured for our forces an important position.

January 1, 1863. We remained under arms on the crest of the hill, where we ended our final charge on the 31st ultimo. At 4 P. M. we received a heavy fire from a rebel battery, which was soon silenced.

January 2. Remained in the same position as on the 1st. A heavy battle was fought on our left, in which we took no part. In the evening we went on picket. A heavy skirmish took place immediately in front of our line.

January 3. Still remained under arms in our old position. At night, in the midst of the rain, the last final struggle was made, in which we took no part.

During this great battle our little regiment did no discredit to the old Keystone Staff. Officers and men stood up and did their duty nobly.

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That our line never broke shows that our men fought like veterans. We went into action with 288 men, we lost, in killed 5, including Lieutenant Colonel Housum; in wounded 29, including one commissioned officer; missing, 29, including 2 commissioned officers. Total, 63. Of those missing the greater part were either killed or taken prisoners.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have the honor to be, most respectfully your obedient servant,

TOM ELLWOOD ROSE,

Captain Commanding Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers.  
 Capt. D. C. Wagner,  
 Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Second Brigade.

The wagon trains joined the troops on the field on the sixth, when the division marched through Murfreesborough, four miles out the Shelbyville pike, and there camped. Supplies were still very short.

In the three days immediately preceding this move, the men received but one-half pound of crackers (hardtack) and a very small piece of bacon apiece. From here, on the eleventh, the regiment marched to Nashville to escort a large, empty supply train, to return on the thirteenth, with the wagons loaded full, marching thirty-three miles on the latter day.

After the battle of Stone river, the Seventy-seventh was without field officers, as Major Bradford had previously resigned. Captain Thomas E. Rose was commissioned Colonel; Captain Frederick S. Pyfer, Lieutenant Colonel, and Captain Alexander Phillips, Major.

General Rosecrans having heard of the charge of the Seventy-seventh upon the Confederate battery, was so much interested in the affair, that a few days after the battle, he rode into the camp of the regiment, and then, accompanied by its

field officers, went to the battlefield to view the ground, over which the regiment had passed on that eventful morning of December 31, 1862.

While encamped here, pursuant to orders from the War Department, dated January 9, 1863, the army (the Fourteenth Army Corps) was divided into three corps. The center was designated the Fourteenth Corps; the right wing, the Twentieth Corp; and the left wing, the Twenty-first Corps.

This change of name did not however, affect either the organization of the army or its various commanders.

On the seventh day of February, the Seventy-seventh, together with the other regiments of the second brigade, was detailed to work upon the fortifications. It moved to near the Nashville pike, a short distance west of the town. There it was engaged in the construction of a fort, which was completed in exactly four months. This fort was considered one of the strongest earth works in that part of the country.

On March twentieth, the entire Army of the Cumberland was drawn up in line for review by General Rosecrans and Staff. The General, in riding along the line from right to left, stopped a few moments in front of the Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania, and said to Colonel Rose, "Colonel, I see your regiment is all right. Give my compliments to your men, tell them it is the banner regiment of Stone river. It was the only regiment on the right wing that never broke ranks." This was probably the highest compliment ever paid to any regiment by the Commanding General of an army. It was duly communicated to the men, while on dress parade that same evening.