

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES  
Good battle record

97 Ohio

Twelve notebook pages (incomplete) re the Battle of Stone's River [Murfreesboro], Tennessee

Enclosed in letter of January 10, 1863

[Page 1:]

opened out on our right, in a dense woods and continued all the forenoon, our troops driving them back with great slaughter. Then all was silent again along the line. we remained in front again that night, on picket, our pickets and theirs exchanging fire frequently during the night. the next morning Dec 31st the rebels made an attack on our front, Woods Division, with furious determination to drive us back, when our whole Division became engaged, about noon the 97th was ordered over by Rosecrans

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in person to assist another Brigade. I led them over to the right on Double-quick and formed them in line of battle right under a heavy fire - not a man flinched - but came right to the work like heroes - we held the position, and after two or three hours, the enemy gave way and began to face back leaving us masters of the position - here we had a full realization of the horrors of war in earnest, rebel batteries were playing on us, with great fury[,] shells exploding over and around us - While our own battery in our rear poured

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their fire over our heads at the enemy which kept us duking [sic] and dodging to keep out of their way as well as the enemy - the roar of artillery was terribly sublime! no language can convey any, even the remotest conception of it - we stirred not from our position until 4 o'clock next morning, when we changed our position and the whole army changed its base line - This was new years day - I shall not soon forget how we spent the day, nor how and where we

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held watch the night before!! New Years came with fury & terror - with dead & dying strewn over the ground for miles around[,] wounded men groaning and calling for help, for water - for every conceivable form of relief! but none came, save only the relief of death!! The following day picket firing went on all day along the line and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they made another attack upon our left - again

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we were under the crossfire of our own & the enemy's batteries in full view of the approaching columns driving our men back[.] back they came! and on, on, steadily marched the defiant foe - the roar of musketry increasing at every step - our forces giving way and apparently flying before them. They were still not in range of our guns, but approaching very fast. we were holding ourselves in breathless suspense awaiting our turn - and such suspense!!

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no tongue can describe it - They had reached the little creek which separated us - here our big guns opened on them a murderous fire. I looked around to the rear and saw our re-inforcements coming up column after column with banners flying. I called out to our men, to be of good cheer. the day would yet be ours - This column was led by some general we all took to be Rosecrans - waiving [sic] his

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hat and sword - and cheering his men on - ours took the cue, and such a round of ef cheers I never heard - I took the regiment on with the column on double quick - I saw by this time even before we reached the creek that our men that were driven back had begun to rally & the enemy in turn were flying back from whence they came - ours pursuing!! The tide had turned! The day was ours - I never had such

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feelings and emotions in my life! it seemed to me that all fear had left me and all that remained was the fear that I would not get to take a part in the grand panorama that was moving before me!! & when I got the order to move my very heart bounded with delight, but very soon night closed over the scene and left us again Masters of the field! we rested on the extreme front that night and all next day

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The following night our centre made a night attack and drove them back some distance - and we were relieved and permitted to come back to the rear for a little rest - that night, Saturday night, the rebels evacuated their position since which nothing has been heard of them[,] only the supposition that they are retreating towards Chattanooga[.] if so we will have no more big battle soon if ever -

[Page 10:]

This has been one of the most extensive fights of the war - our loss is heavy but theirs, if possible must be twice as heavy - our Div. alone has lost probably one thousand killed & wounded together. we had two killed on the field & sixteen wounded one of which has since died [-] a cannon ball took off both his legs - A thousand incidents of peculiar interest have occurred to furnish

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food for thought and reflection, and I would like to fill a long letter to you, but I must close this to send it by hand [-] we have no mail here and no prospect of any very soon - As soon as I can get some facilities for writing I will give you my dear one a fuller description. I am in first rate health, although I have [been] exposed to the weather day & night for ten days Yet I have felt first rate

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not even disheartened, nor gloomy except the night before the battle commenced  
as I told you - There I must close my love - Oh how much I would like to see  
you and tell you all - but give yourself no uneasiness about me - my love to  
Mother and Tirza and ocean of love & kisses to yourself my dear - good bye  
my love I am in the mud, & dirt - Your Milton