

January 1, 1863 - In camp on Cripple Creek, Tennessee

The old year with all its joys and sorrows has passed away, and with its histories unnumbered with the things of the past. Born when rebellion threatened the overthrow of the government, its advent was goaded with the groans and cries of freemen. And amid the requiem sung was heard the groans of freemen fallen in defense of the country.

The new-year was born and yet the discordant sounds of war ran through the land. Instead of the greetings of a people happy, prosperous, and at peace there came the cries of anguish of hearts bereaved by the fortunes of war. Who can tell what the year shall bring forth? Shall we have peace or war?

January 2, 1863.

Last night we lay in line of battle in front of the enemy at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, shifting frequently from one part of the field to another. For two days the battle had raged in its fury; along the lines many free men had fallen, martyrs to the principles of Liberty and Justice.

Today we are lying in support of the 7th Indiana Battery on the left. About 3:00 p.m. the enemy advanced in force and attacked the left wing of the army, a portion of which had crossed Stone River. For awhile the enemy gained on us, but Rosecrans, with seeming forethought, had massed his troops and artillery in a favorable position to meet the advance.

The lost ground was soon regained, and the enemy driven in disorder from the field. Night alone saved him from utter rout and defeat.

During the engagement our regiment lay under the fire of nearly 100 of our guns and some 20 of the enemy's. It was a trying ordeal but we stood to our outpost. When the Rebels began the retreat, we were ordered to drive the enemy from a point of woods they occupied on our front. It was done at the point of the bayonet, in handsome style, General Palmer leading the charge. This being accomplished, we fell back to our old position and lay on our arms during the night. The night was spent in gathering and conveying to the hospitals the wounded, both Union and Rebel.

January 3, 1863.

The rain fell in torrents all night, and continues in this and bids fair to keep up all day. Everything quiet during the night. Slept on a board without a blanket or covering of any kind. Mud about four inches deep. The right wing under McCook has advanced today, meeting with light opposition. Skirmishing sometimes along the lines relieved by an occasional spirited artillery duel. At night a division of fresh troops, mostly East Tennessee, moved on to the Rebels along the pike, taking possession of the outerworks of the enemy and capturing many prisoners.

January 4, 1863.

It is reported and confidently, that the enemy has retreated from Murfreesboro. The cavalry has been thrown forward and Rossen and Negley's divisions are moving in the direction of the town.

The cavalry found the town vacated, and that Bragg retreated during Saturday night, leaving 3,000 of his wounded in our hands. Thus closes the memorable battle of Stone River, resulting in the defeat and rout of a superior number of the Rebels under their favorite general, by the Federals under Rosecrans. Another blow for Freedom has been struck, and victory perches on the banner of Liberty and Union.

Parties have been detailed and sent out to collect and bury the dead, many of which have lain in the field since Wednesday December 31, 1862. It is a horrible sight to wander over the different fields of action and to see the mangled and torn corpses of friend and foe, lying in close proximity, with lofty patriotism and firm determination on the white, upturned faces of the former; and hate and revenge on the latter, as if even in death they would fight and struggle for the mastery. To give a full description of those seven days of fighting, with their different phases and appearances of the field, I leave to pens abler than mine. And as to the causes which came so near to losing us the day and putting our army to rout on Wednesday, I leave to others to give.

In the evening we went back from the battleground and bivouacked for the night. The loss in our company was Sergeant William F. Davis, killed, and seven wounded, none seriously, Sergeant Litsey, only severely.