

for them, but he would let them go for half a dollar. The old fellow didn't find a market for his "possums", so he took them back, no doubt ~~was~~ much disappointed after stall feeding them so long.

A member of Morgan's guerrillas was a prisoner in camp for several days and they were glad to have him sent to Louisville as nine men had to guard him everyday and he had to be cared for out of their rations.

The regiment's first major engagement came on December 30th shortly after Captain Allen had returned from a leave which he spent with relatives and friends at home. Hearing heavy cannonading toward Elizabethtown on the 27th, the men began strengthening their stockade. The parapets around the stockade were made doubly strong and deep rifle pits were dug on each flank. On the inside of the works all the furniture was pulled down to leave plenty of room for free movement and the men wondered where breakfast would come from with all the furnaces, tables, equipment, etc., piled in a heap in the center of the stockade.

Morning found a flag of truce approaching the stockade, carried by three cavalry men. Captain Allen and Lieutenant Biers met and read the note which they carried. It presented a formal demand for the surrender of the fort, stipulating that if the fort would surrender, private property would be respected. It stated that the fort was surrounded by cavalry and artillery. It was signed by John Morgan, Brigadier General.

To the note Colonel Benneson replied that he very respectfully declined. The flag of truce returned and we began to prepare for immediate action. About 1½ hours elapsed before they got their battery in position and force in line of battle. They planted their cannon northwest of us and about a thousand yards distant. Every man was assigned a position previously designated, except about 15 who occupied the rifle pits under Sergeant Scott. There were a designated number for each of the circles, the Colonel's quarters, our own

headquarters and the several sides of the stockade, together with a reserve force in the center of about 10 men.

About nine o'clock the ball opened by the commencement of the bombardment. The word came from Sergeant Scott from the outside, who by previous arrangement was designated to give warning when the shells came. Look out, here she comes, he shouted and every fellow found his hiding place. The shell came buzzing and struck about 50 yards short of us, but on a line with the stockade. The ball bounded over us and struck on the farther bank of the creek.

A few minutes later we heard Scott yell out again, "Look out here she comes," and the gun belched out again. And again the doleful whiz in the air told of another bum winging its way to destruction. This was not a direct shot as the other, but was aimed to explode in or over the stockade. It burst just before it reached the destined goal sending the fragments in every direction, some of which fell harmless among the men. When the boys found the shot did no damage they off with their hats and no 4th of July ever witnessed more lusty cheering then they gave them.

The third shot passed between the stockade and adjutant's office and plowed into the ground about 10 feet from the south side of the stockade. The boys dug it up and found it to be a 12 pound shell. It probably had been damaged so that they thought it would not explode, and they made a direct fire with it as they did the first shot.

After firing several shots they changed the position of their piece about a quarter of a mile south of their position and some closer to us. Their cavalry thus far had done nothing, but were drawn up in a long line of battle to the rear of their artillery. When the battery changed position

a company of their cavalry deployed and came sweeping down to near where they had taken the second position with the battery. They were some 800 yards distant and the boys who were aching to let fly at them now received the order to fire.

The enemy were drawn up in line when the first fire was made and from some cause, whether from the effect of our shot or not, we did not know, dismounted and took their horses behind Howel's house, a dwelling nearby, returned, took position behind the fences and began returning our fire. The captain ordered to pour it into them and right willingly did they obey. The firing was rapid and incessant for about half an hour and it growing to hot for them, they ingloriously fled up the hill much faster than they came down.

At the same time they deployed in that direction, a party came down past Johnson's in the road and fields to near the river below us. They received the same kind welcome that the others did and like them they ingloriously fled, being heavily pressed by Sergeant Richard's who had taken a conspicuous position on the butment of the bridge and poured a well directed fire into their ranks. It was really laughable to see them scedadle, our shots must have been very effective among them, else they would not have been in so great hurry to get out of the way.

We learned afterward that one major and several others were wounded. A boy came down after the battle and reported that he heard the Rebel's say, "Those Yankees had the d---st guns ever saw, they shot farther than our cannon."

Fearing that the enemy had withdrawn only temporarily and would be back soon at a different position, perhaps Captain Allen's men went out onto the battlefield to see the effects of their shots. They found that some of their balls had penetrated as far as two inches into trees, some had gone right through large oak fence rails, walls in Howel's house 800 yards distant had been penetrated and some shots had even landed a mile distant.

The people of the village of New Haven, who were sympathetic to the Southern soldiers had expected the fort to surrender and were mortified to see the defeat handed to their men.

Colonel Benneson called Company H together following the victory. Delivering to the boys a pithey little speech in which he stated that he was perfectly satisfied with their display of courage and bravery and then rewarded them with a couple of well filled bottles of good old whiskey, which the boys received with a "god hearty cheer". The battle also satisfied the men that their guns, which they had thought contemptible and had dubbed them Benneson Rifles, were good guns after all and Colonel Benneson commented thereafter that he was proud to have them called by his name.

Later that same night the men who had been sent to the woods to retrieve the officer's horses which had been secreted before the battle returned to camp with a prisoner by the name of Price. This prisoner had two brothers who were Union men and he confessed to guiding Rebels to their places where they purloined good horses, which his brothers owned.

Captain Allen in his account of the battle added as an after thought that during the firing their mascot, the rooster, kept flapping his wings and crowing and the silk flag from the Quincy ladies still flew overhead

an inspiration to them all. A day later Company H learned that Morgan had fallen back beyond the Green River.

A poetic account of the "Battle of New Haven" composed by J.M. McNeill on January 1, 1863 was written into the journal also and a detailed pencil drawing of the area in which it was fought, showing the fort, Howel's House, the rail fences that were riddled by the bullets, and etc..

On January 4 Company H received an agreeable surprise in the form of a treat from the colored ladies of New Haven. The generous gift of "Apple Lady", a beverage; besides cake and applies, was accompanied by a note signed by one Laura Potenger in behalf of the givers, "for your bravery in repulsing the enemy on the 30th of December.

On January 16 the river nearby threatened to accomplish what Morgan had failed to do, destroy the railroad bridge and also the stockade. The snow was not two feet deep, said by citizens to the most ever had at New Haven.

By January 24 the regiment was ready to march again. They were forced to wait two or three days for a train to Louisville, "enough to aggravate the patience of a Christian, much less soldiers," was the writer's comment. Constant rain, deep mud and the inconvenience of sleeping out of doors in such weather added to the discomfort of the soldiers. "Such trials as these make the soldier think of home and the comfort there, but all of which the true soldier for a time gives up for the food of the cause he has enlisted to defend, that he may be enabled to secure to himself and those he has left behind, dearer to him than life, a continuance of those comforts and blessings which ^{he} ~~is~~ knows can not be secured but by the preservation of the institutions handed down to him by his forefathers, sealed with their consecrated blood.

Receiving new Springfield Rifles at Portland below Louisville the regiment boarded a river steamer there, the John H. Groesbeck, a new boat which had never made a trip. Men, mules and equipment crowded the boat to discomfort and some of the soldiers were forced to sleep on the hurricane deck. Proceeding south, they arrived at the mouth of the Cumberland, at Smithland, on February 2. The following morning the Groesbeck nose up the Cumberland River, taking the men through country which Captain Allen described as all woods, occasionally broken by the sight of a cliff and completely untouched by human hands.

Before arriving at Ft. Donelson the men saw signs of the enemy ahead in burning bales of hay that were floating down the river to meet them. They discovered the fort in the hands of the 83rd Illinois, under Colonel Hardin, consisting of only about 600 men, one 32 pound seige gun, a battery of four guns and one howitzer.

The enemy made their appearance above the town at one o'clock and sent in a flag of truce, demanding the surrender of the place. Notwithstanding the fearful discrepancy of numbers, the Rebel force under Forest and Wheeler numbering 5,000 men, Colonel Hardin refused and prepared to give battle. Our forces were fortified in the village by a few rifle pits of a very construction. The battle commenced at two from four Rebel batteries posted on the adjacent hill tops and was soon joined by the impetuous charges of the Rebel cavalry. The battle raged until nightfall, when the timely aid of our gun boats coming up, the Rebel's gave up the contest.

When we went over, our forces were engaged in burying the dead. They were burying the Rebels in a long ditch, the width of which was the length of a man. They piled them in side by side. We noticed the difference

between the burial of our own dead and that of the enemy, the former being buried as near as circumstances would permit in the approved civilian style and with military honors, while the latter were thrown in the long entrenchment much like we would so many hogs, which we felt to be as good as they deserved, having by their acts forfeited their rights while living to all social benefits, and ~~who~~ dead, to a Christian or military funeral.

Viewing the battlefield after the ~~victory~~^{victory}, these are some of the sights which Captain Allen recorded: The first object of battle horror that met our gaze was a fellow lying upon his back with his bowels torn out by a canister shot from the siege gun, upon which we judged he was making a charge up the hill, on the crest of which the gun was posted. The next we came to was an object truly appalling. He lay but a few feet from the mouth of the 32 pounder, upon which he had rashly charged and ordered its surrender. The only answer he received was a full charge of grape which literally tore him in pieces. His horse lay by him in the same horribly mutilated form.

We next approached where a crowd had gathered around some object in the street and found it to be the body of a Rebel colonel by the name of McNeer. His clothing was almost entirely cut off him by curious trophy seekers. The dead of our own forces awakened a different feeling than that with which we looked upon the enemy, whom we thought had met a just reward. Captain E.P. Rud of the 83rd was killed and decently placed in a metallic coffin, which he had purchased for a member of his company a short time before.

Captain Allen said the large fleet of transports which again moved up the river the following day, all with banners streaming from each jackstaff, the decks lined with uniformed soldiers, bands discoursing pleasing airs,

and the curling clouds of steam and the volumes of black smoke looming up all combined to form a grand, sublime picture. They arrived at Nashville on February 6.

From there the 78th and five other regiments marched to Franklin 16 miles south. It was reported that when General Davis had left Franklin with his brigade that morning, the Rebels had taken over the town, so preparations for battle were made. However, they found only a few scattered Rebels, which they quickly chased out. The regiments remained camped around Franklin for several days and during much of the time it rained. But Captain Allen said that they remembered the promise given to Noah and so the continued downpour did not disturb them to much, for if the end was coming, it would be by means of fire and most assuredly there would have to be a very long dry spell before that would accomplish the end, and as we believe God, in his infinite goodness and boundless wisdom would have no design in burning any but Rebels. We during the drying process would have ample time to get farther toward the North Pole and be saved from the destruction, living, moving monuments of God's divine goodness and wisdom.

Mean while the 78th had many sick men among them, to whom each company delegated one tent.

Beginning on March 4 the battle of Spring Hill was fought, the 33rd Indiana, 15th Michigan, 22nd Wisconsin and 85th Indiana regiments taking part alone until the afternoon of the following day. This victory went to the Rebels, with many losses on both sides. But the enemy appeared no more and when General Sheridan's division arrived to reinforce the regiments,

several of them started to follow them. They pursued ^{to} the Rebels ^{to} the Duck River 22 miles south and then returned, as the enemy showed no signs of giving battle.

The diary closed with an entry made on March 16 telling how work proceeded on the fortifications that were being made at Franklin.

Captain Allen had this to say in an earlier part of the diary.

"The amusement of camp is the spice of war and the only antidote for longing thoughts of home, wife and babies. We see cases frequently to whom this antidote does not apply. These men are marked by visible symptoms, such as gluttonous appetites, not able for duty, got the government quick step, dark scowls upon their faces, hanging brows like some jutting mass above the yawning chasm, physiognomy looking like the bright rays of a smile had not radiated over their care-worn features since the flood, and soon want to go to the hospital. Now there is more truth in this than fable, and the secret of it all is that they are homesick. And how easy it would be to effect a cure. A few hearty laughs like those we so often hear from those who labor under none of those symptoms would knock these like the electric shock on a thunder house. Won't do -- must keep a stiff upper lip and thinking about home, the wife, babies and blue eyes won't do that thing. We are sold for three years and the more we look on the bright side the sooner the end will come. Camp life on the whole is not so monstrous as one would suppose. Something is continually arising to amuse and break the monotony.