

Letter of Pvt. Thomas Corwin Potter, Battery B, 1st Ohio Light Artillery

Somersett, Ky.

January 24, 1862

Dear sister i have but a few moments to spare and i must be brief. we are ordered to march tomorrow for tennessee. i am in good health and hope this will find you the same. you must not be concerned about me. if you do not hear from me very often for we have not got our pay yet and i am out of postage money. i suppose you have heard of our late battle in which the noted rebel General Zolicoffer was shot through the heart and left on the field. they made the attack on us last sunday morning about 7 o'clock am about 6 miles from his camp. the engagement lasted about two hours and 40 minutes when the enemy retreated in great confusion leaving everything behind. the ground was literally covered all the way to their camp with ... muskets, sabres, blankets, knapsacks, haversacks, canteens, cartridges, horses and everything that they could throw away to facilitate their escape.

we followed them to their camp and played upon it with shot and shell from 16 pieces of artillery from three p.m. untill dark when we lay by our pieces untill daylight when we went into their camp and found that they hadd all crossed the river leaving 14 pieces of artillery, a large lot of ammunition, several hundred baggage wagons & about 3,000 horses and mules, all of their camp equipage, a large lot of comisary stores, provisions and clothing. their camps were on both sides of the river and covered a space of ten square miles and there was tents and barracks enought fore 25,000 men to winter in. this they have strongly fortified but they left it without doing it any damage.

our loss is about 80 in killed and up to the present our troops have buried 350 of the rebels. i was within rods of Zolicoffer when he fell and cut three buttons off from his coat. one of these I sent to Wm and another to father. i have several things that i would send to you but i have not go the means. i must close.

our battery was the first one on the field and took the advance and our piece (no. 1) fired the first shot that was thrown from a cannon at the long to be remembered battle of logans field. our piece took the extreme _____ and i loaded it 117 times but i must close. write to me often. direct as before. this from your brother, Thomas Corwin Potter.