

Letter of Pvt. Joseph G. Durfee 9th Ohio Light Artillery

Our battery left Louisville Saturday Morning, Jan. 11th, and took the cars to Lebanon, which place we reached at 8, Sunday morning. We started for Somerset on Friday, and traveled on a fine pike road nearly all the way ... We reached Somerset on Friday and pitched our tents in a fine situation, on an elevation commanding the whole country around the town ... but Friday night, we were ordered by General Carter to move across Fishing Creek about 8 miles. The next morning at daylight, we moved with our four guns and a part of our baggage. ... Soon after we started, it commenced raining and rained all day. When we came to the creek, it had begun to swell. We crossed without trouble and reached a point about half way between Somerset and old Zolly about noon, where we found two Batteries of artillery (Standart's and Kinney's) and ten regiments of infantry ... When we reached this place, we found, as we thought, no danger of a fight. We lay all night in the rain. The next morning we were a sorry set of boys. We were awakened at daylight by the long roll. The enemy had attacked the Indiana 10th and Woford's K.Y. Cavalry, which were encamped half a mile south of us, in the woods. We planted two of our guns where we were, and moved the other two half a mile to the west, and the other Batteries towards the woods. It was not many minutes before the fight became an earnest one. The 10th Indiana were badly cut up before they had any help, and fell back towards us. At this time we commenced firing. The 2d Minnesota and 1st and 2d [4th] Ky. poured forth their iron hail, and the fight became general and terrible. ... For about an hour we had to fire over the woods in the direction of the enemy's artillery, the roar of which was all we had to direct us. We fired our shells in earnest. One of them struck a stub, and, bursting, killed 10 and wounded 8. I saw and counted them. Finally, the cry "They flee," was heard and we followed in the rear of the infantry. We followed them within two miles of their fortifications. It was then 4 o'clock. We commenced firing and continued till dark. We lay on our arms all night expecting an attack every minute. At 6 o'clock in the morning, our Battery was ordered to move half a mile south to the banks of the Cumberland River, and down the stream near the enemy's camp. We saw a steamer just crossing the river. We fired at her with the Parrott guns, and after firing ten shots, set her on fire, and a grist mill close by. ... When we shelled her, she was loaded with horses and baggage. The horses jumped overboard; some were saved and some drowned. The rest of the loading was destroyed.

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