

History of Kaufman Funk by Rev. Frentz

Kaufman Funk Biography

" Kaufman Funk, bn. Nov. 16, 1843, in Wayne County Ohio. Was medium height, light complexion. Attended the common schools when a child. After his mother died, he had a home with his sister, Cecilia Myers, and then with his brother William, until the Rebellion broke out, he then enlisted in the 30th Ind. Infantry, in Oct. 1862 under Gen. Wood, of Ky. He with a few of his comrades organized a Bible class. Of this he writes his sister: 'We read a chapter of scripture every evening before going to bed, and each one passes his opinion it, and then we bring things to a point as near as we can; this is a very good practice, I think. The rest of the boys are beginning to find it out and come in to hear us: last evening our tent was crowded full, they all seemed to like it.' He was then an orderly in rank. They moved south into Kentucky and Tennessee, and were in the battle near Murfreesboro, Tenn., whence he writes the following:

" Head Quarters, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division.

In the field, Jan. 1, 1862.

'My Dear Sister: - Now that we are settled, and the excitement is over, I will try to inform you of a few affairs which I think will be of interest to you. In the first place I must say that I am thankful to God for His mercies. You have undoubtedly heard of the battle, and you are perhaps uneasy about my welfare. In reply to this I can say that I am in good health, and by this time in pretty good spirits. I was in the thickest of the battle and did not get a touch by a ball; how I ever got out in this way I cannot say, for I did not think the bullets flew far enough apart to miss a man. I am very sorry to say we had to fall back immediately after the attack was made. We were overpowered by ten times our number; one whole corps was thrown on our two brigades; but after giving back some distance, and taking a new position, we checked the enemy' s column, and afterwards repulsed them. I will now try and give you an account of our proceedings since leaving Nashville, and if you will let the rest of the relatives read it, you will do me a favor, as I have not time at present to write many letters.

'We left nashville [sic] on the day after Christmas, marched south on the turnpike through a drenching rain, and having to fight the enemy all the way, made very slow progress. We reached a village about 7 P.M. and went into camp. In the night we received another very heavy shower of rain, which made the ground (with the exception of the pike) almost impassable. We started at 7 A.M. that morning to advance, We had moved but a little way when we came in sight of the enemy . Our cavalry opened fire, and had quite a skirmish. Fire was also opened from artillery, which soon dislodged the rebels who were posted on bluffs on each side of the road. Our cavalry lost two men killed and three wounded. In a short time the rain commenced coming down in torrents but we still moved slowly, feeling our way as we went, and every now and then having a brush with the rebels. After the rain was over there arose a dense fog so that we had to stop and wait for it to clear. Our brigade was during this time deployed in order of battle,

as there were signs of the enemy's presence in force. The fog cleared in about an hour, and we received orders to advance, which we did, carefully guarding against any dodge the enemy might choose to play. We soon came in sight of them again, when they opened on us with two pieces of artillery, posted on the right of the road, on a high bluff. Our battery was brought into position on the left of the road, also on a bluff, and opened fire. This was too much for them, so they soon pulled stakes and left. We immediately moved forward and occupied their ground. Here we came in sight of a small village - Tryune [sic] - which the rebels still held. Our battery was placed in position and commenced shelling the town, which soon made the rebels seek other quarters. We were now in good position, as the hill upon which we were stationed commanded the country for a considerable distance. We waited here a few moments and receiving no reply, moved forward calculating to occupy the village. Our movement was as rapid as possible, and but slow at that, for the ground was so soft that it was impossible to move faster than a slow walk. When we reached the edge of the village, the enemy opened on us again, with artillery, Orders were sent immediately to advance and charge the battery, but it could not be done, as the men were entirely fagged out. The rebels gave us a heavy fire of grape and canister, but it had no effect at all, although we were within easy range. We rested under fire and then advanced, but the enemy, seeing the game, again fled. We pursued them for about a mile and went into camp. Here we lay the next day; were then a westerly direction from Murfreesboro. On the 29th we started for Murfreesboro, coming across from Tryune [sic] on a dirt road, we arrived on the Nashville and Murfreesboro turnpike about 7 P.M. and went into camp. We were too close to the enemy to have camp-fires, therefore we did as best we could without cooking. Next morning we moved forward again and took a position on the right of our line in a southerly direction from Murfreesboro. Our movement was slowly made as the advance guard were all the while contesting the enemy. We reached our position about dusk, pickets being in sight of the others. Gen. Davis' division which was on our left, was engaged by the enemy. There had been a rebel battery shelling his line all day long, and when we came up Gen. Kirk ordered our battery into position and to commence firing. The movement was executed with great promptness, and at the second fire the rebels picked up and left. They were then taking another position, when our battery gave them another round and disabled them entirely. our [sic] line being by this time posted we retired, but little rest did we get, for the pickets were constantly firing on one another. In the morning the whole command was under arms before daylight, and remained so until after daylight, when part of the battery horses were taken to water. No sooner was this done than the enemy appeared in great numbers. They moved up with a front equal to a battalion in line, and seven regiments deep. Our battery opened fire with grape and canister and the infantry poured a volley into us which made everything ring. Our men were compelled to fall back as we had but a single line; the battery could not be moved on account of the horses being killed. The rebels were now within twenty-five yards of us, the men of the battery stood until some of them were bayoneted. We fell back in the best order possible, losing many men and officers. The next position was taken in an open field, which place we again held until we could

almost see the whites of their eyes. Here I heard that Gen. Kirk was wounded and his horse killed, so I went back again, and found two men carrying him. I asked whether he wanted my horse, he said he did. I dismounted and helped him to mount, By this time we were between two fires, our own and the enemy's which was not more than ten rods from us. The General got out safely, but how I got out without a wound, I cannot say, for the balls came just like hail. The General is now in Nashville, doing well. What was left of our brigade fell back again across the open field into the edge of a wood and formed again. Here we checked the enemy for the first time, but they soon overpowered us again and drove us. By this time they had turned our battery upon us, and just made the shells ring, We fell back through the wood in very good order, the enemy still following us, When we reached the reserve of our forces we repulsed and drove the enemy back again, but not near to our old point. The brigade was again formed under Col. J. B. Dodge and took position which we held that night and the next day. Here you can see how we spent our New Year's day. There was heavy skirmishing all day on New Year, and in the evening one of the heaviest battles of the war was fought on the left of our lines. The killed in our brigade will amount to about 125. The wounded and missing will amount to about 900.

'we lay on the field until the 7th of January, then moved where we now are, five miles south of Murfreesboro, on the Selbyville [sic] turnpike. It has rained most of time since the battle, and we have had but little to eat, nevertheless, we are thankful it is no worse.

' Jan. 9. - I am in good spirits this morning, owing to the brightness of the weather. I hope you are well. I know not how I can send this letter, as there is but little mail at present. Not having time to write more, I will close,

'I remain your brother,

' Kaufman. '

Received Captain Commission

"In the year 1862 they marched through a great part of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, having frequent battles with the enemy. His brother Henry, though in the same army, did not meet him until Sept. 28, 1865, when they spent two nights together, their first meeting in eleven years, and the last time they saw each other until Kaufman was on his death bed and could not speak. Henry says, "We may well be proud of Kaufman, for his whole regiment is proud of him. " Kaufman received a commission as captain, in April, 1865, and then was granted a furlough of 14 days before taking the command. His official signature now was: K. Funk, Captain and Topographical Engineer, 2d Brigade, 1st Division, 4 A.C."

Kaufman was eventually commissioned as a Colonel but that was Mexican wars and not part of this story.