

## Chicago Tribune Article January 26, 1863

Account of the 19th Illinois at Murfreesboro in a Letter Home  
The Glorious 19th - A Stirring Account of the Part it Took in the Fight.

Editors Chicago Tribune:

Knowing how anxious many of your readers are for any and all the particulars of the conduct of the 19th, I send you a copy of a letter from my son, a private in company D, 19th Illinois. He left the freshman class of the Northwestern University at Evanston in June, 1861, and has shared the fortunes of the regiment up to this time. Like all his comrades, he loves Gen. Turchin with a fervor that a soldier can only feel for a good and great man. Of course, the letter was not intended for publication, and the personal allusions were written only for a parent's eye.

MURFREESBORO, Jan. 6, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER:

After I recovered from my illness, of which I wrote you, I overtook the regiment on the 30th ult., in time to go into the fight. We did not have a very severe fight that day, and lost only nine men. We had hardly anything to eat, and our blankets were in the wagons, miles in the rear. In the morning we were up early and in line of battle. The firing soon became heavy on our right, and as we saw Sheridan's division drive the rebels, we cheered heartily. Presently we found, by the sound of the musketry, that the rebels had turned our right. [illegible word] had been partially surprised. He had lost his artillery, and his veteran troops were giving way before the enemy. Further back towards our rear we heard firing. Then our guns opened on the enemy. We changed front, fixed bayonets and charged, but the foe fled before we had advanced ten rods. We commenced firing, and soon a storm of bullets whistled through our ranks. At the first fire poor Corporal Daggy fell, mortally wounded. He was of our company, and Turchin's pet. We had repulsed the enemy, but aid was wanted for the 27th Ill. We faced to the right and walked over the 27th, who were lying down, and filed around in front of the 18th Ohio as coolly as though on dress parade, while Scott rode at the head of the column amidst a storm of shot and shell. Edgerton's battery had been taken and was turned upon us, and the Washington battery opened on us with shell. One shell cut off a large tree and it fell in our ranks, knocking down three men. Then word came that we were surrounded and cut off, and must cut our way out.

We faced about, formed column, and rushed into the cedar swamp with fixed bayonets. Fortunately, the rebels had left us a little space to get out of, and we rushed through and formed on the left of Sheridan. Soon we moved to the front and commenced firing again. All at once Sheridan's men fell back and began to run; then Miller's brigade came out of the woods in full retreat. Negley saw that unless something could stop the rebels,

all was lost. He ordered us to stand till the rest could form. The rest of our brigade had left us, and the 19th alone bore back the advancing rebels. For nearly an hour we stood with the enemy in front and on both flanks. At last we saw that the 18th Ohio and 42d Ill. had formed, and "old Rosey" was leading them to the charge. Then Scott gave the word to retreat, and we came out of the woods and retired to the center as reserves. We were engaged no more that day.

We slept again without blankets, and in great doubt. Rosecrans had become desperate, and had the bridges in our rear burned, so that we must fight or die, for there was no thought of retreat with him. New Year's day we were not engaged, but stood ready all day. The next morning we were moved to the left, and stood listening to the firing until it became quite severe. Then Rosecrans rode up and asked for Gen. Palmer. He was not to be found. Rosecrans galloped up to Col. Stanly, who commanded our brigade, and said, "Col. Stanly, save our left, if you can." "By the left flank, march," was the command, and away we went. "By the right flank march! Deploy column!" And forward we went. We lay down for a moment and fired, then up and forward, right through the river, though a rebel division disputed the passage. Col. Scott rushed in without stopping, and Adjutant Bangs was beside him urging on the men. Scott put his cap on his sword and shouted "Forward." I rushed out with one or two others from the cover, and went ahead to Scott. For a moment half a dozen of us drew the rebel fire, and nearly all were shot. I received a shot in the hand, but fought on. Scott soon fell, wounded in the leg. Then we fought for revenge. We ran forward and drove the rebels in perfect terror before us. The rebels fought with the courage of desperation - even their wounded fought, and we had to kill them, for even with the bayonet at their breasts they would not surrender. These were the Louisiana and Florida regiments. Many of the Tennessee men, however, were glad to surrender. One of them lay on the ground badly wounded. I came to the tree where he lay, to shelter myself while I was loading. The poor fellow raised up and said, "Go in - I'm glad to see you make 'em [sic] run! I'm a conscript. Kill them: they forced me into the 20th Tennessee. Hurrah for the Union." You may be sure I was cheered by this. Just after this we charged on a rebel battery, and took it.

I saw the Color Sergeant standing behind a tree, and I told him to give the flag to me if he was afraid to go forward with it. He said he dare go as far as I, so we rushed forward and formed in the open field, under a storm of shot and shell. The rebel batteries poured in grape and canister, but shot too high. We formed in line to make a charge, but it was so dark that we had to discontinue the fight. We took our positions, stacked arms, and went back to get blankets out of the knapsacks of the dead rebels. We took, each man, what blankets we wanted, also haversacks. I got one well-filled with biscuit, nice ham, sugar and coffee, and had a good supper. We took the colors of the 20th Tennessee. The ground was heaped with rebel dead, and as we looked over the field by the light of torches for our fallen comrades, the scene was terrible. We lost 124 out of 340 men in this fight. On Monday we entered Murfreesboro. It is one hospital. Every house is full of rebel wounded.

J.M. TRACY.