

Henry S. Bliss Files

Biographical Information on Henry Bliss

Born: 1836 in New York

Died: May 10, 1875

Married: 1858 to Mary Ann Byrd

Served in: The Civil War 38th Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Company K

Rank: Private

Date entered service: August 12, 1861

Date returned home: (first time home since left for war)

Weight during the war: 136 lbs.

Number of miles marched: Approximately 2000

Number of states marched through: 7

Number of towns camped in/near or marched through: Approximately 60

Towns either camped or marched through:

MISSOURI: Pilot Knob, Mineral Point, Potosi, Middlebrook, Ironton, Arcadia, Fredericktown, [sic] Patterson, Greenville, Doniphan, Pocahontas, Jackson. ARKANSAS: Powhatten, [sic] Jacksonport, Dallas. ILLINOIS: Camp Butler, Cape Girardeau, Cairo. KENTUCKY: Franklin, Bowling Green, Cave City, Munfordville, Elizabethtown, West Point, Louisville, Beardtown, Springfield, Perryville, Danville, Lancaster, Crab Orchard, Lebanon, New Market, Mound City, Padukah. [sic] TENNESSEE: Cooperville, Eagleville, Petersburg, Grieme, Lawrenceburgh, [sic] Columbia, Spring Hill, Franklin, Murfreesboro, Lavergne, Antioch, Nashville, Edgefield, Hamburg, Corrinth. [sic] MISSISSIPPI: Reinza, Booneville, Jacinto, Ripley, Iuka, Eastport, Florence. ALBAMA: Mt. Pleasant, Goodrichville, Mitchellville.

Number of letters written: 103 [margin note-5 to other people] 102 (known of still in existence)

Letters written to: Mary A. Bliss (wife). She could not read, so they were read to her by family members.

Camp two miles S.W. of Murfreesboro Tenn

Jan 8th 1863

Dear Companion I am still alive and among the living and able for my daily rations although I feel rather stupid from the effects of exposure to cold wet weather. During the nine days we besieged Murfreesboro our Division was on the front lines and most of the time we were not allowed fire day or night and it rained a good share of the time. We would occasionally take of [sic] our clothes and wring them. It was indeed a time to try mens [sic] souls, a time long to be remembered. On the thirty 1st Dec. the rebels made a charge on three of our divisions viz. Johnsons, Davies's, and Sheridans. Johnson was on the right and Sheridan on the left of our Davies's division. Johnson allowed his men to be taken by surprise and they soon ran in confusion. Sheridans [sic] men fought like heroes but were overpowered and gave back leaving our division by itself. The rebels swung their flanks around us and poured in their fire from three directions. Davis ordered us to retreat. Carlins [sic] Brigade did not get the order til [sic] ten minutes after it was issued so we were the last to leave the ground. The 38th was the last regiment to leave and Company K was the last company to leave the ground (that is true). We retreated two or three miles. The rebs [si] poured in their musketry, grape, canister and shells very lively. We met reinforcement who halted [sic] the scamps and drove them back then we felt glad. The two armies continued fighting and maneuvering until the 4th inst [sic] then the last of the enemy evacuated and we went back from the lines to the woods and built fires and sought the rest we so much needed. Oh, how happy we felt. The roaring of canon the whizing [sic] of shells and minieballs [sic] had ceased, and laid in peace around large fires made of dry cedar rails. Oh, how happy.

Yesterday we moved camp from 3 miles above town to 2 miles below. I dont [sic] know how long we will stay here. Our casualties are thirty men have already been buried of the 38th. I dont [sic] know how many were wounded. Co. R lost two killed and ten wounded. Henry More and Boss Bridges and Sam Scott are prisoners. Uncle J.E. Reed was captured but released. Eliphaz Reisner and John Bliss were captured and paroled. John is at Nashville in the hospital. Eliphaz is here he came last night. Uncle Amos was captured and retaken by our men. Our 2nd Lient. [sic] P.N. Scott was shot in the leg. It has been amputated we fear he will die. I am as willing for peace to be made now as I ever was, and I guess this whole army is ready for peace. We had had no news from the north lately.

I have not had a letter for a coons [sic] age. I feel thankfull [sic] to God for my preservation, let us not forget to put our trust in him, for he is able to save to the uttermost and he has said all things shall work together for good to those who love and serve him.

Mary, I love to see you and Jonny but how long it will be till I can is hard to tell. I must close for this time. Give my love to all our Parents and Brothers and Sisters and take a full share for yourself and Johnny.

From your affectionate Husband Henry S. Bliss

I hope we will soon get our mails more regular. Then we will write often.

[memo-Written in light pencil at bottom of sheet] I have just heard that Lient. [sic] Scott is dead.