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**15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Regiment** *p. 342-343*

The names of those who were in this regiment we have found among the other soldiers in the previous list but here we will reproduce from some official writings\*\* since they are indisputable proof of the esteem that Norwegians gained and the bravery they showed in the army:

Headquarters for the Army's 2nd Brigade, 1st Division,  
Right Wing, the 28th December 1862.

To Colonel H. Heg, 15th Wisconsin Volunteers,

The Commanding General wishes to express to the officers and men of the 21st Ill. Volunteers, 15th Wis. Volunteers, 101 Ohio Volunteers, 38th Ill. Volunteers and the 2nd Minn. Battery his admiration of their conduct in the conflict with the enemy near Nolensville the 26th inst. After a 10 mile tiring march in heavy rain and flooded roads you met the enemy and drove him back to Knob Gap where they, with 8 pieces of artillery and supported by a large force of cavalry, gave strong resistance. It was in the attack on the battery that you demonstrated bravery that has never been exceeded and seldom equalled in the annals of the war. After having advanced without stop or wavering for a mile under fierce fire right up to the cannon emplacement, you drove the enemy from his strong position, took a cannon and 6 prisoners and were still willing, despite the hard march, to continue the pursuit if you had received permission. Your conduct has brought the Army's admiration.

W. P. Carlin Colonel, 38th Ill. Volunteers

In a later letter, dated the 27th January 1863, referring to the campaign of 26th Dec, '62 to 4th Jan. '63, Colonel Carlin writes:

The number of killed and wounded officers and soldiers in the 101 Ohio and 15th Wis. was greater than in any other regiment with respect to their size. But not a single regimental banner was lost; they were all brought to safety, flying proudly right above an overwhelming force of the enemy. Not a cannon, not a caisson was lost from your battery. You held your position until the troops on your right side had fallen back and your flank and rear were attacked while your left side was also wiped out. You later

formed up at a fence near the position you had held so long and did not waver until you were almost completely surrounded.

Then after running over two open fields, you formed another battle line at another fence on the east side of Goersom's house (our hospital) and held your position until you received orders to pull back - after you had sent a destructive salvo into the enemy.

The 31st December, you fought until half of your officers and soldiers were killed or wounded or completely missing from their colours.

On the 2nd January when it was feared there would be defeat on the left wing on the other side of Stone River, the immortal Rosencrans sent a message to your commander and gave him the following order:

'Take your section over to the left wing, form two lines and if our troops there are driven back let them pass through your lines and when the rebels come near, give a great cry and attack them.'

Through the hard combat the brigade was reduced from 1900 to 700 men; nevertheless you went with steady steps to the battlefield where you found, however, that the enemy was already beaten.

You can be proud of the undisputed honour you have gained in having attacked the enemy on the heights at Knob Gap where you drove them back with great losses. Even if the praise you deserve has not been proclaimed in the newspapers you have won a reputation that will never die. When the truth comes to light the 2nd Brigade will be honoured and as long as you live you can be proud of your conduct at Perryville, Knob Gap and Stone River.

**On the 29th April 1863 when the 15th Wis. was transferred from the 2nd Brigade, it received the following message from Headquarters:**

The Brigade's commanding General hereby expresses his sorrow that in the interest of the service Major-General Rosencrans, who commands this army division, has transferred the 15th Wis. Volunteers, Colonel H. C. Heg from this Brigade.

The commanding General hereby forwards, since he separates from this regiment, to both officers and men his sincere thanks for the honourable and soldierly manner which they have conducted themselves on all occasions.

In camp they have been obedient and faithful in the fulfillment of their duties and on the battlefield they had no superiors in bravery. \*\*\*

In the Battle of Chickamauga on the 19th and 20th of Sept. 1863 some (176) of the 15th Wis. also took part. But this group was reduced from 176 to 75 battle experienced men. They had suffered a loss of 101, 10 officers and 91 enlisted men.\*\*\*\* Colonel Hans C. Heg had at that time been promoted to Brigade Commander (3rd Brigade) and thus commanded the whole brigade. Lieutenant Ole C. Johnson commanded the 15th Wis. (the Norwegian) Regiment. It was in this battle, unfortunately, that Colonel Heg met his fate (the 19th Sept. 1863). In an instant when he saw his Brigade waver because of the enemy's superior force, he rode into the wildest tumult waving his hat calling on his men to follow him. This they did instantly and drove the rebels back a great distance. However, he was badly wounded - and died the next day.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ole C. Johnson who also showed great courage was among those who were taken prisoner on the second day.

\*This Regiment was formed in the fall of 1861 on the initiative of Hans C. Heg and Senator John A. Johnson. The Senator's brother Ole C. Johnson (Skipnes) was its first recruiting officer. Both Heg and Ole Johnson went into the field with the regiment. See their biographies in the preceding section.

\*\*These writings are, with a few small changes, taken from a little book "15th Wis. Reg." that Senator John A. Johnson published. But in the book there is no list of names of non-commissioned officers or enlisted men. The names and information about those who were in this regiment I have obtained from various places as previously mentioned.

\*\*\*General Howard, who had also heard about the 15th Wis. once said, "I could wish that we had a whole brigade of such men" Yes, Generals Stanley, Woods, Sherman, Willich and McCook had similarly spoken appreciatively about the Norwegian regiment. It was known almost everywhere for they were moved from one place to another - always where the need was greatest, which says enough.

\*\*\*\*Sergeant Otto Steen who was in this regiment recounts that its total loss of killed and wounded (in the course of the war) was 481. It most often went under the name of the Scandinavian Regiment. It consisted mainly of Norwegians.

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