

# Knob Gap

**tennessee  
civil war  
preservation  
association**

## **NARRATIVE**

After seizing Nolensville, Union forces pushed south on the road to Triune. About two miles south of town, the men Gen. Jefferson C. Davis division came under fire from Confederate forces holding the heights on either side of Knob Gap. Davis was forced to spend the remainder of the day pressing the full weight of his division against the Confederates who withdrew as the sun began to set.

## **HISTORICAL THEMES**

Crucible for Leadership, Influence on Campaign

## **EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:**

Accounts of engagement at Knob Gap

## **LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

N/A

## **COUNTY:**

Davidson

## **DATE:**

12/26/1862

## **GEO COORDINATES:**

35°55'18.34"N  
86°39'27.98"W

## **PRESERVATION**

### **OPPORTUNITY INDEX:**

HIGH

## **CONFEDERATE UNITS:**

Brig. Gen. John  
Wharton's brigade

## **UNION UNITS:**

Brig. Gen. William  
Carlin  
15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin  
Infantry  
38<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry  
21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry  
101<sup>st</sup> Ohio Infantry  
Hotchkiss Arty Batty

Excerpts from "Dan Master's Civil War Chronicles:  
Capturing the Gun at Knob Gap with the 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin

The Army of the Cumberland left Nashville on December 26, 1862 marching south on the Nolensville Pike. The Right Wing, under General Alexander Mc Cook, ran into resistance 2 miles south of Nolensville at Knob Gap. A Georgia dismounted cavalry and battery had taken position atop the Gap. General William P Carlin's formed, the 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry in the center, the 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois on the right and the 101<sup>st</sup> Ohio on the left. The soldiers of the brigade explain what happened next:

*Brigadier General William P. Carlin:*

"About a mile south of Nolensville, the pike crosses a ridge through a depression on either side of which is a round hill or knob. North of this gap was a cultivated field, along the east side of which was the pike. The ridge bears off to the right and left from the knobs in a southwesterly a southeasterly direction. The ridge itself with the knobs forms as fine a military position to hold against an attack as I ever saw in an open country, the gap is known as Knob Gap. It was then held by Wharton's cavalry and several pieces of artillery. Davis' division attacked it, it was my part to move directly over the open field described above in the face of a direct fire of artillery and of Wharton's cavalry dismounted and concealed behind trees. Hotchkiss' battery (2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota) was brought into action in the road and threw a few shells into the gap. My brigade was formed into line parallel to the enemy's position and the command 'Forward!' was given. The field had been plowed late in the fall and the rains had converted the soil into sticky mud. Each man seemed to lift on his shoe a square foot of mud three inches deep at every step."

*Private William E. Patterson, Co. K, 38<sup>th</sup> Illinois:*

"We marched on towards Triune and found the Rebels in force at Knob Gap two miles from Nolensville. Their force consisted of a brigade of dismounted cavalry and a battery of 5-8 pieces.

Their battery opened up on us at a distance of 1-1/2 miles. Hotchkiss' battery unlimbered and returned the compliment. Carlin's brigade was ordered to charge the Rebel battery, which we did, crossing an open and very muddy field. We were exposed for a distance of a mile to their fire which was concentrated on the left of the 38th Illinois, Companies H, I, and K suffering the most severely. The Rebel battery played on us full blast and our own battery in our rear (in an ineffectual attempt to cover our advance) exposed us to still more danger by their own shells bursting prematurely over our heads. The air resounded with the hideous noise of the shells whizzing and bursting before us, behind us, above us, and among us. When we got to within 150 yards of the guns, we gave them a volley. They soon after retreated leaving one piece of artillery in our possession. We captured seven prisoners including one that had been captured in the skirmish with the cavalry at Nolensville. A gang of cattle got between the lines during the fight and ran wildly from line to line. One of them had its leg broken by a Rebel shell and was devoured by the heroes of the day."

*Private Charles B. Dennis, Co. B, 101<sup>st</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry:*

"About 11 o'clock we got in touch with heavier forces of the enemy and after the sharp skirmishing forced him back to near the village of Nolensville, where he took position on a ridge which ran directly across the pike. On this ridge he planted a battery of four guns with a strong support of infantry. Our line drew up on a parallel ridge about one-half to three-quarters of a mile distant. One of our batteries had been ordered to get into position and open on the Rebels.

## LEGEND OF TERMS:

Historical themes: Topics and subject matter that characterize the battlefield including Control of Tennessee's Resources, Crucible for Leadership, Guerilla Warfare, Transformation in Warfare, Enslaved People, and Influence on Campaign. Sites are identified that exhibit themes at moderate to high levels, and some sites may contain one or more Historical Themes.

Preservation Opportunity Index (POI): A rating assigned for each battlefield to indicate relative opportunity and potential for successful site preservation. The Index is generated by a model that evaluates ratings assigned for site significance, condition, risk of loss, protection potential, and opportunities for interpretation. Based upon the POI values for each region in Tennessee (West, Middle, East), sites are indicated as having High, Medium, or Low opportunity.

Geo Coordinates: General/central location of the battlefield area per latitude and longitude coordinates utilized in Google Earth

## DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON A BATTLE SITE?

Please email us at [info@tcwpa.org](mailto:info@tcwpa.org) and we will reach out to you soon. If you have copies of documents or photos to share, you can include those. If you want to discuss by phone, we will schedule that too.

## HELP US COLLECT INFORMATION TO PRESERVE THESE BATTLEFIELDS

TCWPA's Statewide Preservation Plan team captains are recruiting volunteers to help gather information about many of the lesser-known sites with hopes of verifying the condition of each site and identifying opportunities for preservation and interpretation.

If you are interested in helping, please contact TCWPA at [info@tcwpa.org](mailto:info@tcwpa.org) .

TCWPA will not publish nor release any confidential information, or the name of the contributor, unless you request to be recognized.

Thank you!

The logo for the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association (TCWPA) is displayed in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. It is positioned on the left side of a dark blue banner that features a background image of a Civil War-era cannon. The banner also contains contact information on the right side.

tcwpa

Have Information on a Civil  
War Battlesite?

Contact our team at [info@tcwpa.org](mailto:info@tcwpa.org)