

CIVIL WAR

Navy in action - Ref: USS Monitor

U. S. S. Nusho * Off Nashville. December 10th, 1864

Dear Mother:

I have written you once or twice since receiving a letter from you, but as the Cumberland River is blockaded by Rebel batteries I cannot expect to hear from you for some time.

When I last wrote we were in the Mississippi near Vicksburg, but a few minutes after mailing it we received sailing orders for the Cumberland River fleet. When we arrived at Nashville, we found Hood's army drawn in front of our lines threatening the city. I took the first opportunity visiting the front from Ft. Nagle, had a fine view of both armies; small detachments of which were to be seen skirmishing between the lines. Shot and shell were also thrown into our lines from their batteries. Some of them falling in proximity to my worthy self, reminded me I had urgent business aboard the Nusho, therefore I beat a hasty retreat. A few days since several transports were captured some distance below the city and our whole fleet consisting of eight tin-clads and our vessel were sent down to open the river. Our boat took the advance and had proceeded but a few miles when six rebel batteries opened upon us, they being stationed on the hills on each side of the river. We rounded to as soon as possible and started up river to stop the tin clads, which the Admiral said could not live five minutes if exposed to such a deadly fire. We were in action sufficiently long for them to demolish our quarters on deck and destroy the clothing of many of the officers. I, more fortunate than the rest, had only one pair of pants spoiled although four shells passed through my room.

We stripped the decks of all wood work and nothing could be seen but heavy iron, and returned again to fight the batteries. We shelled them three hours with our eleven inch guns. When it became dark we returned to Nashville. Over fifty shots struck our boat but with the exception of destroying our summer quarters, glanced harmlessly from our decks.

The press, a local journal, gave an account of the engagement, stating that the Monitor had her turret blown off, and was rendered unfit for service. If you see this copied in the Cincinnati papers, you may know that it is false, for one hundred batteries would be powerless to affect us. Tomorrow we are going down to blow their batteries from the river banks unless Hood makes a general attack, which is hardly to be expected.

Since our quarters were shot away we have been rooming in a transport which the Captain pressed into service. Since the fight I am better pleased than ever with the Nusho, for a tin clad would have literally been blown from the river.

Direct as before.

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