

61-7-1863

Col. G. T. ...  
the ... battle  
7/11 ...  
in this letter  
to his father

misheard message

Harall Bree 58th Ind  
Lt. Col JAMES T.  
EMBREE

Manufacturers Term  
Jan'y 9th 1863

Dear Father

Your letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> ult is at hand, As to the Michel matter all I can say is that it is all properly settled as far as I had to do with it & if he sees proper to pay this or check anything he can do so. Wheeler knows what I have done and is trying to fight me Michel out of his money. You can see that he is even ready to get his hands on so small a sum as five dollars. If he has authority - to collect of Michel he should present it without pay from Michel. Wheeler is a scoundrel and had no authority in the matter or I should have paid him the money. But I found that he had no right to have the money and therefore paid it to the proper office in New York. Donald I think has all the papers relating to the matter and if you will read Wheelers letters to me you will see he was trying to steal the money from Michel. Michel is still responsible on two other bonds to the people of New York but Wheeler has nothing to do with it.

Well we are through a snow battle, and are now resting from a week of as hard and trying service as ever performed

Just as I had finished the last sentence we had orders to move our camp, and moved about two miles but are still within two or three miles from Murfreesboro. This is the last day of January, I wrote many a letter giving me a statement of our camp from the 26<sup>th</sup> Dec to the end of the fight which closed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst.

Our Army arrived within a third of a mile of the enemy's works on Monday evening the 29<sup>th</sup> Dec about sundown. The Rebels were then engaged burning a fine brick house with about a dozen negro quarters, for the purpose of clearing the way for their artillery which they intended to play upon us. We had had considerable skirmishing all day driving the enemy's out posts and advance forces about six miles.

About night when it was getting dark we received orders for our division to cross Stone River and go into town. We started and came to the river (which is a small stream fordable) when we arrived there with our brigades the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Brigades had crossed and the enemy opened a heavy fire of musketry on them and us, in such a manner that the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Brigades recrossed the river and we fell back to our old position about a half mile in the rear in a cornfield. We left all our tents at Nashville and that night

It rained all night and we had no fire for fear it would give the enemy knowledge of our position and tempt them to shell us. On the next morning the rebels began to cast solid shot and shells into our position but we held our places without answering their fire except with two pieces of artillery.

On our right about a mile off at Lookout was engaged all day in quite a fight with the enemy but with no material results.

That evening our regiment was moved to the front and placed on picket for the night without fire or tents and in a cold rain.

About 8 o'clock A.M. of 31<sup>st</sup> the cannonading became heavy on our right being in the right wing and center of the army. And in a short time that whole part of the army was engaged in a fierce contest. It was not long until all of that part of our army gave way and were driven in perfect confusion back upon the turnpike road leading to Nashville. Their lines were at the beginning of the fight in something like a curve on the right of the road. The extreme right of the army being about a half mile from the road and back toward Nashville, with the left of the center of the army resting on the picket line to the left.

The left of the army to which we belonged was on the left of the picket and nearly perpendicular

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to it. As when the right and center were driven  
back, they with us formed almost a right angle  
with the angle on the side nearest the confusion.  
That is of the right and center could be said to  
form a line at all. About the time this  
happened our brigade was called into line  
and held (ready to be moved), in an open field  
when the solid shot and shell fell thick and  
fast around us. The men of the center & right were  
~~running back among us, shouting and fleeing~~  
with their guns, caissons and lumber in wild  
confusion with wagons, ambulances, and horses  
driving with fury and madness intent only upon  
saving themselves regardless of consequences to others  
or the great American people. It was not long  
however until a place was found for us. The  
enemy brought his forces to bear upon our left.  
Thinking that as the right and center were whipped  
he would have an easy task in whipping the  
~~left~~ ~~in fact~~ ~~we~~ ~~but~~ ~~about~~ ~~one~~ ~~division~~ ~~of~~ ~~four~~  
in fact, we but about one division of four  
thousand men. Our regiment was ordered to  
cross the rail road track and as was our  
whole brigade into a little wood, about such  
a place as the lot on the west of your house.  
I mean the line was about that thick.  
Then we sent the rebels who made their  
contact attack upon us in columns sent  
in the center that is in your line.

were killed stuck down it. We did not load these guns however, the men were sent and crew them away by hand. The remainder of our guns kept up the fire, and our battery especially which was about twenty steps behind our regiment kept up a constant discharge. And after about an hour the rebel batteries were silenced. During this contest there was one constant shower of solid shot, shells & shrapnell, falling and bursting all around and over us; shells burst within ten feet of me, and yet with all this our regiment had but two men wounded, none killed. The 24<sup>th</sup> Ohio had two killed and three wounded. And the 100<sup>th</sup> Ill had one killed which was all the loss we suffered. I find that artillery is much better to scare people with than to kill them unless grape or canister is used when they are terrible execution. This was the sum of our fighting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> day. But on the day before the other two divisions comprising the left of our Army to wit Palmer & Van Cleve's divisions were thrown across the river on the extreme left. And about 3<sup>rd</sup> October part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day the rebels attacked them. Van Cleve's line in front was first attacked and was driven back to the river. We could see the rebels bringing up their solid columns against them, and as our force was

falling back and the enemy advancing and getting  
with all their power it again looked as though  
the day was lost and that we must be overthrown.

But we fortunately were most excellently prepared  
for this very thing. Some say it was designed but  
I rather think it was an accident as I do not  
think our troops were expected to fall back.

But however as it happened or was designed,  
we had in position to sweep the very ground  
over which the pursuing rebels were compelled  
to pass in pursuit of our troops fifty-two  
pieces of artillery, all of which were double  
shotted with grape and canister and poured  
their deadly contents into the rebel ranks with  
most terrible effect. Palmer's Division also at this  
time came up to the help of Van Cleve and the  
 rout of the rebels was completed. By this time it  
was night, and our brigades received orders to move  
in the direction of the place where we had fought  
the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec, towards a small wood the same we  
had fought in, which then was occupied by the  
rebel Skirmishers. The Brigade moved towards the  
point and sent out four companies one from  
each regiment as skirmishers to engage the rebels.

It was then dark. We had just sent our Skirmishers  
into the woods when we received orders to cross the  
river with the brigade to the place where the battle  
had been fought that evening. And the forty second  
and the brigade to which it belonged came up

and advanced into the woods when we were about  
to go. That night about the time we started to  
cross the river it began to rain and rained hard  
all night and all next day and night. We got  
over the river and were marched backwards and  
forwards to find our position stumbling over the  
dead and wounded in the dark and mud until  
about eleven o'clock P.M. At that time we  
were informed that we could go into a wood  
not far off, and build fires in a low piece  
of ground and get supper and sleep until  
four o'clock in the morning when we were to  
take our position in an open campfield as at  
usual. We went to the wood, built fires got  
supper, and had just laid down in the rain  
when I received orders to take the 50<sup>th</sup> Regiment  
to the front line and fill up a gap in that  
line between Col. Harker's Brigade & Gen. Davis  
Division. At that time there was no sleep for us that night.

The remainder of the brigade slept all night.  
I watched the line all night in the dark and  
cold and to tell the truth I then and there became  
somewhat disgusted with the service, for I think  
the first time, I was so cold and tired that I thought  
I could stand it no longer. And my eyes were so  
sore I could with difficulty hold them open.

I at one time leaned against a stump, and  
almost, in an instant was asleep, and dreamed  
that I was in some city very tired and had

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Stopped at a splendid hotel built of blue limestone  
had procured a good soft bed and was just in  
the act of turning back the bed covers preparatory  
to a good night's rest, when all was ruined by the  
report of a gun fired in our front from the line  
of skirmishes. We were kept in this position without  
fire until four o'clock P of the third. Our rations  
were out, except two crackers to each man which  
I gave them that morning. Just in our front were  
the skirmishes of our line and those of the rebels  
or rather rebel sharpshooters, whose balls were whizzing  
over our heads all day, yet the line was not engaged  
in the fight during the day. It seems strange to those  
who were never accustomed to it that men should ever  
become indifferent to bullets. Yet it is so. Those who have  
stood in battle and had thousands of balls to pass  
over and around them care nothing for two or three  
bullets. Our men all this day would slip away  
from their places and pass between our lines of  
skirmishes and those of the enemy simply to get  
an arm full of fodder with the bare possibility  
of being allowed to sleep on it at night, the rebel  
sharpshooters firing at them all the time.

Two of Love's divisions were wounded while at  
this business but it did not seem to be a caution  
to the others. About three o'clock P.M. of this  
day some of the boys found that there was a  
good supply of good meat at a house standing  
between the lines. And it was but a short time  
until our regiment had an abundant supply  
of good meat, which was very acceptable.



The rebels attacked them but the men did not falter although one of their number was shot down. They brought off about 2000 pounds of excellent meat, and plenty required in our regiment once more. Notwithstanding our rations were short at times no one suffered much on that account, as it was so managed that about the time or shortly after all was gone a small supply was had, and thus we kept eating it out all week. The trouble was we had no fire to cook and most of the meat was eaten raw, which however is common at all times as many eat it raw rather than cooked.

About four o'clock P.M. <sup>we</sup> were moved back about 100 yards to the second line a little below the hill and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regt. took our place. We then built fires cooked supper and feasted. About dark a severe fight took place on the other side the river at the same place we fought the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. It was a severe contest, and our troops composed as they heard, in part, of East Tennessee regiments drove the rebels out of their works, routed them and ended the contest at that point. The 42<sup>nd</sup> was not in this fight they having been driven from the point the previous evening and Lt Col. Shanklin taken prisoner. He assisted in this fight with great ability and about ten o'clock went to

bed on the wet ground, and in a heavy shower  
having previously been required to put out the fires.

The heavy rains had swollen the river and it  
was feared we could not cross if we delayed and  
therefore we could not run the risk of a defeat.

Therefore at 12 o'clock at night we were ordered  
to fall in and march across the river which we  
did leaving all our ground on that side the river  
to the enemy if they saw proper to occupy it.

We were moved in rear of the whole army or  
near the road to Nashville. And for sometime we  
supposed we were on the retreat. We remained in  
the position taken at this time and rested three days.

At the very time we were crossing the river &  
on that night and marching from the enemy they  
were making all best possible to get away  
from us. On the next day our forces occupied  
the town and pursued the rear of the enemy  
taking considerable number of prisoners. I cannot  
learn how the rebels have gone but supposed  
beyond the Tennessee river. Many will not doubt  
complain because Sherman did not rush upon  
the enemy while they were leaving Memphis but  
it will be those only who know nothing of  
arms or battles and whose judgment is of no  
value. The night was stormy and the wind  
made such noise nothing of this movement  
could be heard or seen. And then night lines  
remained unchanged until all were gone.

Our Division was the only one that good  
sit ground during the whole battle. And it is univer-  
sally acknowledged that the Aussins saved the fight -

I do not think we had over thirty-five thousand  
men who fought in the battle, that is who came  
with guns and used them; but if teamsters, hospital  
men and other men detailed as special service  
were counted there were forty-five thousand men on  
our side. It is astonishing that so many men  
skulk away from the battle. Not less than  
seven or eight thousand of our army were hiding  
among the rocks and woods on Thursday of this  
fight. And on Friday about six thousand were  
hunted up and sent to their regiments. Yet their  
cowards will when they go home brag of having  
been in the battle. A part of Genl. Rancrans  
staff hid themselves in a hole under a cotton  
press. But now the battle is over these fellows  
are all up ready for their notions and complaining  
because the paymasters dont come right along  
and pay them. Every Regiment had such men

I think our loss about twelve thousand  
killed wounded and captured, but cannot say  
come with certainty. The dead of both armies  
lay very thick on the field and the towns and  
members of hospitals are filled with wounded

Chloe Emile is slightly wounded but not enough  
to hurt him a man service. This is as much as  
you will need & will stop. *Benjamin Franklin*

I send list bottles and contents  
It is badly written & the species not good but  
I have no time to write it over  
It was written by the recipient & if  
you see proper & kindly discuss it you can  
have it printed

Description /  
bottle /  
Manufacture to  
letter from  
H. Col. J. J. & E. L. C.  
of the ...

Report of Killed and Wounded in 55<sup>th</sup> Regt Ind  
 Vs in an engagement with the Rebels near Burgess  
 Baro Tenn on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of Sept. 1862

Company	Name	Rank	Wounded	Severely
A	Cross, William	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt	Wounded	Severely
"	Wm. H. Hargy	Serjt	Killed	
"	Edw. Skilton	Private	Killed	
"	Alfred Benedict	"	Killed	
"	Joseph Ravis	"	Killed	
"	Albert Traffer	"	Killed	
"	Jos. S. Crystal	"	Wounded	Dangerously
"	Joseph N. Davis	"	"	"
"	George Hillis	"	"	"
"	George Southfield	"	"	"
"	Wiley Knowles	"	"	"
"	Justus Knowles	"	"	"
"	Wm. S. H. H. H. H.	"	"	"
"	Wm. S. H. H. H.	"	"	"
"	Henry Beck	"	"	"
"	John Brown	"	"	"
"	Stephen H. H.	"	"	"
"	Homer Bryant	Capt	"	Slightly
"	Wm. S. H. H.	Capt	"	"
"	J. J. Hutchinson	Private	"	"
"	Jos. S. H. H.	"	Taken Prisoner by the enemy	
B	James Curry	Private	Wounded	Severely
"	Richard Smith	"	"	Slightly
"	Ernest Johnson	"	"	"
"	James Cochran	"	"	"
"	Green B. Payer	"	"	"
"	John Van Wagner	"	Killed	

Company	Name	Rank	Wounded	Severity	Notes
C	Wm. H. Downey	Captain	Wounded	Severely	"Shot in the neck"
	Pesant R. Spain	Ordergt	"	"	
	John. Johnson	Corpl	"	"	
	Ezekiel Goodrich	"	"	"	
	Simpson Dye	"	"	"	
	George H. Davis	Private	Missing		and supposed to be dead
	David W. Ke	"	Wounded	Severely	
	John. J. Phillips	"	"	"	
	Harrison Knight	"	"	"	
	Albert Woods	"	"	Slightly	
	John Crossier	"	"	"	
	John Fox	"	Missing		
	James H. Hall	"	Killed		
	Robert Chew	"	Killed		
Sibern Roberts	"	Killed			
Henry Turley	"	Killed			

Company	Name	Rank	Wounded	Severity	Notes
D	Henry Carl	Private	Killed		
	Abraham Jones	"	Killed		
	George Whitman	1st Lt	Wounded	Slightly	in arm
	Parins, G. Sweet,	Ordergt	Wounded	Severely	in the leg
	Wm. Munford	Serjt	Wounded	Slightly	in the arm
	Willis Coleman	Serjt	"	Slightly	in the arm
	David J. Davis	Serjt	"	"	in the back
	Daniel Hanninke	Corp	"	"	in the arm
	Alexander Cochran	"	"	"	in the forehead
	Jos. Duncan	Private	"	Severely	in leg
	Johnson Wheeler	"	"	"	in leg
	James Anderson	"	"	Slightly	in arm

Company	Name	Rank	Wounded	Severity	Notes
E	Francis S. Black	1st Lt	Killed		
	John F. Norman	Ordergt	Wounded	Slightly	

"	Louis Engleman	"	Wounded Slightly
"	Harbin House	"	" "
"	Elijah Black	"	" "
Company			
F	Syrcus Mason	Co. Sgt	Wounded Slightly in shoulder
"	Hugh S. Barnett	Sgt	" " in hip
"	John W. Hammonson	Corpl	" " in thigh
"	Calvin Finch	Private	" " in arm
"	John Brownlee	"	" " in arm
"	Isaac Cleveland	"	" Slightly
"	Richard Embree	"	" " in thigh
"	Henry McCoy	"	" mortally since died
"	W. J. Sanders	"	" Slightly in arm
"	Robert Henrycut	Teamster	Taken Prisoner
"	John Richardson	"	Taken Prisoner
Company			
G	Noah Miller	Private	Killed
"	Robert J. Brown	Sgt	Wounded Severely in Stomach
"	Henry Drenton	Private	" " in thigh
"	Milton Holder	"	" Slightly in Head
"	Perry Amos	"	" " in wrist
"	John A. Barber	"	" Severely in Shoulder
"	Harrison Whaley	"	" Slightly in Hand
"	Comodore Coonrod	"	Missing
Company			
H	Andrew Cunningham	Private	Killed
"	Joseph Newman	"	Killed
"	William Adams	S. Lt	Wounded Slightly
"	John H. Groves	Corpl	Dangerously Wounded
"	James Woods	"	Wounded Slightly
"	Wm M. Kendall	Private	" "
Company			

"	Wm L Shaw Seryt	Wounded slightly in leg
"	George W Ont Corp	" Severely in leg and <u>Back</u>
"	Vincent Mead "	" Slightly in <u>Head</u>
"	George W Martin "	" " in Hip
"	George Van "	" " in face
"	Samuel Blair Private	" " in groin
"	Wm Hodges "	" " in face
"	Josiah Wiley "	" " in Chin
"	Tros J Smith "	" " in left Hip
"	Francis Smith "	" " in left wrist
"	Lewis Gostlin "	" " in hand and hip
"	Uriah Setzer "	" " in finger
"	George Williamson "	" " in face and hand
"	Joab Mead "	left arm broken

Company

K	Alfred Goodman Private	Killed
"	G. W. Wilder Seryt	Wounded Severely in leg
"	J. B. Miller "	" " in foot and jaw
"	Alfred Poe Private	" " in Head
"	Wm. H. Young "	" Slightly in Shoulder
"	Gas Bohannon "	" " in Hip
"	Samuel Wilder Teamster	Taken Prisoner



11-16-1863  
three thousand dollars will be  
lent a security sum to last us until  
it is all over, Save all you can  
You seem to think I am not  
satisfied here, but this you are  
mistaken. I would it is true give  
much to have the troubles settled &  
we at home in a quiet country but  
as things are I am now doing  
as I should do, and have no  
idea of leaving the army at present  
I do not know what I may do  
as things develop themselves.

I want more cheerful letters from  
you. Your letters are about all that  
give me trouble. I cannot of  
course be happy when you in  
every letter tell me you are un-  
happy. I have in my letter told  
you that things with us could  
not be changed, and you ought to  
accommodate yourself to the cir-  
cumstances, and try to make us  
all as happy as possible. Don't write  
to me any more when you have  
a fit of the blues, my dear, but write  
cheerful letters, and I will have  
nothing to complain of.

Murfreesboro Tenn  
July 16 1863

Dear Mary

Pa arrived safely at our  
camp on Tuesday evening the 15<sup>th</sup>.  
He had a slight spell of the  
sick head ache the night before  
but is now well and is with  
Frank at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regt.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> it began to rain  
and rained very hard 24 hours  
and closed with a snow; it  
is now quite cold for this climate  
Our camp was completely flood-  
ed with water, but my tent being  
on a knoll did not get wet.

The river will now be in good  
boating stage, and we can give  
up the rail road which will  
give us a large addition to our  
strength in the army here.

The army is in good spirits  
and condition here but there  
is no prospect of fighting soon.

Things look worse at home  
than here. Both parties are  
acting somewhat in the  
legislature and I am more  
sure thoroughly convinced that  
the charges of revolution at home  
of which I wrote you sometime  
ago is eminent. We must  
prepare ourselves for these things  
and meet them as we can.

It will be of no avail to  
despond, and get the blue  
devils over them. Come what  
may. But one thing we ought  
to do. We ought to prepare for  
it while we can. And I now  
wish to caution you that if  
this thing comes and we are  
out of money we and our  
little children will most

surely suffer. I therefore wish you  
to save all you can even to  
a fine cent piece. Make your  
old clothes go as far as possible  
to be comfortable and decent.

Patch the children clothes, and  
make old clothes into new ones  
for them. Do not save the last  
penny for them; for I tell you  
that if this thing comes, our  
houses land and other property  
will not furnish us even a  
meal or victuals. Let me caution  
you to stay at home with your  
children, and make no expenses  
except what you are compelled  
to make, do not encourage yourself  
to feel sad over these things but  
meet them as you should it  
may be our fortune or our  
ruin. Let us make the best  
of it we can, and be prepared.  
If this thing comes two or

[1-16-1863]

When I write to of facts either  
as they are in the city or at home  
you seem to take up the idea  
that I am despondent and unhelp-  
ful. This you ought not to think;  
for I do not suffer myself to give  
way under such things when it  
would instead of doing me good  
under me miserable. It is true  
that I regret the conditions that  
our whole people are in but  
that is nothing more than men  
at home do. And I am in not  
worse condition here than I would  
in that respect be if I were at  
home. If I say we are at the  
end of revolution in the west  
and take up the idea that  
I am sitting moping and despo-  
nding here about it. for it is  
not so. It is nothing more than  
have looked for since my boyhood

and if it does not come now it  
will before many years. And all  
we have to do is to prepare for it  
we can be in a tolerable condition  
for it. All you have to do is to  
follow the advice I give you and  
we will be in as good a condition  
as we can get ourselves in

I tell you nothing but money  
will be of avail to us then: therefore  
save all you can. And especially  
all gold and silver that comes into  
your hands. Keep your own eye  
constantly over your children  
do not I pray you leave them  
in charge of others for that is an  
imposition on the people to whom  
they are trusted, and a great  
wrong to the children. They are entitled  
to your constant care. don't think  
of coming out to the any under  
any circumstances. But at your home  
and children be your care  
Yours affectionately  
James T. Kenton

Sturtevant, Tenn

July 10<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Mary

I received your letter by Capt  
Lockrum last night just after returning  
to camp from a foraging trip. The small  
change came in good play, as I had no  
money whatever, and change is exceedingly  
scarce. You speak of a slander about Mrs  
S. Such a report has been circulating here for  
some time but I don't believe that there is a  
shadow of truth in it. As to keeping the  
cow, for Elisha you will of course do so if  
he likes the milk and will furnish feed  
for her in such quantity as you think  
right. I don't wish to deprive him of a thing so  
good for him for the small reason that it  
costs a little. Let him have what he wants  
of it. As to your teeth I wish you to do as  
you think best. Get such teeth as you  
think will be best. I am sorry that you have  
to loose your natural teeth, and would  
advise you to save all you can of them.

I wish you to have teeth of some kind  
at all events. I do not wish you to go to  
do abroad for them, as it would cost you  
more than the cost at home even if they  
or made them for nothing. And I should  
feel like I had imposed on him if I should  
suffer him to do so.

I suppose Mr. Hund is a good dentist  
but I know him to be a very bad and

EMBERS,  
5/1/12

dissolute man or at least he was considered  
so a year or two ago. As to settling with  
Mr Russ you can do so, if he wishes it. I suppose  
we owe him enough or more than enough to  
pay his note. If we owe him anything I suppose  
he wants the money if so pay him.

If our red cow is still so mean as she  
was I expect you had better have her sold.

Nat French stayed with me last night  
and is well. Frank has gone to Nashville  
with his regiment to guard a provision train  
He is well too. So many of our Generals and  
Colonels are absent that I now have to command  
the troops of this brigade whenever they are  
out foraging. I was out yesterday and got our

hundred wagon loads of corn, oats and fodder

We can get plenty by going about seven miles  
from town and crossing Stone River. There  
is no bridge over the river and the men have to  
be taken over on the wagons. I went out a few  
days ago but could not cross the river it was too  
high and only got about forty loads as there is  
but little on this side the river.

We send out our thousand infantry and  
six pieces of Artillery on such trips.

We could hear of the rebels within a few  
miles of us but they did not attack us.

We are building some very strong forts  
here and will in a short time have the place  
very strongly fortified. Tell Curtis that he must take  
good care of himself and get fat. Write often.

Your affectionate