

Letters of Colonel C. Irvine Walker, Staff of Gen.
Arthur Manigault.

South Carolina - 10th INF

Chapter 3.

Into a Hornet's Nest

Permanently titled
Letters to Orde

Edited by
Lee White

Although the Kentucky Campaign was viewed as a failure, it was not without positive results, Bragg was able to recoup some of the losses of the previous year, he had forced Buell's Army out of Northern Alabama and away from Chattanooga, he had also regained a large portion of Middle Tennessee. Bragg moved his army into camps around Murfreesboro to threaten Nashville. Still the positive gains of Bragg's campaign were not enough to quiet the growing criticism against him. Irvine would be disappointed in results of the campaign, but his hopes remained high and tried to convey his optimism to Orde.

Bragg wanted a chance for redemption and that soon presented itself in the last days of December. General William Starke Rosecrans was given command of Buell's army and moved out of Nashville against Bragg's camps at Murfreesboro. Bragg now had his chance and in the predawn of December 29th attacked Rosecrans. The battle that followed would finally give the 10th South Carolina its baptism in combat and the opportunity that Irvine had been seeking. Ironically, the prediction that Irvine had made at Corinth about the 10th assaulting batteries would come true, and many men would fall in hailstorm of shot and shell, but would come through victorious and live up to their reputation. Irvine would recount the fight to Orde in detail and show that the bloodshed did not slight his enthusiasm. However, the Battle would be judged as a defeat despite the initial successes of the Confederates on the 10th's part of the field, Bragg retreated from the field and moved his army back to the area around Tullahoma. There Irvine and the 10th would go into a period of static camping. Irvine would defend Bragg to Orde, justifying the retreat and contemplating the Confederacy's fortunes as spring dawned in 1863.

XXIV.

Hd. Qrs. 4th Brigade Res. Div.

Polks' Corps, Army of Tenn.

Murfreesboro, Nov. 27th, 1862.

No.1 of your letters was received this afternoon before we actually left Tullahoma, and a day subsequent to my writing. Our move here, the necessary confusion of settling in a new camp, and the rush of business, has prevented my answering sooner. I would not have been able to have done so even tonight, but orders have just been received to prepare for action, and intelligence just arrived, that the enemy was supposed to be advancing in force, has caused me to write before going to bed tonight. I may be prevented from writing for some time, but I rather think that his is only the first cry of wolf, and will be repeated several times before the veritable "wolf" makes his appearance. However, they may keep us moving about and stirring around, which has the beneficial effect of disturbing a person's rest at night, sleeping out in the cold air, - marching and countermarching without object, or rations, and finally after having just got within sight of the enemy, and possibly only within hearing you fall back to

some stronger position. This is the kinds of work and glory I am sorry to say the late Army of Miss. has achieved. I say "late" for Bragg has condemned the Armies of Miss. (Bragg) and of Kentucky (Smith) into the Army of Tennessee, and hereafter he hopes that they will crown themselves with as bright laurels as those won at Corinth and in Kentucky¹. I hope that I will be more proud to claim to be one of this new Army than of the old A.M.

You will think that I am in no better humor than formerly, perhaps so, but I can't prevent it. * * *

What do you think? I have just commenced another chimney, and again comes the order to move. I think I must stop building and then perhaps we may be allowed to remain in camp. I am afraid that I will Have an opportunity before the winter is out, of using my first one again.

I received a day or two since quite a comforting letter from father wherein he speaks of Genl. Beauregard's entire confidence in his ability to hold Charleston, I hope he may be successful. Father did not write a long letter, but it had a great deal in it, and it gave me much pleasure. I suppose, ere this, your Uncle is in Columbia.

N. B.- He was Senator from Prince George, Winyah, Parish, Georgetown District and had to attend the Sessions of the Legislature at Columbia.

I hope that Capt. Weston may be made our next Governor – he is a man worthy to fill any place that the State can offer him and a man highly deserving of it.

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N. B. – The Legislature of South Carolina, then, elected the State officers. Capt. Plowden C. J. Weston, was, at this session elected Lieut. Gov. and resigned his position as Captain Co. A. 10th S. C. Regt².

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XXV.

Hd. Qrs. 4th Brigde. R.D.P. C.A.T.
Murfreesboro, Tenn. Dec. 3rd. 1862.

No. 6 was written on the 1st inst. but I think I omitted to number it, if so, just place a 6 in the corner for me.

We are still in Murfreesboro, and will stay here as long as the Yankees will allow us. How long that may be, Rosencrans alone knows – but as I have built another chimney and am enjoying the quiet of a comfortable and cozy tent, I don't care how long it may be.

You can't imagine how comfortable a chimney makes a tent.
Of course, as the tent is small the chimney must be small, but

they are in proper porportion. I have only ***** in my tent, and my desk – the former a source of pleasure, and the latter of business. At present I have more communication with the latter than the former. But I hope I may not be so continuously confined to my writing as I have been lately – but as I have only been re-arranging after the confusion of our late active campaign it cannot last always.

Speaking of our "late campaign" I send you three proclamations issued which we were in Kentucky – two by Genl. Bragg, to the people of Kentucky, and another to the same by Maj. Genl. Buckner, of Fort Donlaldson fame. The first one of Braggs was published just after we entered the State, at Glasgow, where everything looked prosperous and success seemed to parch upon our Banners³. After it came Mumfordsville, and then Bardstown, then we had heard nothing of the enemy, and he seemed disposed to have yielded us Kentucky without a blow – here while we were at Bardstown was the second proclamation published, threatening the Kentuckiana with conscription – but the Kentuckians would not volunteer and braved Bragg's displeasure, so he left them to their own fortunes, and the care of a powerful Yankee Army in our rear. The shameful way they treated the saviours of their country, and no the Yankee Army, of course make Bragg disposed to go back to more friendly fields of operation.

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(Copy)

Bardsotwn, Ky. Sept 24, 1862.

To the Freemen of Kentucky:

One year ago I addressed your from Russellville. The despotism of the North, though at that time only in its incipiency, had already invaded our State. The professed advocates of free-speech has crushed the freedom of the Press. The privileges of the Writ of Habeas Corpus had already been suspended by the dicta of the petty instruments of usurped power. The Constitution, which was the basis of our old Union, had been violated in all its essential provisions. Our citizens, for no other reasons than the advocacy of the principles of the Constitution, were torn from their homes and from our State to languish in Northern prisons – and denied alike the knowledge of their accusers and the privileges of a fair trial. The judicial department of the government was virtually suppressed. The Constitution, the only basis of Union, was overthrown, and all its powers usurped by the Executive and the degraded instruments, whom he chose, to oppress a free and a gallant people. Even then the Washington government was a revolutionary power built upon the ruins of the Constitution, and wielded by an unprincipled Executive for the suppression of the liberties of the People.

As a citizen of a State so dear to its own sons, and so

renowned throughout the world for its love of freedom, I felt it was not only my right, but my highest duty to resist these encroachments upon our constitutional rights. It was in this spirit that I addressed you. The events of the past year have justified the decision of those who from the beginning opposed the tyranny which has since oppressed us. A northern army, flushed with a temporary success, has pursued its marauding career with a ferocity and a contempt for the claims of justice and humanity which have astonished the civilized world. your property has been stolen or destroyed; your slaves have been taken from you on the plea that you are disloyal, - disloyal to the tyranny and the usurpation which seek to take from you even the right of peaceful remonstrance; your houses have been invaded by armed soldiers; you have been compelled to endure, at the point of the bayonet, unwarrantable searches; our fair women have been compelled to render the most menial services to the hirelings of the North who have assumed to be your masters; no firesides have been sacred from these ruthless intrusions. the unoffending victims of this relentless despotism have been dragged to jails and to other loathsome prisons to gratify private malice or to satiate the lust of tyrannical power . And when the prisons of our own State were filled with freemen and free women, the penitentiaries and bastiles of the

North still opened to receive others, until the numbers are now so astounding that even the names of the victims are not permitted to be known. The once boasted land of freedom, under abolition, domination, is one vast prison house. The starry banner, once so famed in Southern song, has been converted in the hands of Sumner and Garrett, Davis and Seward and Lincoln and Hunter and Pope and Turchin and Boyle and Butler into the emblem of all that is oppressive to man and cruel and disrespectful to woman. Yet to this emblem, degraded by being so upheld, we are required submissively to bow as to a talisman which will sanctify the most atrocious of crimes.

Freemen of Kentucky ! It needs not that you look abroad upon the burning cities and villages, and the devastated fields of Tennessee and the Mississippi valley, and of our mother State, Virginia, to convince yourselves of the true character of our oppressors. Our own State show sufficient evidences of their tyranny. Nor need you listen to the piercing cries of the women of northern Alabama. Our oppressors would teach us that the nameless brutalities of Mitchell and Turchin were sanctified by the folds of the immaculate banner under which these deeds were perpetrated; for we learn that their master has rewarded these outlaws for their crimes. Nor need you look to Butler and New Orleans to see the depths of degradation to which man may descend when he becomes the in-

strument of abolition tyranny. From the jails and prisons of our own State the fair daughters of Kentucky call upon us to release them from a despotism almost without a parallel in history. Well may the organ of Mr. Seward exclaim that it is time the North had learned that they were "warring not only against a united South, but against the sentiments of the civilized world.". The name of the "Austrian Butcher" whose cruelty was wreaked upon only one woman, conveys an idea of moderation compared with those of these Northern Despots. Let us not insult the memory of the Austrian by mentioning his name in the same sentence with those of Mitchell and Butler, and Boyle and Turchin.

Kentuckians! View the position in which the leaders of the so-called Union party would place our State. In a thousand ways they solemnly declare that any attempt to coerce the South should be met by the armed opposition of Kentucky. With these declarations upon their lips, they gained your suffrages. But no sooner had they been placed in power, than in violation of their repeated pledges, they joined the abolition crusade against the South. Under the guise of a faithless neutrality, they devised a scheme of treachery to the people of this State, which is calculated to deprive us of all civil equality, and to make us virtually, the political serfs of the North. Through all the mazes which duplicity can lend to a tortuous course, they have

sought to lead you from the support of the neutrality policy which they imposed upon the State, into making yourselves the instruments of enforcing against the South and against yourselves, the policy of indiscriminate plunder and robbery now urged by the abolition government of the North.

Freemen of Kentucky! Whatever doubts may have heretofore existed as to the designs of the northern government, they have been dispelled by the last proclamation of their President. In violation of every principle of the Constitution in violation of his own constructions of that instrument, in violation of his own most solemn pledges, President Lincoln, assuming to be the master of all his subjects and that you are his abject slaves, has now fulminated a general proclamation of freedom to the slaves and of robbery of other property of the South. It is the fixed policy of the North. If the will of this Abolition Autocrat can be fulfilled, he will make his people a nation of bandits, and will light the incendiary torch around every Kentucky fireside. There are millions of NORTHERN hearts which revolt at the thought of such a policy. Can Kentuckians be found who will any longer submit to make themselves the instruments in the hands of New England to war upon our own interests and upon the interests of our brothers of the South?

Will you light the servile torch which is to in-

volve our own homes in the general conflagration and draw upon ourselves the contempt and derision of the abolition despots who view us only as the tame instruments to carry out their will?

Will you consent that the proud women of Kentucky shall become the menials of the North, or will you shake off the fetters which you are bound and show that you are worthy to be freemen?

Men of Kentucky! Two Southern Armies under the able leadership of the gallant Bragg and Kirby Smith, are now in your midst. They come to relieve you from the tyranny with which the North have so long oppressed you. No peaceable citizen, whatever his political views, will be molested. We make war only against armed men, - not as our enemies do, against peaceable citizens and defenseless women and children. We ask those who, from sentiments of duty are with us, to join the standard of freedom. If you are worthy of liberty you will win it. We have arms for all who will join us. Unite your efforts with those of the South, and under the protection of providence our beloved State will not long be desecrated by the footsteps of the abolition oppressors. Let us not be the slaves and the instruments of the North to oppress our own people; but actuated by the spirit of freedom which won our independence, let us prove that the sons of our State are worthy of their

parentage, and entitled to claim the right of protecting the daughters of Kentucky from the insults with which they have so long been visited. Whether from the gloomy prisons which despotic authority has reared to crush the Spirit of Liberty, or from the ranks of this army of Southern freemen, let every Kentuckian utter a shout of defiance against the Northern Tyranny, and proclaim that under the guidance of Heaven Kentucky shall prove worthy of her ancient fame, and shall win for her sons and her fair daughters the rich heritage of freedom which they so fully deserve.

S. B. Buckner,

Major Genl. P.A.C.S

XXVI.

Hdqrs. 4th Brigade R.D.P.C.A.T

Near Murfreesboro, Dec. 14, 1862

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We had yesterday, quite an unexpected visit from President Davis; he only remained twenty-four hours. He reviewed the whole of Polk's Corps, composed of Breckenridge's, Cheatham's and Withers' Divisions. The whole of our Division was reviewed at one and presented a magnificent appearance. I suppose we had out six thousand men, drawn up in line, by Brigades. The whole Division marched past the President in fine order, the 10th. as usual attracting especial notice. The army is now in splendid condition again. Plenty of Tents, Clothing, Shoes, Blankets, and Subsistence, and are in excellent health. The sick list of our Brigade is only about 100, and that of our regiment varying from 10-15, neither was ever so small before, and that of the Regt. not since the first week at Camp Marion. We are as comfortable as circumstances will allow. I don't know that anything especially brought the President here. I think he only visited us "en route" for Mississippi. He did not stay long enough to effect much. We are delighted to have Joe Johnston⁴ here, Bragg's command was much too large for him – that of the Army of Tenn. is enough for any one man without the whole of Northern Alabama and Mis-

Mississippi and the conduct of the campaign in western Miss. I hope Genl. Johnson's arrival will be the opening of a new state of affairs in the West. Genl. Johnson was placed here at the earnest solicitation of Genl. Bragg. In the latter of whom, I am glad to say that the Army has not lost so much confidence as I at first expected they would. I am glad to be able to say that the whole Army, Generals not excepted, now admit that Genl. Bragg did well to retreat from the overwhelming enemy which surrounded him in Kentucky. Many facts have come to light now which were not known at first. The wisdom of his course is admitted by all. you speak of Bragg's capture of cattle and jeans - he may have, and believe did get a great many of the former - but I have heard very little of the latter, and seen nothing. He has as much as he could do to bring his army out of Kentucky and not surplus time or transportation to bring stores, in fact I know that large quantities of Com's'y and Ordnance were destroyed at Camp Dick Robinson because we could not bring them along.

Your own

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XXVII.

Hd. Qrs. 4th. Brigade R.D.P.C.A.T.

Near Murfreesboro, Dec. 27th, 1862.

Christmas has passed and still we are in the field. Instead

of passing the day as I had once with you, I spent it in the midst of camp and surrounded by camp friends. All the visions of Turkey, Plum Pudding, mince pies, egg nog, we realized in Pork and Rice, the latter being a delicacy, was the delicacy of the dinner, not even a glass of wine to drink a Merry Christmas, and a toast to absent friends.

I had expected to dine in Cincinnati and had even won a bet, which would have added there to the dinner, but instead of reaching Cincinnati the brave army of Miss. reached Cumberland Gap, and we were thus compelled to dine in Murfreesboro. Hard fate! We were in luck, however, in getting any dinner for neither the pork or rice arrived until the day came. Christmas Eve the prospect looked black, and my darling, how do you think we spent the day? Not like the last, I assure you. We, from the colonel down, ran races, wrestled, played prisoners base, etc. I got my ankle sprained playing prisoners base, so happily excused from running a race, but the Col. Lt. Col., Major, each ran, the two former against the like officers in the 24th. Ala., and the latter against the Maj. 19th. S. C., both Regts. of our Brigade. For the honor of the 10th. he is said that all three came out victorious. We had a merry time, although I might have found, under other circumstances, a pleasanter way of spending the day.

We are all well and could enjoy this sport. We really

had an egg-nog ! but the Doctor (who is from West) missed the time of day,
and made it before breakfast. What do you think of that? For myself, I could
not relish or eat it at that time of day. * * * * *

The enemy are moving in our front, so you may now hear something
from the Army of Tenn. Genl. Wheeler, Comdg. Cavalry in our front, sent Bragg
a Christmas present of some 200 prisoners, and several pieces of Artillery. * * *

Tell your Auntie that I am as fat as ever, and not yet starved. That the
10th will stand by her flag to the last. They nearly united to shoot Genl. Withers
on the day of the Presidential Review because he would allow us to carry none
but our battle flag on the field, so the President did not see it⁵. Tell her that they
love it dearly, and that when she hears that it is taken, she may be assured that not
a man of the 10th. remained to defend it.

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XXVIII.

Headquarters 4th Brigde. P.C.A.T
Alisonia, Elk River, Jan.8th, 1863.

Since my last, a decisive, but I am afraid, fruitless, vic-

tory has been achieved by this Army. You remember that in that letter I hinted at such an event, but for fear of rendering you anxious, I did not tell you of its approach. Thank God, I am safe, as well as all of our friends of the Field and Staff. I have not time to give you a description of the battle, but suffice it to say that all that you were interested in, did well. The Army gained a complete victory, holding the field for four days, but finding that the enemy dared not attack us, and it was too fatiguing to keep our Army drawn up in line of Battle, Bragg was compelled to fall back. We will however re-occupy much of the ground we have lost. The enemy retreated as we have every reason to believe, the same night we did, but unfortunately they discovered it first, and occupied Murfreesboro.

The order of battle was the following – Cleburne's Div. on the right, Withers' and McCown's on the left⁶. Cleburne's supported by Breckenridge, and Withers by Cheatham. The right wing did not do much

N. B. This is no reflection upon Cleburne's and Breckenridge Divisions. A part of Bragg's strategy kept Cleburne thus inactive, but after we drove the Federals back to the Nashville Pike, Breckenridge's Division was brought up and most valorously but without success, charged the enemy's position.

but they held their ground. And the left wing drove every-

thing from before it, routing the whole force opposing it, and killing the three Division Commanders opposed to us.

N. B. This was common Army rumor, but I think it was mistaken.

We took the enemy completely by surprise – they evidently intended to attack us but Bragg forestalled them, and made an irresistible attack on their lines, which completely routed them. We drove them two or three miles and were only stopped by night. The next day the battle was not renewed, nor was it at all renewed. Bragg not being strong enough to attack them, as they were posted in a very strong position, and the enemy too badly whipped to venture an attack on our lines.

The Col. commanded this Brigade, and I acted as A.A.G. The Col. showed much ability and has gained great credit. I hear of no Brigade which fought better than ours, nor any Regt. which acted more gallantly than the 10th So. Ca. The loss in the Brigade was over 500 – out of about 2,000 carried in the field. The 10th. S.C. lost 10 killed, and 100 wounded. The Battle Flag was riddled, and your flag shot off the staff. The 10th S. C. brought it off the battle field safely. Among the wounded was Capt. Nettles seriously, Capt. Palmer, severely in the leg (flesh wound) Capt. C. T. Ford, Capt. Mc. White, and Lt. Easterling (wound in the foot by a shell). Glennie Herlot is