

LETTERS FROM A SOLDIER OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, UNION ARMY

James K. Weir, Company B, 25th Illinois Volunteer Infantry  
All the original letters were written in ink and the spelling and punctuation reproduced here is exactly the same as in the original letters. An example of one handwritten letter is on the reverse side of this sheet.

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F. O. BISHOP  
25 S. Germantown Rd., Apt. 202  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411

while he was in the Union Army,  
 25th Illinois Volunteers, Co. B., Infantry.  
 Killed at Marietta, Georgia, June 21, 1864.  
 Buried in the National Cemetery, Marietta, Ga.  
 Grave #2310 with marble headstone.

October 8, 1861	from Otterville, Mo.
November 8, 1861	" St. Louis, Mo.
January 24, 1862	Rolla, Mo.
March 26, 1862	Keatsville, Mo.
March 27, 1862	Keatsville, Mo.
April 12, 1862	Forsyth, Lang Co. Mo.
May 6, 1862	Salem, Arkansas
July 12, 1862	Jacinto, Miss.
October 1862	Dick's River, Ky.
Dec 4, 1862	Nashville, Tenn.
January 8, 1863	Murfreesborough, Tenn.
January 21, 1863	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
March 19, 1863	Murfreesboro, Tenn.
March 25, 1863	"
May 6, 1863	"
June 4, 1863	"
June 22, 1863	Manchester, Tenn.
July 6, 1863	Winchester, Tenn.
July 27, 1863	"
August 14, 1863	Camp of the 25th Regt.
August 23, 1863	" "
November 4, 1863	Chattanooga, Tenn.
November 17, 1863	"
December 8, 1863	"
January 30	Letter from the Rossville Aid Society sent with a cake to Lieut. Weir
February 22, 1864	Knoxville, Tenn
April 28, 1864	Cleveland, Tenn
May 23, 1864,	"
June 15, 1864	Four Miles west of Marietta, Ga.

Nashvill Tenn Dec 4th 1862

Dear Mother i received your letter telling of your visit to George Cristies i exspected to hear of his being well of i have reiting several times lattely to you i have not writing Charley Cass for i never reaceve one from them i got a letter from Dab the other day he had plenty of work was all he aught to Volunteer our regt took a long scout wee got back night before last wee traveled over one hundred miles captured a lot of horses 300 barells of flour and other things met with no acident the Captain Co A was shot dead by a drunk soldier who had bin arested by him for disorderly conduct he has bin in prison since Capt Clark was a brave man and well liked, wee had started with the intention of attacking some rebbels who had crossed the river for the purpose of destroyi'g the R R but wee did not see anything of them wee are now under Orders to march at 8 oclock in morning wee go out on the reb-bels lines who are in force southe and east of this place i have to draw and issue Clothing to the boys yett tonight so i wont write much wee have not bin paid yett i have not had a dollar in change for a long time could you get a house built on that land before spring or could it be rented, if their was a hoise on it if i get paid all up i might send money enough to finish that house i commenced for i dont know when i can get home, the weather is quite cold not enough to feise the river Tuesday i lay out on the open ground and it rained hard all night every rag was wet most of the boys done the same it made the boys wish themselves at home was all our health is better when wee fare like Cattle than whenwee are in camp in tents

if i was you i would not fret about the war nor anything else the boys says it all goes in three years (ours is the ninth Division Commd by Gen Jeff C Davis our Brigade is the 32 composed of 25 & 35 Illinois and 81 indiana and 8th Kansas and the 8th Wisconsin Battery

The Brigade is commanded by Gen Goodruff he was taking pris- oner once at Manasses gap he is a regular officer Rosencrans reivewed our divs a wwwwk go sunday he thought a great deal of regt his staff made the finsed apearance i ever saw Davis Cettenden Mccook Michell and several others was their

write agen your Efectionate son

James K Weir

Co B 25 regt Ill Vol  
Nashvill Tenn

Camp Near Murfreesborough Tenn

January 8th 1863

Dear Mother i am about as glad as i ever was in my life to find myself alive for i have gone through the hardest time wee have ever had wee left Nashvill on the 25th of December with three days rations and our Knapsacks also our shelter tents and cook- ing utensills on saturday wee had our first skirmish but wee had none killed on sunday wee rested on Monday the fight com- menced agan our cavalry engaged and had two Majors killed wee

wer out on picket and ly in the rain wee was then five miles  
 from Murfresboro wee continued our march next day the battle  
 going on on our right wee reached the feild that night and did  
 not take our things of on wensday wee marched in line of battle  
 and took of our knapsacks in a cotton feild our regt lost sev-  
 eral men wee took possession of some woods that night which was  
 very cold the rebbels firing at us all the time their camp-  
 fires was close to us wee wer not allowed a fire so wee kept  
 walking wee had nothing but crackers to eat early on Thursday  
 morning the rebbels attacked the lines with Great force and al-  
 most destroyd Johnsons Division Johnson was surprised so re-  
 ported the rebbels fell and left and it gave way then came our  
 tourn wee stood it a while then gave back here came the reb-  
 bels yeling like indians wee rallied and drove them back and  
 wee gave back and retook our troud three times in the night  
 wee had gone and brought in our knapsack and layed them by a  
 fencewhere wee lay on our arms their was a cornfeild between  
 us and the rebbels and they had to run across that before they  
 could reach us they had crosed over our clothes three times  
 and had not disturbed them by this time their was a great  
 many kiled wounded lying in the woods here our Colonel was  
 kiled also Daniel Dale and John Burley our Captain was shop in  
 the arm wee had several wounded the last time wee run them off  
 and i did not think they would bother us agan but wee saw the  
 brigade on the right falen bach and the firing came nearer and  
 directly it was one sheet of flame and smoke on our right so  
 wee had to run to save ourselves from being cut of i did not  
 know what the truble was till wee come in to the cotton feild  
 i had gave out in the runing and got behind the regt the whole  
 line of battle was runing for life i thought everything was  
 lost i thought it was a stampede and a Manassas affair the  
 rebbels followed close and threw shot and shell at us till wee  
 into the timber where our lines formed agan our division left  
 the feild and Gen Critenden ofrces took it and the battle con-  
 tinued till late at the nois of the musketry was tremendous.  
 wee did not recover the ground so the rebbels got all our clothes  
 and took a god many prisoners they drove our lines so as to  
 tke possession of the road and had captured a host of prisoner  
 and waggons ourcavalray which has done first rate during this  
 battle hashed in and recaptured and took over three hundred of  
 their prisoners that night wee was not allowed a fire and had  
 nothing to eat and i spent New Years eve in a hole in the rocks  
 where three of us had the smalest kind of a fire wee could hear  
 all kinds of ciscourg news wee worked on a breastwork on Neyeas  
 day and hev little and did not sleep any it was so cold the  
 wounded suferd greatly i would have gave them anything but i  
 had nothing but a thin coat, the battle was still ragin on  
 friday our General caled us out to help Woods division which  
 was had presed they were on the left and great many of his  
 men was runing away wee stoped some of them we formed and  
 started and had to wade the river thre times it over knee deep  
 wee had to ren about two miles it was muddy andquite darke but  
 wee got their while the fight was ragin wee had to charge right  
 up to a battery shell and grape flew all around us the rebbels

left in a hurry this ground was covered with slain wee lay in our wett clothes but i had sent some of the boys back to take blankets from the rebbels who wer kiled so wet as i was i had my first sleep for several nights some of the boys found plenty to eat in the rebel haversacks on saturday wee drew provisions and wee done very weel though it rained continually wee lay all day and left in the night it kept raining so it was about to cut of our retreat so wee waded back and rested a day or two and last night came into this camp it was bout twelve oclock when wee pased through Town every was still the rebel loss has bin awful the battle lasted eight days i think they ran their wounded of on the cars i am very sorry on Daniel Dale acount he had never bin sick and was a good soldier during the fight when wee was retreating i stoped at a tree Dan fired left i stoped to get a closed shot i never saw him again he was buried close to where he fell our regt lost in all 119 our company lost 8 one bulit grased by face was all

Wee are in Mc Cook Army corps first Division Jeff C Davis Comanding the Division 3d Brigade Col Woodruff, Comdg

i think wee will start for Chatanooga in a few days hope i wont have another such a time

i have not had a letter for sometime  
dont know when i can send this

Write soon

Your Efectinate son

James K Weir

Co B 25th regt Ill Vol  
Murffeesborough, Tenn

some of the men was so scared they ran Cleare to Nashvill  
27 miles i think they are in Jail now

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 21th 1863

Dear Cassy i dont get anymore letters so i believe i will write a few all wee have to do now is to attend roll call four times a day and that is tiresome it rains most of the time, i have not saw the official report of the Battle and you know about as much as wee do our loss is caled eight t thousand which i think is more than the actual loas the reb-bels lost more for they left as many as wee had and they took of a great many by railroad

our loss will sho you what hard time wee had all our regts lost some

Tom Swan was over the other day he looks as usual thinks he has got to stay three years he thinks lots of his mule team mighty glad he was not around when Wheeler rebble took our train i guess ill go and see him tomorrow

1  
I received a letter from Net and Eliza think a great deal of  
Champaign their new house I some everything in stile Net  
~~thinks-they-will-do-well~~ Net anticipates a great time when  
I get back liza thinks they will do well, we hear all kind  
of news bad and indeferent, the rebbels pickets are 16 miles  
off dont know when wee will move hope wee will move soon,  
winter is very mild here it has not frose hard enough to beare  
a waggon up they are repairing the railroad to this place  
dont know when wee will be paid off I will try and send all  
home tell David S their is a fine chance to keep back in the  
army

I have not heard from you since August  
try and write soon

your Brother  
James K Weir  
Co B 25th regt, Ill, Vol  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

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Murfreesboro Tenn

March 19th 63

Dear Father I send by Adams Express to you to  
Danvill seventy Dollars \$70,00 I dont have much  
time to write I wrote to Mother what I wanted  
done with it if you think that is best do it,  
I think paying of them notes is best it saves  
interest

wee leave here today or tomorrow bragg is  
reorted advancin in great force he will get  
thrashed if he comes up here and fights

your Son James K Weir  
Company B 25th regt  
Ill Volunteers  
Murfreesboro Tenn

the money will be kept till you call for it

You went away in 61 18/25  
the 1861 October the first Tax 18/25  
1862 April 1<sup>st</sup> the paid Tax 18/25  
October 1<sup>st</sup> the paid Tax 18/25  
1863 April 1<sup>st</sup> paid Tax 18/25  
Paid Geessy the store keeper 23 dolers  
and your land Tax was eight Dol  
one Hunder and 2 doller  
paid 65 Dollers on the not  
one Hundred and 68 Dollers

The first money you sent was 30  
40  
70  
23

## Camp at Murfreesboro Tennessee

March 25th, 63

Charley I got your letter while on Picket it is the first I have had from you for six months it was very graphic, if you cannot cross the creek I would not gather Toms corn in marching when we come to a river we cross it if it costs a mule, we have stirring times now the rebels are around our lines all the time, now and then they lose a man, I havn't shot at one since the battle, I dont know whether we will have a big fight or not at this place we are close to our fortifications Capt Wall has got back, peach trees are in blossom the woods begin to look green, but their aint a rail left around here for ten miles the houses go next The soldiers have killed all the hogs the cavalry have taken the horses and no cattle it is a good chance to farm without fencin, Gen Mc Cook had his Hd Quarters close to the finest farm house you ever saw fine orchard gardens and nice fencin now all is gone but the house the roads here are all pikes some good ones but they are getting used up, I sent Father 70,00 dollars I took a receipt for it I spect it is in Danvill now at Adams Express Office tell Father he can take a bust on part of it I paid no expersage on it

write agan when you cant find anything to write about I like to receive letters esspeshly when their is nothing in them, the rain had not aught to bother you if you had to lay out in the pound night after night you might complain I have laid many nights by laying down three rails on the ground and then lay myself doen and sleep while the hardest kind of rain storm was reging so I did not roll off into the mud it was all right you must get up earlyer

Your Brotner James K, Weir

## Camp Near Murfreesboro Tenn

May 6th 1863

Charley

Received your letter the other day it was a slight improvement on your other, but I could not make out whether you write it home or in Danvill or whether Cassy had got back or not, you are doing very well plowing corn will be high for sometime to come you aught to raise as much as possible but I would not keep so many cattle with you can raise more feed

I esspect my place has gone to smash but dont care much Jake Gundy wants to trade his 80 for it his joins Fathers how would it pay to trade it If I had Jakes I think I could trade it to Bill Kent for that 80 morth of the House, Tell me what the difference is between mind and Gundys

I went to a horse race yesterday down on the parade ground the 4th U S Cavalry is camped here and they got up a race for five 500,00 dollars but one horse did not run over 50 yards when he flew the track and lost the money the most fun was in the mule racing they wer equal to the donkey racas you read about, the 4th cavalry is a bragg Regt and thrashes the rebels when ever they fight

the fortyfycations are still building and I believe equals

any in the U S if Hoocker drives the confederates out of Virg they will come here, their is no talk of us moving skirmishing is going on every day on the lines it is very cold now i like to pose on picket the other night it had bin raining. cotton is just coming up

i went out on the Battle feild the other day with a party of men the fix up the graves of our men who was killed the ground looked natural it was the first time i had bin on it since wee was drove off, our Regt has twelve in one grave, they died on the feild more have died from the effects, wee built a nice fence of cedar around the grave Dan Dale is the only one wee have buried their John Burly was buried at the hospital and i could not find his grave he was buried with a great many others in one grave their is anews of importance

write soon. Muur Brother

James K Weir Co B,  
25th Regt Ill Vol

Murfreesboro Tenn

Camp Near Murfreesboro Tenn

June 4th 1863

Dear Mother i received your letter several days ago but having not much to write, wee are now exspecting to march every minut with seven days rations i thing wee will go south we will be likely to have some fighting, Grant is doing great things at Vickburg i believe he will capture everything yet though it will cost a good many lives, but the fighting aught to be done as sson as possible for it

becomes very sickly down their after August the rebbels will have to draw their lines in after this for our cavelry can ride all through their countey when once through their picket lines as sson as they are obliged to guard all their railroads and bridges like we do it will beave them less men to fight,

their is more men guarding works in Ten KY than Rosencrans has to fight,

so i dont think the rebbels will out number us in many more fights

i got a letter from Dan the other day they wer all well I dont see what Father wants to keep in debt for you sed last year that you did not raise feed enough and i dont think it will pay to buy both if you can get to sell that school land sell it for if the fence goes down and the breaking goes back to grass it wont be worth more than wild land, the land in this state will average 50 dallas an acre right about here it is worht 100 Dollars, their is a place out where wee stand picked that has eight hundred acres before the war it was owrth 80,000 Dollars but now their is nothing left but the house a very costly brick, it looks like a prarie farm no fence or archard all gone for firewood

wee are in the 20th Army Corps 1st Division

3d Brigade

Maj Genl Mc k Cook Comndg

the lealth is very good now

this army is in good condition for operation the deaths in the new Regts is more than duple ours i dont think their is a new Regt but what has had more men die in eight monthg than the old Re has in two years