

Letters from Captain James William Stinchcomb, Co. B, 17th Ohio Volunteer Infantry

From the pages of the Lancaster Gazette

Major James William Stinchcomb, a 39 year old Democratic attorney residing in Lancaster, Ohio, was among the first to enlist upon the news of the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. He enlisted in the first company from Lancaster (Co. A, 1st Ohio Volunteer Infantry) but returned to help raise the second company which became Company I of the 17th Ohio Infantry. He was elected captain and led his company through the campaign in western Virginia before returning home to enlist for three years, the company being re-designated as Company B.

Captain Stinchcomb wrote frequent letters home to the *Gazette* during his service, leaving notable accounts of the battles of Stones River, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge. Following the death of Major Benjamin F. Butterfield from wounds sustained at Missionary Ridge, he was promoted to the rank of Major and held such rank until his resignation on May 2, 1864.

Buckhannon, Virginia

July 17, 1861

Rev. J.C. Felton: Dear Sir and Brother,

Your favor reached me on yesterday upon my arrival at this place as also three from my wife. You cannot imagine with what satisfaction a person can sit down and peruse a few lines from either home or friends whilst in the army running the Virginia hills. It makes him think of 'home and home associations.' As this is the first time I have had an opportunity to give anyone a history of our tour and as I expect tomorrow to be engaged again, I'll give you a brief history.

The day our regiment arrived at Parkersburg, Virginia, news was telegraphed from above that a strong escort must be sent with the baggage train that night as the sentinels along the line had reported seeing a secession force of 300 ready to attack it. Gen. Rosecrans called on Col. Connell for the escort and the colonel, about 9 o'clock at night, notified me to have my company ready in 15 minutes to guard the train. We started in a few minutes with strict orders not to let a man go to sleep on the route- 86 miles with two trains running in sight of each other. Our company was divided into two detachments, I took the front train with 37 men and Lt. Wiseman took the second train with the residue of the company. Not a man closed his eye that night to sleep. We got through safe and sound without sight or smell of the enemy next morning about 10 o'clock and by the time we got our things unloaded and selected the campground for the regiment that was to have followed next morning, it was dinner time. Dinner over we lay on the ground to take a nap, and just as the boys were getting into a sound sleep, the telegraph operator handed me a dispatch to report myself at Parkersburg with my company on the next train. The railroad agent told me the train would be ready at 6 o'clock P.M.

At 6 we arrived at the depot ready, armed, and equipped as the law directs, and there we lay until 2 o'clock the next morning before we got cars to get into, and then not an engineer would venture through the road as the report came up that we might expect an attack. It now commenced raining very hard and continued to rain until 9 o'clock this morning, about which time a train got ready with the same engineer that came up with us the night before. In a few minutes we started off towards

Parkersburg, the iron horse snorting, puffing, and blowing and the boys trying to steal some sleep the first 25 miles before we should get into the dangerous region.

The signal agreed upon between the engineer and the officers of danger was four short toots of the whistle, and when about halfway through, there is a very long tunnel, I should judge about $\frac{3}{4}$ a mile long, and as we neared the center of it at a very cautious gait the four whistles were given, but as the last one was not long, the officers knew it to be only something wrong with the track, but the boys not having a full explanation, though sure enough the seceshers are here and fight is certain. As the train stopped, one the side were burning about 50 alcohol lamps to furnish the Irish boys light who were repairing the road and were now stuck back in the "holes in the wall" and if you ever witnessed the ghostly appearance of alcohol lamps, you can imagine the dismal appearance of things to the astonished boys to run from bright noonday light into a place of midnight darkness and then into the red flickering dreamy light of a hundred burning jack o'lanterns scattered along at regular distances, and just at that moment to give the signal of attack. You ought to have seen the boys grasp their pieces and cast their eyes around to the officers in breathless silence, anxiously yet nervously awaiting the order "ready." Little Kub's eyes stuck out worse than pop-eyed Fisher's, whilst Simon Thomas admits he never knew what a scare was before; yet the boys were all at their post and from indications each would have vied with the other to have got the first fire at the enemy. We soon undeceived the boys by telling them that all was right except the track which was a little out of repair. This furnished the boys fun enough for two or three days.

We arrived at Parkersburg about 3 o'clock P.M. and at 9 o'clock started back for Clarksburg, and there found Gen. Rosecrans who informed me that my company and Capt. Jackson's would go back to Parkersburg, thence down the river to some point below Ravenswood and thence march to take Ripley, the county seat of Jackson County. We landed in the woods 12 miles distant on the night of the 28th of June and in the morning of the 29th marched to Ripley, 12 miles in three hours. Went into the town on a 'double quick,' expecting to find 300 troops there and in less time than I can pen it down, we had a squad of men on each principal street. We found no fighting game except one man who got on his horse and the boys supposing him to be a citizen until he had got some two hundred yards off when they espied his gun and calling him to a halt, upon his failing to stop, three shots were fired at him, the last of which was fired by Butler and as we afterwards learned by the man's brother, Butler's shot took effect in his right thigh, which felled him to the ground; but only being a flesh wound, he succeeded in getting onto his horse and made his escape, with the loss of his saddle bags, coat, overcoat, shirt, flask of powder and gun, all of which the boys got.

At 9 o'clock we left Ripley and marched to Ravenswood on this river distant 12 miles, making 24 miles march. We arrived at Ravenswood at 2 o'clock P.M., both tired and hungry. We immediately established a post there calling it Camp Connell at Ravenswood, Va. Maj. Steele left that evening (Saturday) leaving me in command of the post. The next day, sitting on a boat, with spy glass in my hand, I could see the shores of the river lined with men, women, and children, and in a few minutes a messenger arrived with the information that O. Jennings Wise was marching on us with a force of 300 cavalry and 500 light infantry. We called a council of war and commenced throwing up breastworks (this was on Sunday the 30th of June), we took possession of about 75-100 barrels of salt and set them on end and by means of which the work was materially expedited, and by 9 o'clock at night we felt perfectly secure against any force they could bring against us; their cavalry would have been useless, and they

could not have brought over 400 of their footmen to bear against us at any one time. After waiting until about 10 o'clock at night, as the enemy did not appear, we went to bed and slept soundly as the boys had worked very hard and in a drenching rain throwing up the breastworks.

At daybreak the next morning, a messenger crossed the Ohio and informed us that the enemy had been on the march towards us for two and a half hours which would have brought them within two miles of us. Capt. Jackson and I called our companies out and in less than a minute, we were on the march to the point where we intended to make the first stand. Another messenger arrived and informed us they had passed his house about 2:30 on the direct road to our camp with a force from 800-1,000. We had 160. About this time 40 home guards joined us, armed with common rifles; a flag was noticed approaching but it was yet too dark to ascertain, although only a quarter of a mile distant, whether it was friend or foe. I sent Watson with a detachment to meet it who returned and informed us it was the stars and stripes with 37 home guards from Murrysville and 23 of the Portland guards. They marched in and formed on our left. I then notified the boys what number was expected (800) and proposed that all that like standing our ground and fighting should take off his cap and give three cheers, and I know it would have made some of the Fairfield secessionists slunk back in shame to have seen those brave boys standing there awaiting the approach of 800 against 240, and then to have heard the welkin ring with the shouts of the Fairfield boys at such a time. If it had not cured them, I should prescribe the same dose we did to old Jacoby, a trip to see Gov. Dennison with an escort. Wise marched within about three miles of use and then turned in another direction so that we had no fight.

Just after ours boys gave the three cheers, two captains of the home guards, whose names I have forgotten and hope I'll never recall to memory again, came in and informed me they must actually leave the battle line and go home, as one of them had a sick wife and the other had a large harvest to cut. I saw it was cowardice in them and informed them that I preferred one brave boy to 40 cowards and gave them liberty to march off, which they done with their men, leaving us only about 220. About 9 o'clock the same day, the scouts returned and informed us they were again marching on us. We immediately formed battle line and stood in a drenching rain for two hours awaiting their approach, confident that we could whip them, but still they did not come.

Next morning, Col. Jesse S. Norton with six companies of the 21st Ohio came to our assistance and took command and that afternoon we planned a second expedition to Ripley, to which place the enemy had fallen back and taken position. After dark, we got aboard and started for Ripley, landing the boys, all full of fight and anxious to get a chance, as we now had a force of 675 men. We got to the landing at 11 o'clock at night and four companies of Norton's men were marched ashore and formed in marching line and we were just going on to the other boat to waken up the boys, when for some unaccountable reason, Col. Norton called a council of war, when to the utter astonishment and chagrin of the officers of Capt. Jackson's and my companies, every officer with one exception in Col. Norton's six companies voted to go aboard the boat and go down the river to Gallipolis for a reinforcement.

We insisted on going ahead and offered to take four companies, march around Ripley, fortify a hill, and hold them back until Norton could go and get his reinforcements if he must have it, but all to no purpose. We were all ordered aboard the boat and I do confess, if I had not at that moment remembered my vow, I should have done as Lt. Free did and sworn like a mad man. When we had force enough to have whipped O. Jennings Wise with a superior force with six or eight guides that knew very path and field all around Ripley, and a chance for our boys to show their metal, to be fooled out of it by

imbecility, cowardice, or undue caution, I felt like quitting the service and going home. The maddest set of men I ever saw in my life was Capt. Jackson's and my boys, next morning when they awakened and found that we were at Mason City in place of Ripley. That night we returned with a force of 1,400 and found that Wise, upon our arrival at Ripley, had taken the hint about two hours before and left for Charleston. Norton then ordered us back to Ravenswood and after his regiment had stolen all they could find, he left for Gallipolis. I am proud to say that the boys of our two companies, so far as we could ascertain and without a single exception, kept their hands clear of the stealing.

Upon returning to Ravenswood, we found Lt. Col. Mason of Circleville with four companies of the 13th Ohio. He stayed two days and on the 6th of July old Gov. Wise with 1,000 men came back to Ripley. Col. Smith arrived on the evening of the 6th. On the 7th, we started for the third time for Ripley, still anxious for a fight, with only 600 men to fight 1,000 and as we were on the march, a deserter from Wise came to us and assured us that he had got wind of our march upon him and he too had run. After questioning him very close, we became satisfied that he was telling us the truth; so Capt. Runkle and my company were ordered to about face and march to Sandysville, and if possible, take Capt. Phelps' cavalry company of 100 men. By this time, some 36 of my boys and about the same number of Capt. Runkle's boys were not in good marching order as it rained on us for about an hour as hard as I ever saw it rain. We let a portion of them return and started with about 100 men, leaving all unnecessary clothing behind, and depending on Providence for our grub. We went the 12 miles in three hours and found that somebody had preceded us and warned Phelps of our approach, and by the time we had pressed about 25 horses into the service, and they thinking us an advance guard, or else afraid (the latter I think), to fight us, they put spurs to their horses and left in a gallop. We here killed and cooked a fat pig, got a couple of corn ponies, and struck across for Little Sandy Creek, a distance of eight miles where we learned there was a suspicious camp of some 200.

It now being about midnight, we marched four miles and took possession of a field of rye in the shock, made beds of the rye, and without cover or overcoats, took the sweetest nap, as the boys all say, they every got in their lives. A little after sun up, we resumed our march and after traveling about two and a half miles we came to a halt in front of a house and sent an escort to know if we could get anything to eat. One of Virginia's noblest girls by the name of Molly D. Hutchinson met them at the door and taking us for secession troops, as the whole country were secessionists except her father (and he had fled to save his life) and inquired what we wanted. Our escort replied something to eat. She looked a perfect storm of indignation, and replied that although we had driven her father from home, she would let us know we could not get a bit there; but at this moment, our guide who was acquainted, made himself known. Molly jumped for joy and sang out at the top of her voice that the last thing on the farm was at our service. Four or five of us volunteered to assist her in cooking beans and cornbread. Sgt. Pierce was detailed to cut some wood and upon inquiry for the axe, Molly went to her bedroom and brought it with the remark that she had it there last night to use on the rascals' heads when her three guns gave out. The boys say that a man that wouldn't fight for such a girl ought to sit on a porcupine chair the balance of his life and die in the desert.

But unfortunately, just as we had got the breakfast in large pans to divide among the boys, our advance guard fired their guns and call out light horse. We instantly dropped our breakfast, I don't know whether on the table or the floor, and put the boys on double quick for three miles to head them off but was again disappointed to hear that they had passed the point not to exceed five minutes before us. Our

horsemen, 25 of them, dashed after them without inquiring their numbers and run them about five miles further and returned with the capture of only two horses. Tired and disappointed in our fight, and hungry, we dispatched a couple of the boys back after Molly's breakfast; they brought it in double quick time and I presume it is unnecessary for me to say that we devoured it like a pack of hungry wolves and wished for more of the same sort, gave three cheers for Molly, and started down the Little Sandy for Ravenswood where we arrived that evening about 6 o'clock, having made a march of 28 miles that day on the one meal.

We stayed at Ravenswood until Friday last without anything of note, when we received marching orders to rejoin our regiment at this place. We started Saturday morning and arrived here yesterday about 3 o'clock, all well except very tired and about 20 in each company run down with the diarrhea, among them your humble servant. This place is about as large as Somerset, situated in a nice valley and a county seat. The same thing is seen here that we saw all over Jackson County: deserted houses. Our folks cannot imagine a scene of panic-stricken men, women, and children, fleeing before an army of enemies. Oh, the bitter pangs and anxious care that I saw in hundreds of countenances as they were fleeing for life to Ohio, and then to hear the cries and sobs of broken-hearted women whose husbands and brothers and friends had been carried off prisoners, or shot down in their own door yards, and only for the reason that they loved their country and stood up for it, was enough to make the blood boil. I don't exaggerate when I tell you that for five or six days when Wise was in Ripley there could not have been found in Jackson County 50 men of either side that would venture to their own houses to get anything to eat, let alone to cut their wheat, an excellent crop, too, that stood in the fields spoiling for the want of the reaper. Our boys turned out and cut a field of about 100 acres of secession wheat at Ravenswood. It will take years to repair the loss to Virginia already done. I pray God to send any other curse on our beloved Ohio than two armies of our own county in hostile array. It must be seen to appreciate it.

We have now got our regiment together once more and hope to keep them together until we return home. You can look for us about the 1st of August. We have only lost two men in our whole regiment since we left Camp Anderson, and that was in Company B and C- one died with fever and the other was drowned at Parkersburg. Our regiment has acquired a reputation of honesty and gentlemanly conduct that but regiment every acquired in an army. Gen. McClellan has reached the foot of the Allegany Mountains as far as he can advance until a new program is made out in Washington. You need not tell me anymore about Virginian and Southern chivalry. I tell you they have not got the pluck our Northern boys have in battle. They lose their own confidence and their officers lose theirs'; and as life is dear to all, they make their legs perform the one part which nature intended them for.

Pray for me and the boys

Lancaster Gazette

August 1, 1861, pg. 1

Camp Wild Cat, Kentucky

October 22, 1861

Dear Lou*: On yesterday morning as I signed my name, the long roll of the drum beat "To Arms! To Arms!" I was in Capt. Ricketts' quarters; dropped my letter unfolded and unsealed, met the

postmaster about halfway to where my company was, hallowed to him to enclose my letter and address it to you.

I had not marched my company 100 yards before the sharp keen crack of infantry commenced about as far off as from our home to the canal brigade (about 600 yards) from where four companies of the 17th Ohio were, Company B (my company), Capt. Ogden, Capt. Rippey, and Capt. Getzendriner. We are on a hill on the extreme left with a deep ravine on our south and well-fortified behind breastworks thrown up on Sunday, Sunday night, and Monday morning.

The 33rd Indiana, Col. Coburn, with four companies, occupied the second point from us south and being the center. Here the attack was made by two regiments, the 2nd Mississippi who called themselves "Hell Cats" to designate their bravery and a Tennessee regiment. They made a charge with three cheers and reached the top of the hill when the four companies opened fire and such a continual roar of musketry was enough to deafen anyone. The other six companies of our regiment had been held as a reserve when Captains Whissen, Haines, Red, and Fox were ordered to the relief of the Indiana boys. They reached the top of the hill just in time for Capt. Haines' boys to get three rounds. At this time, our canon opened on their battery and in less than two minutes they were silenced. The Indiana boys fought like tigers- four companies against two regiments. The fight lasted about 20 minutes, ended at 10 o'clock A.M., and as the Rebels fell back leaving their dead and wounded on the field, you ought to have heard the shout that rent the air as hill after hill took up the glorious sound of victory. They retired but a short distance in a deep ravine and commenced reconnoitering to attack at some new point. We lay near our breastworks expecting to be attacked every moment. Lt. Ashbrook, about a half mile in advance with the skirmishers, and having been there from Sunday about 12 o'clock in order to check their progress and formations of line. He is a noble officer whilst a large portion of our boys were actively engaged with axes, completing our breastworks.

About 2 o'clock they made a second attack on another hill on our extreme right and also at another point of the same hill, occupied by the Indiana boys and our four companies. This fight lasted about half an hour when the Rebels deployed around the gill in sight of our cannon. Three shells were thrown among them, each one taking effect, the last of which exploded in the midst of a large body, and from the way they scampered, evidently killed and wounded a large number. This silenced them. I forgot to tell you that in the first fight the Rebels commenced throwing shot and chains at our boys, but three shots from one of our pieces silenced their batteries and evidently dismounted their gun as it was not heard from afterwards.

The loss in both fights is six killed and 16 wounded, all Indianans and Kentuckians. We cannot yet tell what their loss is but it must be heavy. We have three of their wounded in our hospital and I saw two of their dead lying on the field, both of whom were shot in the head. They carried off during the night their dead, as there were least evening nine bodies lying near where the two lay this morning and 15 in another place, all of which are gone this morning.¹ The enemy had 7,000 men besides 600 cavalry

¹ It appears that the Confederates buried the dead with the emphasis on speed instead of thoroughness. After the battle, a squad of Union soldiers came across a recently dug grave of a dead Confederate; the hand of the deceased stuck out from beneath the dirt. "He is reaching for his land warrant," said one. *Weekly Lancaster Gazette*, October 31, 1861, pg. 1

and six pieces of cannon. We had, when the fight commenced, our regiment, Col. Garrard's Kentucky regiment, and Col. Coburn's Indiana regiment. One third of Garrard's men were in the hospital sick with measles, making for us about 2,500 men. Col. Steadman with his regiment (14th Ohio) and battery (Capt. Garnett) reached the field on the double quick in time to assist in winding up the fight before dinner. Since then, two Tennessee and one Kentucky regiments have arrived and another Ohio regiment and battery are now crossing the river.

We have now lain on our arms for three nights and but little time to eat. We have carried the victuals to the boys in the battle line since yesterday morning. Gen. Schoepf, a Hungarian, is in command, but says this kind of Indian fighting does not quite ring of scientific military fighting, and hence he left the principal part of managing to our gallant Col. Connell, he having made himself somewhat acquainted with the ground before the fight commenced and the General only reaching the ground about that time. Our success is really due Col. Connell as I know he suggested to the General that the hill where the fight took place ought to be occupied when Col. Coburn was ordered to take possession at once and was not on the hill 15 minutes before the firing commenced and 15 minutes later would have given the enemy possession of the hill. Col. Connell galloped from one point to the other, and in the last fight was in rather an uncomfortable place for some time, as the bullets flew like hail around him, as I am told by some of the boys and they say John was as composed as if he were debating a question with Judge Whitman in the Courthouse.

Our Major was in the last fight and showed himself to be a gallant officer² as also Adj. Davis. Col. Moore is one of the best workers on breastworks I have come across lately. He can endure as much as I can, and I know from personal observation that he is one of the most watchful officers in the army; it was through him that the reinforcements came up as soon as they did. Our boys are becoming delighted with all the field officers. We have been in strong hopes that the enemy would attack as today, as we are well fixed at every point and we can whip 20,000 of them; but we are now informed that Zollicoffer is in full retreat. I presume we will follow him up. His loss must have been very heavy. Our boys have found about 50 guns of the battle ground.

No time to write more now. All well, but want sleep and rest, yet ready to follow Zollicoffer 20 miles tonight if we get the order. God bless you and the children.

Lancaster Gazette

October 31, 1861, pg. 1

Camp near Crab Orchard, Kentucky

November 17, 1861

² A correspondent to the *Cincinnati Gazette* wrote of Major Ward that "when Major Ward of the 17th Ohio came over the hill with a part of the regiment, Col. Coburn took him down the hillside in front of the Kentuckians in a somewhat exposed place. Someone asked the colonel why he put him there. 'Well,' said he, 'I eyed him and he looked like an old bulldog, so I put him down where he could wool the hounds.' The Major, you know, never before had a compliment paid to his homely, sturdy face, being rather hard favored. Next day, some of the boys got the joke on him by telling him they had heard his beauty complimented. He asked for the compliment, got it, and drily remarked 'that it was rather an equivocal recommendation of his pretty face.'"

Dear Lou: We arrived here night before last and I thought I would wait before writing so as to let you know something definite, but we are here, knowing as much as we did when we left camp at London, except finding out that we took the hardest march on the boys I ever witnessed. The boys lay all along the road for eight or ten miles in squads of two to fifty in the mud and rain, and I assure you anyone who had humanity left about them could scarcely refrain from tears when he saw the poor fellows lying their completely exhausted. Some of them would drop to sleep almost as soon as they touched the ground and many would declare they could not move forward when awakened by the officers. And when the question is asked why so hard a march after night in the rain and with roads nearly knee deep in mud, no one appears to be able to answer. I presume superior officers to Col. Connell can answer as he can't. He moved simply because he was ordered to move. Our regiment stood the march better than any regiment in the brigade- the last to start and the first to pitch tents. Company B started with 52 rank and file, the rest being guards, except one in the hospital and the other, Lt. Brown, sick at a private house, and we landed here with 57 in fine spirits and in order; the only company that came in with one-third the men they started with. Where we will go next I cannot tell; I should not be surprised if to Tennessee as they now seem to indicate that Tennessee is in a good condition for us to make a demonstration into. Our boys will cheerfully wade mud or go in any kind of weather if anything can be accomplished. We will go wherever ordered at any hazard.

The weather is very unpleasant. Last night ice froze to considerable thickness, but we were fortunate as Lewis Morrison in the afternoon of yesterday discovered very good coal within two rods of our campfire that was easily got at, and in a few minutes coal fires were sending forth their black smoke and comfortable heat all over camp. This morning we built a large fire in front of all our tents and I assure you it feels comfortable although it has been snowing all forenoon. As I have said to you before, the weather is very uncertain here in the mountains, et we feel the mountain weather as we are not distant to be out of its influence.

My boys are all well except Eli Tipple and Lt. Brown. Eli has had the measles; I think he will be well in a few days. Address your letters to Camp Dick Robinson until you hear from me again.

Lancaster Gazette

November 21, 1861, pg. 3

On march from Camp Moore to Lebanon, Kentucky

November 27, 1861

Dear Lou: We started this morning on our march again under the most glowing circumstances as it began last night about 9 o'clock to snow and continued to snow for about one half an hour and then it turned to rain and I assure you it did rain; I had gone to Danville in the evening to get a camp stove and had to wait until 9 o'clock for the man to finish it; and by the time we got to camp it was thundering, lightning, and raining. The creek this morning had risen so high we had to chop a large tree across it for the boys to walk over on. It continued to rain until 11 o'clock and then it broke away and this afternoon was a delightful one overhead but no so very unpleasant underneath as we are marching on a good pike. It appears as though we have the luck to march in the worst of weather as the majority of our marches have been made in the rain and mud, yet the boys moved off cheerfully with the understanding that we are going on to join a column; embracing several brigades under the command of Gen. Thomas.

I am inclined to think if Gen. Thomas should meet the enemy he will show himself to be a general although many papers censure him for the Cumberland Gap expedition. I don't think he ever had men enough to make an attack on the Gap, and for that reason I infer he did not press the column as close as many thought it ought to have been done, but when it is known that he only had about 3,500 efficient men marching against an army of 8,000; his movements had necessarily to be very cautious and I had much rather see a general err on the side of caution than rashness.

I have never blamed Gen. Thomas for the failure to capture the entire army of Zollicoffer, but it is the Kentuckians that are to blame for the whole of it. Col. Garrard's regiment has been in camp for weeks at Wild Cat and yet when we got there they knew nothing at all about the country except on the roads; ask them what kind of country is over that knob or that hill or valley and their invariable reply would be 'I have never been thar.' It appeared as though we could get no one to give us any information or guides that scarcely knew anything about the country and the Kentucky cavalry is not as good as common make shift, using the old woman phrase. Our boys knew more about the country within 300 yards of where the fight took place in two hours after we got there than the Kentuckians ever knew or will ever know about it. They appeared to think the only thing necessary to know about the ground was immediately in front of their works. They thought only of repelling an attack and never apparently dreamed of following the enemy and cutting him to pieces on his retreat. They should have explored the country all around and known every foot of it and then, when we had ascertained that Zollicoffer was retreating, we could have marched through the woods and ambushed him and made the victory decisive.

I see someone wrote home that Co. A under Capt. Butterfield has marched 50 miles further than any other company in the regiment. This is not the fact, as Capt. Ricketts' company as also my own have been on every march that Co. A has and I assure you we never start on a march but we do as much as any other company; the fact is Co. B marched from London to Rockcastle River and back, 14 miles each way, faster than Capt. Butterfield's or any other company of the regiment, excepting a part of Capt. Whissen's boys who accompanied us; I only state this so that our friends may have the facts.

Ever since we came within about four miles of Mt. Vernon we have been in a most delightful country as the soil is very rich, undulating, and well-watered, as there are many small streams with quite a number as large as the Hocking River at Logan. The whole country in this region and back beyond Mt. Vernon rests on a bed of limestone. But today for five or six miles back we have had a beautiful contrast in land; the Pike runs along some two or three valleys each in its turn immediately on our right a most delightful country is seen running back as far as the eye can reach, whilst immediately on our left there is a ridge of hills or rather a lot of hills ending abruptly extending back from the pike toward the mountains. Immediately in front of our camp there are three at about equal distance from each other, either of which is as high as Mt. Pleasant but they do not break off so abruptly, yet they are very steep; I counted some 18 in sight this evening and today at several times I counted 6 to 14 of the same kind of hills. But they must be seen to be appreciated, yet it looks strange to see a little stream that can be stepped over by a footman dividing two counties so vastly different in appearance. The one raising to 10-15 feet and then extending back for miles on a level except that it is rolling enough to make it beautiful farming land; whilst the other rises into hills or ridges 50-300 feet high all along the road and all ending within a few rods of the road. I presume they are the commencement of a ridge of mountains extending east and west through southern Kentucky.

Mt. Vernon, unlike Mt. Vernon, Ohio, is a very poor-looking shabby town, and quite a sprinkling of Secesh in it but they had all left several weeks before we got to it, and for us it demonstrated the old saying that an 'ill wind that blows no one any good' as we got there when on our march from London, late, tired, hungry, worn out, wet, and cold, and we immediately camped in their vacated houses so the absence of the Secesh was our comfort. Crab Orchard is a much better town and the Union sentiment is much stronger; but Danville is the best town by odds that I have seen in Kentucky. It has a population of about 2,300 and has some splendid buildings in it, among which are a college and a deaf and dumb asylum. It has a little of the appearance of a Yankee town, in this it has some enterprise and public spirit. A few years since a railroad was graded to Danville from Nicholasville but some sharper ran away with \$100,000 of the money and the Marysville Company failed to repay \$90,000 worth of iron when the Danville Company went up and nothing has been done to the road since.

We have a fine cooking stove now in our quarters, the stove part made of sheet iron. We have a coffee pot, roasting pans, cake baker, etc. and you ought to have seen Lt. Ashbrook and me cooking fresh sausage for supper. I don't believe you and Mrs. Ashbrook could have beaten the cooking. There are several of my boys sick, principally with measles.

Lancaster Gazette

December 5, 1861, pg. 3

Camp near Somerset, Kentucky

December 24, 1861

Henry Laymen, Aaron P. Berry and John W. Chapman are so bad that Col. Connell directed us this morning to give them liberty to go home while H.C. Hart, Daniel Johnson, Joseph Lockart, Abraham Ressler, John Dogan, John L. Elder, Elisha Hall, and William Burr are in the hospital. In addition, Thomas and Charles Shrieves are both taking medicine. James Hindman, Edward Thompson, William C. Holiday, Sargent Sears, George W. Spitler, Eli Tipple, John E. Sane, Joseph Delong, and Enoch Berry are sick at quarters. Many of the above, though sick, are able to perform duty. I will write you each day in regard to the condition of the sick and you will endeavor to inform the relations by sending them word directly or by published the above in the *Gazette*.

December 26, 1861

Christmas is over and we had quite a fine time at Company B's quarters as we had a fine turkey and chicken dinner. We had 29 turkeys and 28 chickens. We invited all the field officers and captains and nearly all the lieutenants and any number of the boys. There were about 300 at dinner and we had plenty although at 10 o'clock we were informed that we had neither bread nor meal to bake bread of, but as soon as we learned this fact, Lt. Ashbrook, Sgt. Ruffner, Corp. McNaughton, and myself and several others started out on a foraging expedition to the country to buy bread and meal. We soon found two and a half bushels of corn meal and by half past 12 o'clock we had as much good corn bread as 300 men could eat. Enos Shumaker baked three ponies off the stove. I got a flat or Dutch oven and baked five Virginia corn cakes- which were pronounced by good judges to be excellent. The balance we hired the Negroes in Somerset to bake for us.

After dinner, Lt. Col. More, Capt. Phillips of the 1st Tennessee, Lt. Graten of the 38th Ohio, Capt. Jackson and Capt. Free of the 31st Ohio and Capt. Fullerton each made short appropriate speeches, filling

the boys with enthusiasm. We then sung songs and adjourned with three cheers. I never saw a Christmas pass over with so little drunkenness as there was in the 17th Regiment. I saw none drunk, although I learned there were three who got 'how come you so.' The boys were allowed to have as much liquor as they wanted, under a promise from all that none would get drunk, and I am proud to say that so far as the 17th is concerned, with the exception above, their promise was strictly and faithfully kept.

We now begin to feel the effects of the hard march from London and the exposure of the boys in the shape of death, as the 17th has lost seven by death and will lose a number more, with probably 50-75 being dangerously sick. It is enough to sicken the stoutest heart to hear the boys cough when awakened in the night and called into line. There will be, probably, one half of the regiment coughing at the same time, yet each trying to restrain his cough. We hope to be able to rest here or at some point, a sufficient length of time, that the men of our regiment may recruit their health. The men have improved in health rapidly since we have been here. As to myself, I have never had better health than at present. About the time of our exposure, I caught a severe cold and at one time I thought I would be sick but by keeping close quarters and using stews and hoarhound tea, I soon got rid of my cold and in a short time found myself in good health.

I don't look for a fight now unless we attack the enemy which will not be done unless we get force enough to make our victory sure, in which event you will hear of a victory such as Gen. Pope is said to have achieved in Missouri. I am not at liberty to give details or place, but I think you may prepare yourself to hear of a battle and a victory before long not a thousand miles from Gen. Schoepf's column.

Noah Sites is apparently better this morning though he is so low that it is difficult to ascertain his true condition. He is the only one of my boys that is dangerous who are at present in our camp. Frank Shoemaker of Co. A accidentally shot off the right forefinger this morning. Co. C buried another of their boys this morning. He took colic and the surgeon sent him a vial of laudanum to take in doses and his comrade gave him too much, and from the effect of it he died yesterday morning. I find that nearly every death that has occurred has been the result of carelessness to some extent, either in eating too much or exposure unnecessarily.

Lancaster Gazette

January 2, 1862, pg. 3

Camp near Somerset, Kentucky

Headquarters, 17th O.V.U.S.A.

(late December 1861)

P.B. Embich, esq.

Dear Sir, Your patriotic letter by Springer came duly to hand and I have been delaying the answer until I could give you some news but it appears as though the dull monotony of camp life is not to be broken soon in this region except by the burial of some of the brave boys. I am sorry to inform you that Richard M. Johnson of Capt. Ogden's company was buried today. He died last night of typhoid fever. He was a brave, noble, and gallant soldier and when in health, either on the march or at any other time, he was one who discharged his soldier's duty and was today buried with soldier's honors. His friends have the satisfaction of knowing that he fell doing his duty to his country. Peace to his ashes. Johnson lived near Clearport. Be kind enough to get word to his parents.

There are many now on the sick list. Abraham Ressler of my company is very sick; he is from Madison Township but I think he will get well as he is mending slowly.

We have seen hard service since we came to Kentucky and have been much exposed and both are now telling on our regiment. We have been having several rainy days and nights lately and as it is necessary to keep eight companies on picket duty, it makes it very hard on the boys yet with all these difficulties surrounding us the boys are all anxious for the time to come when the 17th can have an opportunity to exhibit their attachment for their country and their country's honor on the battlefield.

Lancaster Gazette

January 9, 1862, pg. 3

Camp near Somerset, Kentucky

January 4, 1862

As this place has gained considerable notoriety on account of the Union and Rebel armies encamped near it in a menacing attitude for the last three or four weeks, a general description of the nature of the county may prove interesting to many of your readers. Somerset is situated in a kind of basin, the hills rising gradually from it in every direction except the east which is level. We are encamped on a hill 75 feet above the town; on the north and west of us and part of the east is a deep ravine or hollow, making the hill very difficult to ascend from either of those directions. If Zollicoffer should attack us from either of those points, long before he could get to us, he will wish he had not tried it, as one regiment situated as ours is upon this hill could whip four thousand men advancing in either of the directions above stated. From Somerset which is on the southerly side of the camp, the road ascends gradually about a half mile and should Zollicoffer advance from that direction, we will warm him good as he must pass the 13th Kentucky, 35th and 38th Ohio, before he could get to us. If he should advance from an easterly direction, he would have to pass our pickets two miles out, march at least eight miles further and then the two Tennessee regiments meet him and one battery can play on him for 1 ½ miles in all directions except east; in fact it can play on him for three miles in some directions and then there is Capt. Hewitt's battery a half mile south of us. I only wish he would come here and make an attack. He will get away feeling worse and be worse whipped than he was at Wild Cat if he got away at all. I predict he will not fight us here at all, but if we get force enough in his rear to attack him, he will try to make his escape through this way somewhere, but he will not dare stop to fight us in that case, and then if we don't make him get up and howl I don't know anything about the temper and wish of Schoepf's command.

We are pretty well fortified here as is also the 38th Ohio and Col. Hoskins and since our other two smoothbore cannon have come up, we do not fear 'Old Zolly' if we can get half a chance at him. He is evidently afraid of us as a Negro came into our camp from his yesterday who says the day we went to make a reconnaissance in force, they rushed into the ferry boat so fast, expecting us on him every minute, that they drowned a number of his men- the Negro thinks 300- but I don't believe his story, yet I have no doubt that they drowned some, as other Negroes tells the same story and we were moving on toward him with three regiments and five cannon on each road besides two companies of cavalry. I have always thought if we made a bold dash at him before he fortified on this side of the river, he would have fell back or recrossed the river, but as his position then would have been much stronger than ours, we

would have gained nothing unless we could have had a force on the other side to drive him there. This appears to be Gen. Thomas' idea or otherwise we would have attacked him.

Some of our officers do not like Gen. Thomas but I have still implicit confidence in him, as also Gen. Schoepf and staff, and do not attach to either of them blame for not making an attack until we have force enough to whip Zollicoffer and capture his whole command. Fast or quick fighting sometimes wins and I with many others frequently get restless at the 'stand still' way of doing things but when I remember that our own forces and the enemy are about equal- while the latter has the advantage of position, I think it the better policy to pursue, not to advance until we have force enough to secure success. I always feel like yielding my own opinions in deference to those men who have made military matters a study for life, which Gen. Thomas and Gen. Schoepf have done; and I now predict that if Gen. Thomas gets an opportunity during this war to display his military talent, that he will prove himself a General.

But to return to my subject, the hill or narrow ridges with hills on their tops at intervals shaped like large mounds rise from 200-400 feet above the valleys. Fishing Creek is a very crooked stream, meandering through a narrow valley between high rocky hills or bluffs on either side perpendicular for some 10-50 feet when they break off abruptly and rise up for some distance, resembling in appearance the west side of Mt. Pleasant; more specifically is this so in reference to the hills on the east side of the creek. The stream of water is about as large as Rushcreek at Sugar Grove. There are a great many places called bowls or basins such as you will recollect to have seen in Morrow County east of Chesterville. From their resemblance to a bowl they are called bowls. Some of them hold water for two or three days after a heavy rain but as a general thing they are tillable almost any kind of season. Others of them have sink holes that carry off the water as fast as it runs into them. I noticed a large sink hole in one of them in town, and except it is just after a rain, there is no water discoverable about them as the holes are large enough to carry off three times as much water as rains into them.

The dark and bloody ground is not very good although it produces pretty good corn crops, but little wheat comparatively speaking. The inhabitants all love corn bread. They use wheat bread about as often as we use corn bread in Ohio. There is something very remarkable to an Ohioan about the Kentucky corn bread; it has a uniform taste wherever I have had the opportunity to taste it. For a long time after my entrance into Kentucky, this feature in their corn bread was a curiosity and a mystery to me. To gratify this curiosity and to solve the mystery, I asked a lady from whom our boys were buying bread why it was that their corn bread tasted so funny. She informed me that they put no salt in it. I told her I thought that putting salt in would make the bread much better; she replied that salt would spoil it. Kentucky pies are not very palatable to one who has been used to such pies as out Fairfield county women make. The pie crust is so tough it reminds me of peach leather we used to make when I was a boy. Many of such pies are brought into camp and sold to the soldiers. We have prohibited this species of kindness.

The rumor that two men of the 17th were to be shot for sleeping on their post is entirely untrue. The boys of the 17th are not likely to be shot for neglect of duty. Noah Sites is improving in health but very slow, he will not be fit to move for four to five weeks. Hart and Ressler are both improving.

Lancaster Gazette

January 16, 1862, pg. 1

Headquarters 17th Regiment near Somerset, Kentucky

January 14, 1862

There are various rumors afloat to the effect that Zollicoffer and his whole force are to be bagged. When and how and by whom I am not at liberty to state. Our force will not probably be engaged but will merely watch him until he is caught in the net of the Union army. Our men are not well pleased with the idea that they are not to 'pitch into Zolly.'

Col. Bramblett, a few days since, captured a Rebel boat that had been up the river to Zollicoffer. I today saw the two prisoners captured a few days since by Col. Hoskin. They are Tennesseans and very intelligent men and were quite surprised at the kind and gentlemanly treatment which they had received while in our camp. They said to me, that our people were grossly misrepresented to the people of the South. That they expected to be treated badly and expected to find a savage and ignorant army- from the statements made to them in Tennessee, by officers of the Rebel army and men in high social and political position. I conversed with them for an hour. They were very frank and told me that they did not wish to go back to the Rebel army, and that they would not want to shoot any of us after having been treated so kindly. They were captured by being led into an ambush; a man was stationed in a conspicuous place in advance of whom were several others concealed. The prize was very tempting, and they advanced to capture our man when they were surrounded and fired upon. Neither of them was shot, but both were thrown from their horses against trees and badly hurt; one of them did not come to until brought into camp, a distance of eight miles. He says it was the first time he was ever on picket duty and he wants it to be the last. The prisoners represent Zollicoffer as being strongly fortified, but they think he can be whipped.

I presume that we will make our winter quarters here. The water is good, wood plenty, and forage tolerably good, better than many places in Kentucky. It froze pretty hard last night. The cold weather is much better for the soldiers, especially the sick, than the cold rains and winds we have been having for some time. Lt. Spencer, who we supposed dying last night, has changed for the better and we have strong hopes of his final recovery. Hart and Ressler will be sent home as soon as they are able to go. They will remain at home until entirely well. They are both better; I went to the hospital today to see them. Hart is very weak but is improving gradually. Skinner is better today. I think his fever has broken; if so he will soon recover as he was not so much reduced in flesh as the others who have had the fever. Lockart is nearly well and this now disposes of all my boys who are sick. There are several others who have bad colds, but they are all about well. Sgt. Sears is getting fat since he got over his brush.

January 14, 1862 9 P.M.

Madame Rumor is still circulating her stories, whether true or not, I won't say. The latest is that there is a large force of Union troops west of us about seven miles and a very large force have crossed the Cumberland River and that a fight will take place before two days; if she tells the truth you will all hear from this region something that will cheer the national heart and add to the luster of the Union chivalry. But then she tells such big stories so often with such apparent plausibility that a person hardly knows when to believe her. I hope she tells the truth this time.

The Tennesseans are getting tired of waiting for a forward movement; so several of them on the night before last started for their homes, after first securing their pockets full of cartridges, besides the 40 rounds in their cartridge boxes; they swore they were going to have revenge for their friends who

had been murdered by the Secessionists. They say that they can hide in the mountains and hills and shoot Rebels down until they have killed two to one; I fear their tactics and bravery will get them into trouble yet, as a squad of men were started in pursuit of them yesterday morning, to arrest them as deserters.

No one can help sympathizing with the Tennessee refugees; they are a brave and patriotic people, not strong enough to sustain themselves at home so formidable is the rebellion there, and hence to make themselves of service to the Union cause, which they loved, they fled from their homes, crossed the mountains alone or in groups to Kentucky to join the van of the Union army. They were assured by officers that they should soon be led back to the country of their homes and friends to rid it of treason and rebellion, and the time to them appears long, very long, especially when every message that reaches them from their homes gives them but the sad intelligence of new outrages upon their homes and friends by Rebels; the result is that many of them are becoming desperadoes, swearing eternal vengeance, aye extinction of the Rebels if ever they get a chance. Should a column of our army get into Tennessee with these wronged patriots, Rebels and their property will feel the sad effect of madness brought on by secession. Revenge is what they are now asking and crying for, and I doubt if all the discipline in the army will be able to prevent them from glutting their Rebels neighbors and property. I have seen brave and noble looking stout-hearted men among them sit down and cry like children with gladness when some wanderer has been fortunate enough to escape the Rebel horde and reach our camp. I say sympathy and pity are both theirs and I hope the day is not too far distant when they can go into their country and at least say it is over.

Lancaster Gazette

January 23, 1862, pg. 3

Camp near Somerset, Kentucky

January 27, 1862

Editor *Lancaster Gazette*: In the *Ohio Eagle*, just after the victory of our troops over Zollicoffer's army, an editorial appears in which the doubting editor seems to think the great victory will dwindle down to nothing and prove to be a Nelson victory. He advises his readers to 'wait for the wagon.' We have many in the 17th Ohio that have friends who are readers of the *Eagle* and would like Charley to get a little faster wagon than he had last summer, or our friends may not hear from the victory until some of the returned volunteers compel him to change his honest sentiment. Has his wagon drove up yet? Fearing it has let us say to him Zollicoffer was killed and a great battle was fought and the Rebel army not only retreated,, but it was a promiscuous scramble or run, every man for himself, and after three days march, as an escaped prisoner of our informs us, not a single company of all that great army have collected a sufficient number of scared Rebels to march together. Do hurry up that wagon for the *Eagle*. It should not be so far behind and then try to give the editor the cause, the great cause, the first great cause of this war; but in order that he may get at it logically and historically, have him commence with the cause of the war of 1776, next the Indian war, then the War of 1812, then the Florida war, then the Michigan War, then the Black Hawk War, the Mexican War, the Jose Smith War, and don't have him forget the Somerset War. It is important the people should all know and be familiar with the causes of all these wars and it is wrong in so sapient an editor as the *Eagle* man to keep these things all back from his readers. I hope the wagon will soon be up with a driver.

We start Saturday morning at 7 o'clock for Dixie. The 18th Regulars came up last night, and among them brother Seth Weldy. He looks as well as the best of us. I never saw him look so well in my life. His captain says he makes a noble soldier. I hope to hear of his promotion soon as he deserves it, and I have no doubt ere long be a lieutenant from what I learn. Our column will be over 20,000 and within supporting distance of the Cumberland Gap column. We have now five batteries and can make a pretty formidable fight. Awful busy. Your friend, J.W. Stinchcomb

Lancaster Gazette

February 6, 1862, pg. 3

Camp near Somerset, Kentucky

January 29, 1862

Dear Lou: Today I saw William Conner of Co. D and Capt. Free of the 31st Ohio who on the 12th of January was taken prisoner by the Rebels. He had Gen. Schoepf's pass in his pocket and tried him and found him guilty as a spy and was going to hang him when they got to Knoxville. He says on the 19th, the day of the battle, he never saw such a jam and confused mass of men as there was in the Rebel army as they coming piling into their breastworks; confusion in fact confounded confusion and about 9 o'clock at night they commenced crossing the river. He says about 2 o'clock in the morning the guard started with him for the ferry and there he made up his mind to escape but when they got to within 100 yards of the ferry, it was a dense mass of human beings packed together in disorder but as they got to the crowd, a sentinel took hold of either arm and put two in front and eight in his rear so he concluded the jig was up for the night. About sun up, the balance of the men plunged into the river, some swam across and some were drowned, and on they went pell mell, helter skelter, and marched without anything to eat until sometime in the night they halted and rested a little while, but long before all had come up, they started again, marching the balance of the night, throwing away their guns at almost every step and marched until Wednesday night about 9 o'clock, laid down to sleep without anything to eat, as they had nothing to eat. Twelve men were detailed to watch him.

Thirty hours more took him to where he could not escape. The twelve men were divided into reliefs, four to watch at a time and eight to sleep. Soon the whole camp, or rather confused mass of men was asleep as also the eight sentinels. In a few minutes, Bill says, to his joy he saw three of the watching sentinels give way to fatigue and loss of sleep and soon they were sound asleep. Hope sprung up and he lay managing some way to escape from the other sentinel, he had just concluded to pick up a stock of wood, knock the sentinel down and in the confusion run the risk of escape, when to his astonishment, but delight, he saw the remaining sentinel commence nodding as he sat close to him, and soon his head rested on his breast and upon inspection he found the last sentinel asleep. Noiselessly the prisoner arose and quietly left, but he had a line of sentinels and pickets to pass before he was safe. It being very dark, he crawled for some distance and soon discovered that he was beyond the line of sentinels. He now rose and started for freedom in good earnest. A little fire in his front soon told him where the picket was. He struck for the woods and soon climbed a steep and rugged mountain and having made $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, he concluded to hide and wait until the next day; hardly hid until he discovered daylight showing itself in the east. He laid there all day, saw the guard hunting for him until about the middle of the afternoon and when near him, they concluded their bird was gone and far on his way to the land of

the Yankees, and away they went and joined in the stream of straggling soldiers that had been passing all day.

As soon as it was dark, he crawled out and took his course, striking out for our camp, traveled all night and until about 10 o'clock the next morning when he discovered a house in a valley and after watching until he became satisfied there were no men about, he ventured in, nearly starved, having eaten nothing from Monday morning. He found a widow woman, secession in feeling; he passed for a secession soldier, got something to eat and managed to ascertain where there were some Union people living and fortunately for him it was only eight miles; he got there that afternoon, got as much as he could eat and stayed until recruited up, and to our surprise, when all hopes had been given up by us of Bill Conner, he stepped into camp after an absence of 15 days. He run a very narrow escape but says he was well paid for his trip and will be more cautious hereafter. Conner is a good scout and a brave man.

Col. Connell started home today on account of ill health. He has been quite unwell for several days and my only surprise is that he has stood up under the exposures we have been compelled to undergo. As soon as it was ascertained the Colonel was compelled to go home on account of his health, it was a universal expression of regret. He is loved by both men and officers and well does he deserve it, as he is a good commander, a brave soldier, and always cares for his men and neglects nothing that will add to their comfort, if in his power to bestow or procure.

Lancaster Gazette

February 13, 1862, pg. 3

Camp near Lebanon, Kentucky

February 17, 1862

Editors *Gazette*: The 17th Ohio arrived here yesterday in the advance of Gen. Schoepf's brigade. I am not able to say how far the balance of the brigade is, but think the 31st Ohio cannot be over six miles, next comes the 38th Ohio, and lastly the 12th Kentucky. But how far apart and when they will be up I am not advised. The 17th had orders from Gen. Schoepf to halt five miles back and wait until the balance of the brigade came up; but when we got there we were out of rations and snow five inches deep, whereupon Col. Moore concluded to move on to Lebanon. We had barely got underway when we met one of Gen. Thomas' aides with an order to move the 17th up to Lebanon, if possible, so as to take the cars this morning. The roads had been very bad for the last eight miles though it was on a pike, but all cut up with the heavy government wagons that had passed over it. Lt. Col. Moore called the regiment up and inquired how many were willing to move forward, when a universal 'aye' was given. We marched here about 4 P.M. and camped in the woods and did as we had the evening before- scraped away the snow, pitched tents-each one trying to be the merriest. Co. B was very fortunate as out place happened to be near a lot of dry wood in the field. The whole company turned out and each one carried as much as he could and we put it all on the fire at once and soon had a fire at which the whole company could keep warm. By order of Col. Moore, we used hay for bedding as there was no straw to be had and though it was cold, freezing cold, the thermometer below zero, the boys lay warm and comfortable. You cannot imagine how comfortable a soldier can make himself in a Sibley tent, especially with the extra blankets and comforts the ladies of Fairfield sent us last fall. Many have been the blessings pronounced on the 'fair ladies of Fairfield' by the soldiers of the 17th since this cold spell commenced. No act of theirs

could have possibly added so much to the comfort and health of the soldiers as that contribution. God bless all who contributed and cause those to repent who refused.

I said that we expected to take cars this morning but on arriving there, contrary to the expectation of Gen. Thomas, Gen. Buell was unable to furnish transportation and hence we continue our march tomorrow morning to Munfordville, 40 miles distant by dirt road (probably I ought to say frozen mud road) and 90 miles by pike. A portion of us are for taking the short route as the road had not been travelled of any account, and we think we can make it in four days, while it will not take less than six to seven the other way. You may be sure the boys were considerably disappointed at not getting a railroad ride but as we have not enjoyed such a luxury as that would be, even in common hog cars, since last fall, we soon voted the railroad a magnificent bore and each ready and eager to commence the march in the morning with the cheerfulness peculiar to the 17th. Thank goodness we have no advantage of other regiments! The boys are all anxious to reach our advancing and victorious column. We have just received the news that the stars and stripes are proudly waving over Bowling Green. Nashville will be ours in a few days at the farthest but the victory will not be so easy, yet it will be greater and its effect will give such a blow to the rebellion in this region that their recovery will be very doubtful.

Another of Co. B has been promoted. Lt. Owen W. Brown has been promoted to first lieutenant and ordered to report to Co. F, Capt. Ricketts, tomorrow morning and Second Lt. Pugh is ordered to report to Co. B. Lt. Brown is a good and valuable officer and will fill his new place with honor and integrity. This is two promotions from Co. B to first lieutenants. The health of the regiment is recruiting very fast. On this march, though hard as it has been, I have heard but little of that cough which was so prevalent in the regiment in the forepart of the winter, principally produced by measles. We have several left behind until they get well.

The 35th Ohio and 18th U.S. Regulars moved forward from here today, also the 53rd Indiana, all for Munfordville. Weather cold. Thawed but little today (now. 4 P.M.).

Lancaster Gazette

February 27, 1862, pg. 1

The following letter was written by Capt. Stinchcomb to Superintendent G.E. Howe of the State Farm. The soldier discussed here, Private John Dogan, was sent to the State Farm at age 17 from the State Penitentiary. Dogan had no parents or relatives at the time of his decease.

John Dogan, Co. B, 17th O.V.U.S.A., died of abscess in the head at the hospital at Danville, Ky. Between the 16th and 22nd of February 1862.

I found John on the State Farm in August last. He was a member of my company and I can truly say I never saw a soldier do his duty more willingly and cheerfully. At the Battle of Wild Cat, 40 of my company were thrown in the advance one half mile to the brink of the hill occupied by three companies of the 17th and one of the 40 was John. This brought them within 250-300 yards of the enemy when the first battle was fought, and whilst the battle was raging, the enemy changed his position so that his balls passed over the heads of our boys immediately engaged and fell thickest where Dogan was stationed; yet I am told by Lt. Ashbrook who was passing around to see his line that Dogan was one of the few who sought no cover, but there he stood on the edge of the rock that overlooked the deep vale below to

notify his comrades of the first approach of the enemy. He even threatened to shoot a member of the company for falling back and getting behind a tree.

He was left behind at Danville in the hospital when we went to Somerset, but on learning that we were about to have a fight there, he reported himself well to his physician, who knowing his disease refused to discharge him. John deserted the hospital at 4 P.M. and at 5 P.M. the next day joined his company, having carried his knapsack and gun and made 43 miles- passed over 100 well soldiers on the way- found us drawn up in battle line expecting an attack. I shall never forget the determination of that noble boy as he reported himself to me for duty and fell into line. I ordered him to quarters, feeling satisfied that he was unfit for duty; but when he looked up and said, 'Captain, I come to fight!' I let him stay in the ranks.

The morning we started to Mill Springs he was determined to go although he had scarcely been able for several days to hold up his head, and when I told him he could not be permitted to attempt it, with a tear in his eye and sorrow, deep, unsubdued sorrow depicted in every emotion, he remarked that 'Mr. Howe had told him he must always be in the fight and I want to go.' He got on to the portico and watched the regiment until it was out of sight and I am told by the boys at the hospital that he paced the portico back and forth nearly all day and at every boom of the cannon he would stop, turn towards the report, listen for a while, and then start off again.

Friend Howe by some means had taken a deep hold on his affections and his lessons were never forgotten. I found him a stranger and yet six months had given me such attachments for him that I confess I cannot pen his death without tears. I want Mr. Howe to write to his parents, if he knows where they are, I have said this much about him as I knew him to be a stranger, except to the State Farm boys and for their encouragement I have given them a short history of his conduct while with me. I am unable to tell you the day on which he died as the boy who brought the news did not know.

Lancaster Gazette

March 6, 1862, pg. 3

Nashville, Tennessee

March 4, 1862

Messrs. Editors: One year ago today I hardly expected to be able at this distance from you to transmit so heavy a payment on my subscription but have been somewhat fortunate in pecuniary matters and have been able to get hold of some money I did not anticipate. Enclosed please find five dollars (no a mistake), it is cents, which you will please place to my credit. Please acknowledge receipt of the same as I shall be somewhat uneasy until I hear from you.

"The five cents sent us is a shinplaster on the Bank of Tennessee made payable at Nashville December 1, 1861. We have printed a receipt for the Captain's special benefit and will forward as soon as we are able to charter a special train. We have pasted the valuable piece of paper on the wall of our office." *Weekly Lancaster Gazette*, March 13, 1862

Camp five miles west of Nashville, Tennessee

March 19, 1862

Dear Lou: This morning our brigade was up early and by 7 o'clock ready to move notwithstanding the rain was pouring down in torrents. We stood in the rain until about 11 o'clock when

the clouds began to thin and disperse and the rain ceased. About noon orders come to pitch tents again until tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock so here we are enjoying a most delightful evening after the rain. The storm was a regular equinoctial one, thunder and lightning, rain and all that it takes to make up a storm excepting a strong wind. The rain had the good quality of being warm. I expect that you have had no news from us for several days as the high waters washed away some of the railroad bridges and we have had no mail for three or four days, and will not get any for three or four days to come as the bridges cannot be repaired before that time.

We will start tomorrow morning but our destination would be contraband news and I dare not give it, even if I knew which I do not. I can say, however, that it will be away down in Dixie. As to our forces and what they may accomplish, you need have no fears for we are strong enough in number, courage, and discipline to conquer any force that Rebellom can possibly bring to face us. Those of us who are well are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to pitch into Rebel chivalry.

I today added another of my company to the roll of certificates for discharge. John L. Elder, my fifer, he took cold on that memorable march from London last fall and has never been well since. I telegraphed last evening to Aaron Berry's friends to come to him. He is very sick and I fear his sickness fatal. We have just received news of the battle at and capture of Newbern, N.C. and the capture of Fredericksburg, Va., Shipping Point, Va., and of Island No. 10 in the Mississippi. You cannot imagine the enthusiasm there is among the soldiers at the success of the Union army. 'There will be no more Bull Runs.'

Andy Johnson, Parson Brownlow, and Etheridge are in Nashville setting the military government to work. Etheridge made a most effective and eloquent speech in Nashville last night to some 3,000-4,000 people, about one-third of who were citizens. He called upon all to lay aside their secession and again become loyal and their past sins to be pardoned. He concluded his eloquent address by the following emphatic declaration: 'Secessionists, voluntarily become loyal for we are here either to have your loyalty or your silence.' The band then played 'Yankee Doodle' when the meeting seemed to become wild with enthusiasm, and all say they never witnessed such a scene. Shout after shout of joy that seemed almost to lift the roof of the hall, went up from the mouths of the patriots in attendance. I tell you that in Tennessee the Rebels must keep quiet or suffer the consequences. To allow any man to talk treason and disloyalty will encourage many to become the enemies of the best government in the world. Treason and disloyalty will not dare show its hydra head here. Andy Johnson is the man for the position in which he is placed.

Lancaster Gazette
April 3, 1862, pg. 3

Field of Shiloh, Tennessee **April 29, 1862**

Dear Lou: There is a blockade on the post office now of three weeks each way so that our letters by mail will be quite old by the time they get home. There were three divisions moved on to the front of us today and yet you can't miss any of them- there are four regiments in a division. Our front is 12 miles long and with men enough to whip 125,000 men in a fair fight and we have generals who will not be taken by surprise. The guards are being reformed and cautioned every hour in the day and about 25 regiments are on picket guard every day. Gen. Halleck and Gen. Buell will show the world they are the

men for the times and Gen. Thomas is nearly, if not quite, their equal. Gen. Schoepf, I am satisfied if opportunity offers, will convince all that he too is a General. You remember I wrote last winter that Thomas was a General when nearly every officer in our regiment and six others were down on him; now all admit he is one.

On my return I found an official notice from the surgeon of Hospital No. 4, Nashville, Tennessee notifying me of the death of Aaron P. Berry. He was my teamster and took cold on that ever fatal march from London last fall from the effects of which he never recovered. He died respected by all who knew him and when in health he was ever ready and willing to do his duty. You cannot imagine my feelings when called upon to record the death of any of my boys; it seems like taking one out of the family. Aaron died on the 9th of April 1862. Peace to his ashes.

You need not fear the result at Corinth. Our army is so well organized now and both soldiers and officers are on the alert, and by no possibility will we again be taken by surprise, no such criminal neglect can take place with such men as Halleck, Buell, and Pope and if I do not mistake my guess, Beauregard had better get pretty soon or it will be too late for him. He will no longer bear the enviable reputation once borne by Napoleon.

Every soldier's name that is able to come back will be dropped from the pay rolls next pay day that have been gone longer than 30 days.

Lancaster Gazette

May 15, 1862, pg. 1

Camp in the woods two miles from Corinth, Mississippi May 20, 1862

Dear Sir: I embrace this opportunity of writing you a line and as I infer the impending battle is all that is talked of at home, I will give you all the particulars I am allowed to. We are about two miles from Corinth and a little over a mile from the enemy's breastworks, encamped in a large piece of woods that is a little undulating. Our pickets have been within 200-300 yards of each other for over a week. The other day when I was on picket duty, I had an advance post and had the honor of receiving a flag of truce borne by the celebrated Col. Thompson, once Secretary of War, under that old faithless gentleman elected in 1856. The colonel if a member of Gen. Beauregard's staff and is a sharp, shrewd, cunning man, and wanted to go in to see Gen. Halleck. I advised him he could not unless Col. Connell or some other superior officer took him. He didn't get in. I sent for Col. Connell who was back with the reserve. He came up and found they were old acquaintances. After the prisoners were exchanged, the Colonel was sent back to Dixie. We have had two flags of truce since, each time they meeting our outposts a little nearer their quarters.

On Saturday last my company and Co. A were ordered out as skirmishers. Co. A found themselves behind the 14th Ohio and fell back. My company skirmished through the woods according to my order, and just as we came to the cleared ground the enemy fired into us. Jesse Cloud, a new recruit, was slightly wounded at the first fire. I ordered the boys down and to fire whenever they could see a butternut. The enemy had to fall back but the boys say not until they saw two of their men fall. They ran about 200 yards, formed behind a fence, and commenced a severe fire on us which was kept up for some time before the boys could get their exact locality and the sights of their guns arranged. As soon as this was done we poured the fire into them thick and fast, yet they outnumbered us three to one. I then

found to my surprise that there was no one near to support me. I immediately started a messenger on the double quick through a dense forest of near a mile for assistance and determined to hold my position. I ran up and down the line and found every man standing or rather lying at his post doing his duty.

The Colonel immediately started with two companies to my assistance, but lost their way and after fighting for near an hour, I started another messenger. The Major started with one company and partially lost their way. The General, fearing our safety, sent orders to fall back but before they arrived, they undertook to flank us on the right with about 50 cavalry (had only 42 men) but having anticipated an attack from them, I had thrown out skirmishers that met them at that point. We drove them all the time, never giving an inch until ordered to fall back. I am sorry to say, however, that Elisha Hall was badly wounded in the last attack. He was shot in the right side between the ribs. Yesterday he was apparently much better but today he is not so well. Elisha fell and was carried off by his comrades and whether he lives or dies, he done his duty nobly, valiantly, and bravely. I am in hopes he will live, yet I fear. Church McMullen was slightly wounded in the right big toe. The pickets have been fighting every day- sometimes both sides have used the cannon.

You may ask when the big fight will come off. I can't say but anticipate a siege after the fashion of Yorktown and feel confident of success in the end. I am enjoying very good health and so is my company with three or four exceptions. I have seen Capt. Wiseman but twice since my return. We are too near the enemy to go over 200-300 yards from camp and he is about five miles to our right. The bugle sounds to bed.

Lancaster Gazette

May 29, 1862, pg. 2

Tuscumbia, Alabama

Provost Marshal's Office

June 28, 1862

Dear Lou: I have not written you for several days for the reason that we were on the march and I knew I could not send you any letter until after we arrived at this place. Well we arrived here this morning about 10 o'clock with our whole brigade and found three other regiments here. Col. Connell was appointed Provost Marshal, but declined serving and Col. Hoskins of the 12th Kentucky was appointed in his place. My company and Co. B of the 38th Ohio were detailed with orders to report to Col. Hoskins to act as his Provost Guard and hence you find my letter dated as above. We may be here two or three months and may be relieved tomorrow. I am in hopes we may be left here for some time as it is a beautiful place, a magnificent country, and here are two of the largest springs I ever saw. One of them turns off a stream about 40 or 50 yards wide and over knee deep of pure, cold, clear water. The other one would a mill of considerable size and I am told it is a healthy place. The town, however, shows the effects of Rebellom; at least half the houses are destitute and almost every business house in the place is shut up, which makes it look rather desolate.

On the road last night I got yours of the 15th and 18th. All that I can tell you about Elisha Hall is that he was put in charge of the Sanitary Committee and started for one of the hospitals on the Ohio River, either Evansville or Cincinnati. It is most likely he would be at Cincinnati, he being from Ohio. (Elisha arrived some time ago and is slowly recovering his health-editor). I am sorry to say that Sgt.

James McNaughten of Co. B, 17th O.V.I. died of typhoid fever at hospital near Corinth on May 23, 1862 and was buried on the 24th. Sgt. McNaughten volunteered at the first call of his country on April 21, 1861 and served faithfully and honestly in Co. F of the 17th Ohio as a private in western Virginia under the call of the President for three months' men. On our return home he was among the first to re-volunteer for three years and upon the organization of the company, in consideration of his strict integrity and soldier-like conduct as a soldier in the three months' service, I appointed him one of my corporals, which post he filled with honor, showing himself to be an officer worthy of higher honors and when the first vacancy occurred in my company among the sergeants, with the consent of the Colonel, I promoted him to a post his previous good conduct had won. He was promoted but a few days before my company was engaged in a skirmish with the enemy in front of Corinth on the 17th of May, where he proved himself to be a soldier brave, noble, and collected. His post required him to be in the thickest of the fight, and yet where duty called him he went regardless of consequences and though bullets flew like hail around him, Sgt. McNaughten showed that bravery that alone makes a soldier. Some 15 days before his death he took typhoid fever and he had paid the debt of nature. His company feels his loss. His friends have the assurance that he fell doing his duty to his country in its hour of peril and I can only add that he did it nobly, gallantly, and with unswerving integrity. 'Peace to his ashes.'

I don't look for any more fighting in this region this summer. It is now midnight and I must sleep some.

Morning- 4 o'clock. A mocking bird is trying his vocal powers this morning just in front of the Provost's Office and he is a most magnificent singer. I wish I could catch him as he is a wild bird. We had a nice shower of rain the day before yesterday which renders the air pure and pleasant and this Sabbath morning reminds me of home more than any I have seen for some time as I am in a house writing on a table. It is now church time and as the bell is ringing and Col. Hoskins gives me the privilege of going, I'll embrace the opportunity.

Back from church- I heard a good sermon and was reminded of home, except that the audience was composed of females almost entirely, saving some 80 soldiers and officers of our army. I noticed nearly half the women dressing in mourning and a peculiar sadness in the countenances of all that beckoned sorrow. The citizens here begin to think secession is played out and express a desire to have the war ended. The minister prayed for peace and the right today. I am very busy; almost my whole time being occupied in writing passes, hearing complaints, etc. I am well.

Lancaster Gazette

July 17, 1862, pg. 2

Battle of Stones River, Tennessee, December 31, 1862-January 3, 1863

On the battlefield of Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 3, 1863

Dear Lou: Our brigade arrived on the battlefield on the 31st of December. When about two miles from the field, we met a continuous stream of sneakers and skulkers flying in a perfect panic, reporting the day lost to us and our army cut to pieces. They were in the utmost confusion: privates, lieutenants, captains, and even colonels in the wildest panic; footmen, cavalymen, wagons, batteries running pell-mell, helter-skelter.

They were not less than 3,000 in this panic, all flying. I tell you it looked gloomy to our three regiments, especially when colonels told us they were the only officers left out of their division, yet we were formed in battle line on a commanding point by Col. Moses Walker, commanding the brigade, in a good order as if we were on battalion drill. It soon became evident that it was simply a panic created by a pack of cowards and scared men, whereupon Col. Walker ordered Capt. McQuirkin of his staff and me to stop them. We took a small detail and in a few minutes had a large number of them reorganized. Heavy cannonading commenced again within 400 yards and after waiting a few minutes, one of Gen. Thomas' aides arrived ordering us to the field with all possible speed, informing us that our men were driving the Rebels on the left and all they needed was some support on the right to save the whole field. Our boys moved up eager for the fray. In about ten minutes we met another panic that beggars description: 500 wagons, the drivers whipping and swearing, some bare-headed, others without coats or shoes, all scared to death. Here was another wild rush of cavalry and footmen (there is heavy musketry firing on my left now, not 400 yards distant). In another panic, reporting 30,000 Rebels at their heels with heavy cavalry forces in full charge. Our three regiments, the 17th, 31st, and 38th Ohio were immediately formed in squares, with a section of the battery in each square.

I was ordered to stop the wagons and thereby save the panic from being continued and oh, save me from such another job, I never want to try it again. The scared officers appeared maniacs. Wagons crowded up until they were eight or ten deep. After drawing my revolver and presenting it to two or three officers and got them to see our squares, they assisted and we soon got the train stopped and after telling the drivers it was only a panic and not to be scared and that we had stopped them to let Bragg throw a few shells into them, they began to see what they were doing and in a few minutes the panic was over, except between us and the battleground.

Col. Walker promptly detailed a strong guard to pick up sneaks and to the disgrace of our army; regiments of them were soon organized and marched back. We soon reached the battlefield and took our position on the right and found that our right wing had given way; I won't say under overwhelming numbers but because the officers were not vigilant enough. I am informed the pickets never fired a shot in front of some of the brigades and some of the batteries neither had their cannons in positions or their horses harnessed. When, let me ask, will this inexcusable conduct of our officers cease to exist in the army? The left wing of our army was more successful and after a most desperate fight and dreadful slaughter on both sides, drove the Rebels from their stronghold at least one mile and a half.

A large portion of the right rallied about the time we came up and the Rebels after a feeble resistance gave back, thus making the day our own all along the line. The right wing, notwithstanding the carelessness spoken of, and the cowardly conduct of thousands who run to the rear, made dreadful havoc among the Rebels before it gave way but our loss on the right was also very heavy. The next day being New Year's, but little was done until sometime in the afternoon when several companies deployed as skirmishers and were ordered to feel the enemy on the right. In front of our brigade were companies A and B from the 17th Ohio, two from the 31st Ohio, and two from the 38th Ohio. A sharp skirmish took place before our skirmishers had advanced 300 yards, in which I regret to say John Zeagle and Corp. Lacy of Co. A were both severely wounded in the leg, and W.R. Sain of Co. B slightly on three of his fingers. He has one of them tied up.

Yesterday on our left, Gen. Rousseau's division became engaged with the Rebel Gen. John C. Breckinridge. The fight lasted about three quarters of an hour but it was a most terrific one. Loss very

heavy on both sides. The 90th Ohio, Col. Rippey, was on the right the first day and yesterday was in the fight again. I saw Col. Rippey this morning and he tells me his loss was heavy both days. I am sorry to say that Col. Rippey informs me that nothing has been heard from Capt. Alvah Perry since the heavy fight on the 31st ult. The last seen or heard of him, he was at the head of his company rallying and cheering on his men amid a storm of leaden hail. It is feared he was killed. I hope not, as he was a most gallant officer and had the reputation of being the best captain in his regiment. Some 10-12 of his boys are known to be killed, I don't remember their names. The 1st Ohio was also in the fight of the right wing and met with heavy loss. Maj. Stafford informed me that they had to leave Jack Reed and Nimrod Webb both on the field very badly wounded. It is hoped they are not dangerously wounded, though both seriously, and are now prisoners.

Just as the fight was about closing on the left, the extreme right wing was ordered to move forward. By this time, Col. Hunter of the 82nd Indiana had got up with his right, giving us four regiments in our brigade. We charged through the woods about 300 yards when the enemy fired on us. Our whole front promptly returned the fire which we kept up for about five minutes and very heavy, when the Rebels gave way. It was then discovered that for some reason the division on our right had not moved up and as it was known the Rebels were in force on our right flank, after waiting a few minutes and nothing further being seen of the Rebels, we returned to our breastworks. The accidents of this little fight were four severely wounded in the 82nd Indiana and one in the 17th Ohio; Thos. Outcalt of Co. K severely in the arm, since amputated. Col. Connell's horse was shot in the neck. A piece of shell hit my saddle just as I threw myself out of it. I heard the shell whistling the air and thought from its course it was coming near me. I instantly threw myself to the ground just as it burst nearly over me; the pieces fell on either side of me throwing the leaves and dirt all over me.

Last night twelve companies, six from our brigade and six from Col. Baldwin's were deployed as skirmishers, with orders to go forward until we found the enemy in force. We moved a little over a quarter of a mile when the enemy opened a heavy fire of about a half mile in front of us. Capt. Butterfield's and Capt. Whissen's companies from the 17th Ohio were on the right under the general charge of Lt. Col. Davis of the 82nd Indiana, two companies from the 31st Ohio in the center under my general charge, and two companies of the 38th Ohio (A and K) under charge of the Lt. Col. of the same regiment. The fire was vigorously returned by our whole line and though not a very light night, the fight was kept up about ten minutes when it became apparent that we had found the enemy in heavy force. Our object having been attained, a retreat was ordered which we done in good order on double quick amid a perfect shower of bullets.

There were four wounded in Co. A, 38th Ohio and one in Co. K, 38th Ohio, four severely and myself slightly by a spent ball. It knocked the breath out of me and was hard enough to knock me down and just as I was getting up the order to retreat was given. My side is quite sore yet though only bruised; will be all right in a day or so. Have been on duty all the time. We are all on the alert both day and night in the rain and mud without tents and nearly out of rations until a supply train came up last night. A ration of three ears of corn was issued yesterday in one of the brigades, the 1st Ohio being one of the regiments; yet the boys take it all cheerfully. I was fortunate enough yesterday to get three barrels of beans and one of molasses on which we suppered or we, too, would have had to feast on parched corn.

There will be heavy fighting here yet. Our reinforcements are arriving and by Monday we will be ready for the general fight. Then look out! Old Rosy handles his army to suit all his officers and men. He is always on hand. I am well and very busy. Boys all well and ready. Goodbye for the present.

Lancaster Gazette

January 15, 1863, pg. 2

Headquarters First Brigade, Second Division, XIV Army Corps

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 23, 1863

Those at home never once take the thought how Rebels cling to the idea that they are to look to the Northwest for aid and comfort. Jeff Davis in his speech to the Mississippi Legislature distinctly says it is to the North he looks for aid; these are not his words but the substance; and yet if the newspapers are credible, men with whom we converse (if our friends who write us are to be believed), there are men at home who are so devoid of principle, so little love of their country about them and conduct themselves as to encourage the enemy and if their influence were heeded at all, to discourage our troops. How many gallant boys now sleep the sleep of death that fell on the battlefield of Stones River who would today have been in the army had all given their influence to their country and government? I fear from what I can learn that there are many thousands of us in the army who would not now be recognized as Democrats if we were at home. I think the time has gone by when we should stand and dispute as to whether I am a Democrat or you a Republican. No such questions are at issue; but of one thing I assure you, I never will demean myself so much as to vote for anyone who wears a butternut, as I understand some who claim to be Democrats have done. Neither will I so far forget my duty as a good citizen as to vote for our countenance the man who in time of war makes such a speech as Dr. Olds' published in the Ohio Eagle. They may call me what they please. I want it distinctly understood if they are elected Democrats; I don't belong to the wing that elected them. Again, there is poor Critchfield, the pitiable, contemptible scoundrel Attorney General of Ohio, at a supper got up in commemoration of the gallant old hero of New Orleans dares to stand up and talk out bold treason, and then to be applauded. Save me from such Democracy!

Do these men think there is no day of reckoning coming? Do they suppose that the Democrats in the field will suffer such men to control and legislate for them? I tell you, Aaron, the time is coming when they will learn that as certainly as there is such a thing as vengeance, it will be taken. I but talk the sentiment of every Democrat in the army when I tell you that such is not Democracy, and will not be submitted to by the Democracy. Jeff Davis, Gov. Wise and Breckinridge were once Democrats, but who does not know what they are today? Vallandigham and his followers had better make what use they can of the government now, for they will find their time to be short; and if you don't find the boys knocking butternuts when they come home, I miss my guess.

The time is fast approaching if not already here when soldiers ought to let these men at home feel that when they profess to be our friends that their words and acts should be accordance with their profession. They should be taught that in time of war it is the duty of all to stand by the government. I am not one who thinks Mr. Lincoln makes no mistakes. I have done all in power to prevent him getting there and would do so again if a good war Democrat was a candidate against him; but he is the Executive officer of our government; a rebellion exists and he is trying to put it down and anyone

who throws his influence against his government in this noble effort to strangle treason is a traitor, whether he is in Ohio or elsewhere. I would be proud to say tonight that all were united in the loyal states to try and put down treason, but I am sorry to confess that hundreds, in fact some say thousands, followed Old through Lancaster and to Columbus after making such speeches as he did. Surely these men don't think what they do or the effect they produce. It must be that they are misrepresented. I understand that some of them were going to attack Lt. Ruffner for talking them of it. He wrote to me that he went to the meeting and heard Vallandigham speak until he became disgusted and left; and yet Ruffner I know to be a Democrat. He wrote me that treason was applauded that day. If any of them feel like carrying out their threats against him I advise them when they do to do it quickly and quietly and make sure work that no tales can be told, for no man has more friends in the 17th Ohio.

I suppose they are talking about high taxes yet. Let them growl and grumble, and it may be after a while they will learn that the best way to stop their high taxes is to help put down the rebellion. The croaker that thinks more of his money than he does of his government I have no sympathy for whatever; and the demagogue who urges such reasons why the war should stop is even worse than the grumbler.

Lancaster Gazette

February 12, 1863, pg. 3

(The following letter received wide publication throughout in Ohio in both the Republican newspapers that praised it, and the Democratic papers that denounced it.)

Headquarters First Brigade, Second Division, XIV Army Corps

Camp near Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 27, 1863

Hon. A. McVeigh, Ohio Senate: I wrote you sometime since but have not heard from you. I take it for granted that my letter was lost in some of the captured mails, however I will now write you upon a different subject. Is it truth that we hear in the army that our Democratic friends at home have so far forgotten the principles of our fathers as to abandon their government in this, its hours of peril and need? Surely we must be misinformed, yet it comes from such reliable sources that I am almost compelled to believe it. I am told that some of them even wear 'butternut' watch chains to show their derision and contempt for the government. Can it be possible that Democrats who have ever boasted that they are the peculiar friends of the government in time of war have so changed that they can so publicly express their sentiments against the prosecution of the war, as I have read in the Ohio Eagle, in Vallandigham's and Olds' speeches, and receive applause from Democratic audiences? Is Critchfield's speech correctly reported? If so, and they are sustained by the Democracy, don't let them get in the power of the soldiers for we have no such Democracy in the army!

You and I both well remember the time when it was the grandest boast of a Democrat to assert that his party had fought all the wars to that time, and he was in favor of the next one. Yet I find men getting judgeships in Ohio because they changed politics or rather parties to get among his kind, anti-war. I find men elected to the Ohio Legislature who make anti-war speeches and after months of imprisonment, trim it, and mellow it down, and yet leave it so that every soldier denounces him an ass or a tory. Democrats in Ohio led by men such as Old, Trump, Valladigham, Shaw, Roland, and company shan't say to me I am no Democrat. I present a clean record, which none of them can do on voting,

except Vallandigham, and perhaps he can remember the time when he was very lukewarm. As to the others, when they were doing their best against the Democracy, I stood for the and now I predict I will stand there again. Democracy arrayed against its government in a time of such rebellion as this!

Some were so silly as yet to talk about compromise, others talking treason and writing it. Surely the time is fast approaching when these men's mouths will be stopped, if not by force, by the friends of our government at home. You may expect to occasionally hear from the soldiers upon politics as well as services in the field. 'Antiwar Democrats;' what a term! Never shall it be said of me in time of war or rebellion that I was found arrayed against my government. Do these men think because the President (I don't say he has) makes a mistake, therefore Democrats must go against their government? I, as Wright says, 'don't belong to that wing.' The great bugaboo is the nigger and slavery. My doctrine is, let them take care of themselves, and we will try and take care of the government, and in doing so, should it become necessary to crush the institution of slavery, I say crush it. Let us first see whether we have a government, and then take care of minor matters.

If the Rebels assert they will not have our laws or Constitution to govern them, take from them both, and run their boat with their own rudder. This I understand to be the substance of the President's proclamation, and hence I augur it is right and just, and is one of the most effective means to break up rebellion that can be used and I am in favor of using all means at hand.

Ask me to ride in a boat with such officers running it s will at a Democratic supper say they care but little who riles, Jeff Davis or Lincoln; I won't ride and I assure you there are thousands of us in the same fix. I'll run the risk of my Democracy in company with Gen. Steadman, Col. Burk, Col. Connell, Col. Choate, Gen. Lytle, Gen. McCook, Wright, and David Tod and many others I could mention. I suppose, in fact I am told, Ranney and Roland already count me out of the Democratic Party. Neither of them can say as much as I can. I have never voted anything than the regularly nominated Democratic ticket for any office, from Justice of the Peace up; when they have been giving not only the cold shoulder to the ticket, but using their influence against it, I have been advocating publicly and privately the cause. Let them say what they please; the time is coming when soldiers, who are now feeling the effects of their course, will attend to them. We will be at home sometime, I hope, and all such as put themselves in opposition to the war or its vigorous prosecution by word or act or even silence will be attended to, and receive their just reward. You at home do not appreciate the feeling of the soldiers upon this subject; I but express their sentiments except it is not in strong enough language. We look upon all such men as take the course of Vallandigham, Olds and that class as worse than Davos or Breckinridge; while the former have too much cowardice to fight us like men and soldiers, they protect themselves behind the coward's breastwork: martyrdom and persecution. Truly they art fit subjects to fill such trenches.

Tell our war Democrats to stand firm and present a bold front and push forward the column there is in reserve, that will soon come to their relief that will overcome rebellion at home as it surely but slowly doing now. I have written but little upon this subject for some time past as I much disliked and felt quite loathe to part hands with the Democrats with whom I have stood for years; but I think the time has come when loyal men should talk out and let Rebels at time known they must abandon their rotten bark or receive a traitor's doom. Leader of parties can get wrong, but principles never. Jacob Thompson of Missouri, Johnson of Georgia, Stevens, Davis, Breckinridge and many others were once idolized leaders of the Democracy; but who in Ohio today, so low as to acknowledge them their political leaders now? But few. I have lost all faith in such miserable, trucking politicians as seek to build up their

party on the ruins of their government. They, in the language of another, would 'light the funeral pyre of their country and laugh to see the guardian angel of our liberties take their everlasting flight.'

Lancaster Gazette

February 12, 1863, pg. 2

Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia September 19-20, 1863

Chattanooga, Tennessee

September 22, 1863

Dear Lou: I send you as full list as I can of the killed, wounded, and missing of the five Fairfield County companies, which you will furnish to Mr. A.P. Miller and Mr. Kooken immediately. No time to send particulars. Are fortifying here. Our loss in two days fighting in killed and wounded is heavy. The enemy's loss in killed and wounded was tremendous. They were the assaulting party and suffered most in killed and wounded.

Lancaster Gazette

October 1, 1863, pg. 2

Headquarters, 17th O.V.I, Chattanooga, Tennessee

September 24, 1863

Having a little time this morning to write, I will give you a brief account of the fight of Saturday and Sunday last.

Saturday about 8 or 9 o'clock, some Rebel prisoners reported a Rebel brigade lost in a large woods near our division and done it with such apparent honesty that all believed it and at it we went to gobble them up. We found the lost brigade, but there was Longstreet's whole corps with it. The fighting commenced about 9 o'clock A.M. and closed about 8 o'clock at night. I can't speak of the whole army on that day, but of our division and the brigade of regulars I can. Our brigade with the 9th Ohio was in the reserve. About the commencement of the fight, the 31st Ohio was ordered to double quick about a mile and support Col. Croxton's brigade then heavily pressed. They had a tumble fight of about two hours' duration. The Rebels took their battery when the 31st Ohio charged, drove the Rebels about a mile, and retook the battery and a squad of men under charge of Capt. William Free walked the cannon off by hand, the horses being killed. It was in this fight that Capt. Free was badly wounded. About 10 o'clock, the 17th and 9th Ohio were ordered to support the Third Brigade, Col. Ferdinand Van Derveer commanding. We double quicked about a mile and found as follows: the 9th Ohio on the right of the 2nd Minnesota, the 17th on the right of the 9th Ohio. Just as we were forming, the brigade of regulars came running in wild confusion over the hill closely pressed by the Rebels and a lot of cavalry and run through or rather over the 2nd Minnesota. By this time, the fire was heavy on the 2nd Minnesota, 9th Ohio, and 17th Ohio. We all lay down and in about five minutes the order was given to the 9th and 17th to charge. Bayonets were fixed and away we went with a yell. The Rebels turned and broke in confusion and disorder. We retook the battery of the Regular Brigade (Battery H, 5th U.S. Light Artillery) and some 40 or 50 prisoners. The 9th Ohio's loss was about 40 killed and wounded; and strange as it may seem, not a single man of the 17th was scratched. We run them yelling like Indians for three quarters of a mile. The

prisoners proved to be Longstreet's men. They say it is the first time they were compelled to run- that we stood closer than the Potomac army.

In a few moments, a division attacked Col. Van Derveer's brigade on the left again. We had to double quick about a half mile again and got to their support about the close of the fight. They got within 50 yards of our battery (Battery D, 1st Michigan Light Artillery under Capt. Josiah Church), but the boys stood gallantly to their guns and put in double charges of grape and canister. The 35th Ohio and 87th Indiana with their battery soon made it too hot and just as the Rebels called out 'the battery is ours,' such a fire was delivered that hundreds of them fell and back they flew helter skelter, leaving their dead and wounded on the field and quite a number of prisoners in our possession. This finished the fight for us on Saturday, but on our right a terrible fight began in about half an hour which proved to be Palmer's and Reynolds' divisions. It lasted I should judge over an hour. Our arms were again successful. We then went into camp moving just to the center (we were on the left on Saturday), and just before dark the Rebels attacked our men in heavy columns to get possession of some hills. The fight was terrific and last over an hour, but the Rebels were finally repulsed with heavy loss. This wound up the fighting for Saturday.

Sunday morning we moved into position before daylight and about sun up commenced throwing up breastworks of rails, logs, chunks, and stones. About 7 o'clock the fight opened on our left at a distance of say one mile. Our lines gave way and soon the firing was in our rear. Van Cleve's Division was taken away from our right first and next Col. Van Derveer's brigade to the support of our men to the left, but before they had reached the place our men had rallied, charged the Rebels, and drove them back again. But as Van Cleve and Van Derveer had to go about a mile and return, it left a space of a mile on our immediate right flank of the 17th O.V.I. exposed to a flank movements and as the Rebels were in view of our lines, they immediately took advantage of our exposed condition and in five minutes time our brigade was engaged with their columns in front and a brigade on our right flank. The brave Capt. Arney undertook to file his regiment by the right flank so as to front the enemy, but what soldiers have ever stood under such a fire! Company A, and no braver boys can be found, broke; Capt. Arney fell badly wounded, Lt. Blair fell wounded. The gallant Ricketts saw the critical condition we were in and undertook the same movement. His company could not stand under such a murderous fire, yet they fought against such odds longer than troops could be expected to. The noble Ricketts falls dead and yet the number in front and right find they have stubborn men to drive as the wounded of Co. F testify, yet they are compelled to leave. Company after company break; I cast my eye down the line and find my company the only one left; the battery is limbering; the Rebels in front are near enough to use the bayonet Company B leaves; there is no credit due Company B for staying longer than the others, for to that moment I did not know we were flanked.

The regiment is running for cover; the 82nd Indiana made a gallant dash and momentarily check the Rebels; the 31st Ohio, some 150 yards to our left, are still fighting gallantly under heavy fire; a portion of the 17th regiment rallies but the fire is still too destructive and they break again; after running about 250 yards at the command halt, Co. B was formed, gave three cheers for the 17th Ohio to rally; about 250 were soon formed in good order and on the double quick went into the same strip of woods we were driven from and then we fought for 15 minutes and got to within 50-75 yards of the breastworks, but it got too hot and we had to retreat again.

We got to the top of the hill, closely pursued by the Rebels. Van Cleve's division, ordered to our support, run without making any fight at all. Then a scene of confusion occurred. McCook only stood on our right about 15 minutes, when he commenced to retreat, Gen. Negley following close, leaving nothing but the remnant of a few of the regiments with 4000-500 stragglers to fight on a ridge of hills we were retreating over. All seemed to indicate that our brave army would be cut to pieces. Col. Hunter and the balance of the officers succeeded in rallying, I should judge, about 500-600 men. Captains Clarke and Noles, Lt. Stewart, Capt. Showers, Lt. Simpson, and a few other officers just then came up and in about five minute's time we organized the stragglers into companies. Brig. Gen. Brannan supposed we were regiments, and sent an order for us to double quick to the top of the hill and we had hardly got to the top before we were attacked by a division of Longstreet's men and notwithstanding we did not know where the balance of the army was, we determined to hold that hill and with those stragglers, after a heavy fight of one half to three quarters of an hour, we repulsed them with heavy loss on their side, and but small on ours. In about 15 minutes they renewed the attack and forced their way to within 30 yards of those gallant boys, when our line broke and gave way, but by extraordinary efforts of the officers, they rallied and drove the Rebels back at the point of the bayonet. Away went the Rebels in wild confusion down the hill again, our boys raining bullets into them with fearful effect.

Just at this time, Col. Van Derveer's brigade reinforced us. We had scarcely got breath before the attacked was renewed with determination and resolution to carry the point, when to our right, Gen. Steedman, having come up, became engaged in a most terrific fight. The 9th Ohio charged in a run over and down the hill some 30 yards and lay down. At this moment, the musketry firing was the heaviest; all agree this was the heaviest they have heard during the war. Steedman whipped two sets of fresh troops when the third engaged him and his ammunition giving out, he fell back in good order after fighting an hour. The Rebels were too badly hurt to follow him, but at our hill, the 9th Ohio had to fall back and our stragglers again broke, but were rallied again at a distance of 200 yards. It was here that Isaiah Skinner of my company was killed, and Solomon Smetters, Solomon Miller, and Thomas Claughey wounded. The boys were rallied and went back with a shout. Five Rebels were killed inside of our rude breastwork of rails and 151 just as they crossed to fly; but they rallied and stood at a distance of 30 yards and for one hour longer thus close they fought. It was a terrible struggle for the mastery, when just after sundown, our arms proved too much and the Rebels retreated in the wildest disorder, our boys mowing them down. Who on that hill did not feel thankful at that moment? The day was ours- had been saved by Gen. Steedman and the stragglers.

Conspicuous all the two days' fighting was Gen. Brannan. Now in the hottest of the fight where his presence is needed to inspire the troops with fresh courage and if possible more energy; then he flies to another portion where he sees them waver. You could hear his fine commanding voice, 'stand to them boys, we can whip them.' How he escaped being killed is a mystery to all. Brannan has no enemy in his division today. Had the Rebels got the hill we were on, Palmer and Reynolds would surely be cut off and have been sacrificed and probably Crittenden, which Brannan knew. No general on that bloody field came off with more honor than Brannan. Gen. Thomas was all over, unmoved- the same Thomas, cool and calm. Just after dark we started to fall back not knowing whether the others were prisoners or not.

We came to Rossville, slept a little without blankets, and commenced to organize that morning. I found myself the ranking officer of the 17th Ohio. I had the colors with 50 men and five commissioned

officers. We had no idea whether the others were killed, wounded, prisoners, or had made their escape. It still looked rather gloomy. We soon learned, however, that Gen. Negley had ordered Col. Connell with his brigade to the rear. I forgot to say in its proper place that Col. Ward fell trying to rally the men the last time they broke on our hill. No one showed more bravery than he. Col. Connell was cool and always at his place and receives the encomiums of his superior officers. But I must close as I have written too much already. We are now ready for them again. I am well.

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October 8, 1863, pg. 1

"The distinguished bravery of Captain J. W. Stinchcomb, of this regiment, and the leading part he took in rallying on the second line at Chickamauga, are more fully stated in the sketch of the Thirty-First Ohio. It is enough to say here that he was not unnoticed by brave old General Thomas, being handsomely mentioned in his official report of the battle."(A.A. Graham, The History of Fairfield and Perry Counties.)

From the History of the 31st Ohio Volunteer Infantry:

On the second day of Chickamauga, after the disastrous rout and disorganization of most of the Federal army, many of the Perry and Fairfield boys, members of the Seventeenth and Thirty-First, kept together, as well as they could, and when orders were given by General Thomas, commander of the army of the Cumberland, to which they belonged, to form a second line of battle, and throw up temporary breast-works, they joined heartily in the movement. Captain J. W. Stinchcomb, born and brought up in Thorn township, Perry county, but in command of a Fairfield county company, was very active and conspicuous in the formation of this famous second line of battle. So much so, in fact, that he is mentioned by General Thomas in the official report of the battle. His loud hoarse voice was heard above the din, rallying the scattered soldiers, and his stalwart form almost tottered beneath an incredible load of rails. A private soldier of the 31st Ohio facetiously remarked that he "never had the most distant idea how many rails were a load for a man, until he saw 'Jim' Stinchcomb in the business at Chickamauga."

Battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, November 25, 1863

Chattanooga, Tennessee

December 1, 1863

As I am in command of the regiment and it being the end of the month and just after the battle, I have not had time to write for two or three days. The Rebels have been driven entirely away and we now have but little to do as an army. Our army took 6,000 prisoners, 61 pieces of cannon, and no one knows yet how many small arms, ammunition, any quantity; corn in sacks and cornmeal by the houses full, blankets, sacks, etc. The world cannot show as brilliant an operation as this fight. Two brigades, Hazen's and ours, went down the river, ours by land and Hazen's by boats, to Brown's Ferry and before the Rebels knew it, Hazen landed in the darkness, captured their pickets when our brigade was ferried across and with only the loss of 11 men killed and wounded, we drove the Rebels from a hill equal to Mt. Pleasant fortified and held it until Hooker was ready to try his luck on Lookout Mountain. Hooker then took Lookout Mountain with a loss of only 250 killed and wounded whilst the Rebel loss was about

500. Then came Missionary Ridge for the Army of the Cumberland to try its hand on, with Sherman on the left.

The attack was to have been made on Saturday morning, but owing to a rise in the river Gen. Sherman was unable to lay his pontoons until Sunday night. He then crossed a squad of men, took a Rebel picket and made him give the countersign. He then relieved the Rebel pickets, stationing his own men in their place. Soon the Rebel officer of the day came along to caution his pickets to be on the alert came up and gave the countersign and to his utter surprise found himself in the hands of the Yankees. At daylight Gen. Sherman having crossed, marched on the Rebels without having to drive their pickets as he had already 'taken them in.' He found them strangers and why shouldn't he? This was Monday morning. Gen. Sherman had hard fighting until about 4 P.M. when 'Old Pap' as the boys call Gen. Thomas ordered his whole line three miles long forward on the run until they should take the two lines of Rebel breastworks at the foot of Missionary Ridge. Over 100 cannon opened up on the line from the top of the ridge, but forward went that line of veteran soldiers determined 'to do or die.' As the Rebels started up the hill or ridge as it is called, our army became too eager for victory to stop and up the ridge started the whole line. It was like climbing a hill three times as high as Mt. Pleasant from the side next to Major Cox's except that about one-fourth of the way (near the top) is steeper, but onward went the line nearly exhausted, the Rebel cannon all the time belching forth a stream of fire, dealing death and destruction at every shot, yet undaunted the Army of the Cumberland pushed forward. The top of the ridge is gained, one or two volleys is enough to put the Rebel lines into confusion. Thousands surrender, hundreds fall before the cool aim of our soldiers, and in one half hour the whole field is ours and a victory won. Over 40 cannon are taken and some 3,000 prisoners. The Rebels having massed their troops on Gen. Sherman, his fighting was of longer duration and more severe. It took him until dark to complete his victory but what has Sherman ever undertaken where there was a prospect or hope of success that he has not succeeded in when allowed to follow his own ideas. So it was then; he chose his own road, fought his own fight and had in the evening gained his own victory and added another bright laurel to his wreath. He has during this war exhibited a military talent and genius possessed by few men and now has a hold and deserves the gratitude not only of the army but of the nation. Gen. Grant proves to be what was expected of him- a general in the true sense of the word. Hooker is still 'Fighting Joe.' Granger is in the class and nearly at the head. Thomas- who can say too much about him? Talent, genius, and bravery come far short of giving you an idea of what kind of a general he is. 'He is the right man in the right place' and his army will go and will stay where he tells them to.

Maj. Butterfield fell badly wounded in the right ankle in the thickest of the fight. He was a gallant and noble officer and has the entire confidence of his men. We hope that amputation will not be necessary, yet at this time it is hard to tell. Col. Moore of the 69th Ohio proved what we all expected him to be, a soldier such as is needed in the place he occupies. He had command of three regiments and handled them with skill and was always found where needed. He received two wounds, slight, but is suffering from the one in the breast yet; it was caused by a piece of shell. He was the first colonel of his division on the ridge and his three regiments were also the first of his division. Ed Bodenheimer was shot through the breast; he was in the front rank. He laid his prayer book on his wound and died in that position. He was a good soldier, a good boy, and has gone to reap the reward of such.

I have made a diligent search since my return for both Solomon Smethers and Solomon Miller of my company; both were wounded in the Chickamauga fight and from the best information I now get,

they both have died of their wounds; better and braver soldiers could not be found. They were both wounded in the afternoon of Sunday in the front rank on the hill where the terrible fighting was done under Thomas. Smethers was a member of the M.E. Church and never forgot his duty and obligations as a Christian. No kinder-hearted man lived than Miller. Thomas Cluagy (or Kleinick) of my company has also died of wounds received at the same place. He, too, was a brave soldier and was wounded near the spot where the other two were. They all three died as soldiers. No one can appreciate the feeling of a soldier when a comrade dies, except that it is one who has had the trial; it is just like one of the family away, yet I have no doubt many at home often wonder why it is we cannot give more definite information of their friends. A battlefield such as Chickamauga, seven miles long and five or six wide, and we compelled to leave in the night without means to convey the wounded, surely will explain to anyone the reason. If they had seen as many tears shed as I did by stout-hearted soldiers when they looked back on that bloody field as they remembered their wounded comrades, I know such a thought would never occupy their minds for one moment.

This last fight was nothing in comparison to the fighting at Chickamauga for the reason that this was done by a dash on our side and before the Rebels could be made to believe the ridge would be stormed, our lines were on its top; yet the fire was very heavy, especially with cannon, the latter being the heaviest probably during the war.

The weather has been very cold with ice an inch thick. The boys say if the weather it to be trusted, this region still belongs to the North. Our rations are still short owing to the limited transportation and it may be a portion of the army will be sent back to Bridgeport as soon as Sherman gets back from his expedition against Longstreet.

I forgot to mention in its proper place that John Red, another brave soldier of Co. D, was killed. He was from Hocking County. I have been unable to see the 46th since I got back and know nothing of its loss. The 90th was at Bridgeport and hence lost none.

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Headquarters, 17th O.V.I., Mission Ridge, Tennessee December 17, 1863

Yesterday I visited the battlefield of Chickamauga along with a detail from some four regiments of our brigade. I thought I had seen evidence of hard fighting at Mill Springs, Shiloh, and Stones River, but the field of Chickamauga has so many more marks and evidence that it surprised all who saw it. In front of Baird's, Reynolds', and Johnson's divisions, were I to tell you the truth, you would say I surely did not see correctly.

When we got to where our division fought on Saturday and found every tree and bush in front of our lines marked with bullets, many of them with 50 bullets in one tree, we all thought it hard fighting, but when we were moved to our left on Sunday and saw as many as 100 in at least half the trees and one-third shot off with cannon balls, all were astonished. But shall I describe the appearance of the field in front of the line for a mile where Baird, Johnson, and Reynolds' division fought? The Rebels charged the breastworks a number of times during the day and every place where the Rebel columns were hurled against our men were such traces of desperate fighting as there has never seen and probably will never again. Shall I say 500-1,000 bullets in almost every tree of any size in a space

from the ground to a little higher than a man's head? I don't give you any conception of the true condition. Trees two feet over are absolutely shot to fine splinters- that in the side facing our breastworks were actually hot so often that their whole sides are in slivers and splinters. It must have been a continual stream of lead. There are five or six such places and each one as wide as from the courthouse from the Courthouse to Hon. Thomas Ewing's, and as the Rebels came up in columns their loss must have been fearful. Again on the hill where the promiscuous mass was fighting in the afternoon of Sunday of which I wrote you about some time since are the same evidences.

The Rebel graves show from five to one of ours. To be sure, our men were not all buried, though I have no doubt the Rebel generals intended that they should be, but a portion of their details were evidently worse than heathens. I saw nine of our gallants boys' remains bleaching in the sun, untouched, except where some ragged villain had taken off their shoes, shirt, or their pants. It may be said that these men were overlooked- not so, for Rebels were buried within three feet of them. We found the bones of two of our men that they had placed rails on them and burned them. Some places they buried them from 18 inches to two feet deep, but as a general thing their heads and feet were left uncovered.

Maj. Gen. Sherman has just returned from Knoxville. Major Giesy is all O.K, as well as Capt. Wiseman, but many of Gen. Sherman's men are barefoot and have marched miles in the cold and mud in that condition. The general's command has had a hard campaign. They started from Vicksburg in September last and marched thence to this place on forced marches, thence to Knoxville and now have returned here. The Rebels admit he entirely deceived them near Tusculumbia, Alabama. He threw one division across the Tennessee to encounter the enemy there and make them believe he was going to Atlanta and so successful was his maneuver that when he reinforced Grant, the Rebel generals would not believe it. Rebel officers taken prisoners were dumfounded to find that Gen. Sherman had reached here and participated in the fight on Missionary Ridge. If 250,000 men had been placed under his control when he desired them at Louisville in the fall of 1861, I firmly believe the rebellion might have been crushed; but that was too 'big a thing' then.

I am sorry to say to you Maj. Butterfield died today. He was a gallant and brave officer. At Wild Cat, his company was placed in a precarious and exposed situation where it took the greatest care to keep him from being exposed to both the enemy's and our fire. Yet he took his company and faithfully obeyed his orders. At Stones River, his company with he in command, was in a very heavy skirmish on the 31st of December and again in the night attack of January 2, 1863 of 12 companies to make a reconnaissance until the enemy were found it force. At Hoover's Gap he acted as lieutenant colonel, the same at Chickamauga and at the storming of Missionary Ridge he was in command of the regiment; at all of these places he confirmed every man's opinion of him, that he was a soldier true and brave. As a disciplinarian he was strict yet kind; as a drill master there were but few who excelled him. He leaves the evidence behind him. I do no one injustice when I say that Maj. Butterfield left his company, when promoted, one of the best-drilled companies in the army. His military record is one a soldier can justly be proud of. When he was wounded, he was at the head of his regiment and as some of the boys ran to assist him, he ordered them on and up the hill. He has fallen in a great and good cause in the prime of life and is lamented by his whole command. Butterfield is no more! 'How sleep the brave who sink to rest, by all their country's wishes best!'

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January 7, 1864, pg. 1