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O. J. Ebery!

## TENNESSEE LETTERS.

*The following Letters are printed for private use only,  
to accommodate friends of the writer, who are absent  
from the City, and desire to hear from him.*

CAMP NEAR NASHVILLE, TENN.,  
CHRISTMAS MORNING,  
December 25th, 1862. }

MY DEAR MOTHER:—A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, to yourself and all the dear ones at home, is my sincere wish, although my Christmas is very dull, very little like Christmas of old. I am in hopes my New Year will be livelier, as we expect a battle on or before the first of the year.

Christmas, in camp, is dull at the best of times. But we are under orders to move to the front, to-morrow morning at 8 o'clock—in fact we were ordered to go this morning at 8 o'clock, but after we had our tents all struck, and were beginning to pack the wagons, the order was countermanded, until to-morrow morning—and to make me feel still more miserable, on Monday, I suffered so with tooth-ache that our Surgeon tried to pull two teeth for me, but as his instruments were poor he only succeeded in breaking both of them off; and on Tuesday, I went into Nashville, to a dentist, and had both teeth extracted, and am now suffering from face ache and swollen cheek. I have been under the weather for so long now, that I have given up all hopes of ever being well again. I know I never will if I stay out here three months longer.

Our battalion has been put into the Regular Brigade, or "Forlorn Hope," consisting of the 15th, 16th, 18th, and 19th Regiments, U. S. Infantry, and Battery H, 5th Artillery. We are attached to Genl. Rousseau's corps, and our duty is to do the hard fighting. Our battle flag is of blue silk, with a gold star in the centre.

Direct to me at Head Quarters, until further orders.

From the numerous reports of cannon and small arms, it is supposed that there is some skirmishing along the front. You may expect shortly to hear of a terrible battle in this section, for it is bound to come, and when these two armies meet, it will be dreadful.

Excuse shortness.—Love to all.—Send me the box I wrote for.

Hoping soon to hear from you,

I remain as ever,  
Your affectionate Son,  
BOB

CAMP BEYOND MURFREESBORO', TENN.,  
Tuesday, January 6th, 1863.

MY DEAR PARENTS:

I have no doubt that you are extremely anxious to hear from me, since the news of the late terrible battle reached you. I telegraphed to you by the first opportunity, and sent it by the courier line to Nashville. As I said, it was a terrible battle; poor Capt. Bell, was killed the first fire; we were obliged to leave his body on the field, but recovered it on Sunday, under a flag of truce; he was robbed of everything; Capt. Wise, was shot on the 31st, and died on the 2d; Major King, was wounded in the arm, slightly. Capt. York, dangerously wounded in the right side, and Lieut. Occleston, slightly wounded in the left side; and we lost in all 112 men, killed and wounded; all our loss was on the 31st, but we were under a severe fire every-day. How any of the officers or men of the 15th escaped unhurt is a miracle.

When Major King was wounded, Capt. Fulmer took command of the battalion, and I had to take command of B Co., and fought it all the time since. \* \* \* \* Thank God I had pride, if not courage, to stand at my post and do my duty right through, having no idea of any danger. I escaped without a wound, but had my pants torn almost off of me, and a bullet struck the tip of my sword scabbard off, and another passed across the front of my boot top, slightly tearing the leather. I will send the pants home the first opportunity. Almost every officer had a bullet pass through some part of his clothing. *Do not publish this letter.* Our loss is about ten thousand, and the Rebel loss exceeds ours about one-third. Capt. Bell was hit in the left temple, and the ball passed through his brain, killing him instantly. I never want to see another battle, having passed through one of the bloodiest battles ever fought in America. We now occupy the enemy's camps. Did you send me a box? Send me the \$50 I telegraphed for, as I am without a cent of money, and no signs of a paymaster. For the last two days of the battle, the troops were almost starved, we had an ear of corn issued to every two officers. I tried a piece of horse steak, it was bully.

I have some *Confed* money and a story book, captured in town, for Toby and the other little ones. Excuse shortness.—Love to all.—Write soon.

Your affectionate Son,

BOB.

IN CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO', TENN.,  
Thursday, January 8th, 1863.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I telegraphed home, of my safety, at the first opportunity, and wrote as soon after as I could get the materials, so that you would not be worried about me, thinking that in the late severe battle before this place, something might have happened me, but I am happy to state that I escaped without a scratch, although my pants were torn to pieces; but I would have been satisfied to have lost all my clothing, and only escape with my life; as I have never before seen such terrible fighting. I will try and give you some idea of the pleasant Christmas week which I spent.

We started on the day after Christmas, on the march—and that day, we marched about 11 miles, it rained heavily all day, and we got into camp, feeling like drowned rats; on the morning of the 27th, the Battalion moved at 9 A. M., and marched to Nolinsville, 13 miles, rainy and disagreeable; being Officer of the Day, I was left back to guard the wagons. We were obliged to march over dirt roads, which were very heavy and almost impassable, so much so, that it kept me until late on the afternoon of the 28th, before I arrived at Nolinsville, with the wagon train. On the morning of the 29th, we marched 10 miles, and joined Genl. Rosecrans, on the Murfreesboro' Pike, about two miles south of Laverne. As our wagons did not get up, I slept out with Capt. Wise; the weather was rather cold and towards morning it commenced raining, which made it decidedly unpleasant. On the morning of the 30th, we advanced to within about 4 miles of this place, and formed in line of battle, and camped; all day could be heard the firing of skirmishers, and an occasional shell from one of our batteries trying to provoke a reply, but there was no heavy firing. On the morning of the 31st, about 8 o'clock, our Adjutant, J. D. Ogilby, read to us a circular from Genl. Rosecrans to his troops, of course it was received with cheers, and immediately our Brigade was ordered to the front. We advanced one mile on the pike, and then moved into a small wood, on the right of the road, where we were ordered to make ourselves comfortable; all this time we could hear the roar of musketry and the reports of cannon; we had remained at this point but about ten minutes, when we were ordered to fall in, and immediately moved by the right flank through a heavy woods, at double quick. Wounded men and stragglers were passing us, on their way to the rear. We were marched out to a heavy cedar grove, formed in line of battle and ordered to lie down, and protect ourselves as well as we could. Capt. Keteltas, was ordered to march his company about 100 yards to the front and deploy the whole company as skirmishers, which he did very quickly. He had not advanced more than 800 yards before we received one of the most terrible fires ever troops received, (a stray ball struck Capt. Bell, just above the left temple, killing him instantly.)

Capt. K. immediately ordered his company to fall back on the battalion, firing as he retreated; as soon as his company reached us, Major King ordered the battalion to "rise up" and "commence firing." After we had fired two or three rounds, we were ordered to fall back, which we did in good order—until we came to the 6th Ohio, Vols.—where we rallied our men, and made another stand, but were again obliged to fall back; and as the 6th Ohio broke, our men separated and retreated in confusion. At the railroad we rallied both regiments, and sheltered ourselves behind the railroad embankment; we remained there about half an hour, when we again advanced into the woods, and were obliged to fall back, and on our return to the railroad a second time we discovered that Major King was missing; we knew he had been hit, but whether killed or not we could not learn. Capt. Bell was killed, and we were obliged to leave his body in the hands of the enemy. Capt. York and Lieut. Occleston, were both hit and sent to the rear; and Capt. Wise, was reported hit and killed just before we reached the railroad, and we could collect but about fifty men together. As one of the rebel batteries had the exact range of the railroad, at the point we were, it was anything but pleasant, round shot and shell falling all around us; and in one instance a round shot struck and killed a man, who was lying on the ground not two yards beyond me, and the ball ricocheted over my head. Whenever we heard a shell or saw a round shot coming, every one of us, either made a very low bow, or fell flat on the ground. After lying on the ground behind the railroad for some time, and having gathered up such wounded as were near us, Capt. Wise among the rest, we were ordered to the right to support a section of Battery H, 5th U. S. Artillery, Capt. Guenther, formerly Terrill's, which was under command of Lieut. Ludlow. We remained with the battery until dark, the enemy keeping up a fire all the time, and once made a dash to capture the section, but Ludlow double shotted his guns with canister, and the 15th rose up, fixed bayonets, to make a charge—when the rebels changed their mind, and returned to the wood in great haste. After dark we were again moved to the centre, where we remained on outpost duty all night; at daybreak we were relieved, and sent to the rear to rest; but we had not more than reached the woods, when we were again ordered to the front, (this was the 1st inst.) Our Surgeon removed our wounded officers to a hospital further in the rear, and Capt. Wise rode in front of the ambulance. He was cheered by the men, and was looking so well that every one thought he would recover, but the next day when the bandage was removed from his neck, the blood gushed into his wind-pipe, and choked him to death. About 3 o'clock, P. M., our brigade was ordered out to make a reconnoissance to the rear. We were ordered to go about four miles, and return. We started out at double quick, and kept the same gait both ways, returning about 6 o'clock, having seen *no* enemy; and as the men were completely exhausted, we were ordered to bivouac in a woods, which we did.

Up to this time none of us had had anything to eat, since the morning

of the 31st, when we had three hard crackers. I saved one and ate it about noon, on the 1st inst., but we all had to go to bed supperless. Our beds consisted of some cedar branches and our overcoats. In the morning, we were awakened by a heavy cannonading on the right, and a slight shower of round shot fell amongst us. We were immediately ordered to the front, out of range, and protected by a small hill, here we remained all day. This was on Friday, 2d inst., and about noon, the brigade commissary issued *one ear of corn* to each officer, and one ear to every two men. We parched the corn, and at night, when the heavy fighting was on our left, our servants went out and found a horse which had been struck with a ball, but not killed, which they shot with a pistol, and cut us off some steaks, and cooked them on sticks for us. I never relished anything so much in all my life. Just after we had finished our meal, fresh troops were sent to the left to reinforce our men, who had been driven back across the river. The fresh troops charged across the river and up the hill at double quick, and upon arriving at the crest of a hill, charged bayonets, and with a wild and enthusiastic yell, rushed on the rebels, who fled in great confusion. The 78th Penna. captured 4 cannon, and the colors of the 26th Tennessee Regiment, and over 300 officers and men of the same regiment. On the night of the 2d inst., the pioneers were sent in front of us about 20 yards and threw up a small embankment or rifle pit. On the morning of the 3d, Saturday, our battalion finished the entrenchments, which was rather a dangerous piece of business, as the rebels had sharpshooters, in a woods about 500 yards in advance of us, and the balls whistled past our ears and over our heads in fine style, but nobody was hurt, as they could not aim very well on account of the dirt. As soon as we finished, we occupied our trenches, and a report came that the enemy were advancing on us, in three lines. We were all ready for a fight, but nothing occurred but the firing of sharpshooters. Rations having arrived from Nashville, we had a splendid dinner, consisting of hard crackers, bean soup, and salt pork. At night, the 3d Ohio and 99th Indiana regiment, advanced beyond our lines, and drove the sharpshooters out of the woods, and drove them from behind three lines of their rifle pits, but were obliged to leave them on account of having expended all their ammunition. We remained in the trenches all night, with bayonets fixed, ready at a moments notice to jump the bank and at the rebels, but none appeared. It rained heavily all night, and we sat in our trenches, with water about 6 inches deep in them—pleasant for the 3d of January. On Sunday morning the 4th inst., nothing could be seen of the rebels, and we began to *smell a mice*, our men went out with a flag of truce, to look after our dead, and went far into their old lines, but there was no one at home. We sent a detail out for Capt. Bell's body, which was recovered, he looked very natural, but he had been robbed of everything, even the buttons of his vest were cut off.

On Sunday afternoon, I was detailed to bury our dead, which I had to do, although I tried hard to get out of it. I buried 10 men, which were

all we could find. Captains Wise and Bell's bodies were sent to Nashville, to wait until we hear from their families.

On Monday, we advanced into Murfreesboro'. Everything looks deserted, nothing there but wounded *confeds*, and our men. The rebels left over three thousand wounded men, in our hands. We are now encamped about one mile south of the town; I cannot say how long we will remain here.

Since the battle, we have talked with officers who were in the cedar bush opposite to us, and they say that they had three divisions opposed to us, and that we cut them up terribly, it being the hardest fight of any. Every one of our Generals speak in the highest terms of our behaviour. They say we were sent into the cedars, expecting that McCook, would offer some kind of a fight, but he was so completely surprised, that almost his whole corps fell back in disorder without firing a shot, and the poor little 15th, had to receive the brunt of the entire left wing of the rebel army, which we held in check long enough for Rosecrans to see the defeat of McCook, and have time to change his base or front. As soon as McCook rallied his men, he advanced again, but never again occupied his old ground. The blame of McCook's defeat, is attributed to Genl. R. W. Johnson, who was completely surprised, his batteries being captured before the horses were hitched up. Johnson had command of the 2d division, in which was the 4th brigade. Poor Genl. Sill, was killed while attempting to rally his men.

Genl. Rousseau held his ground and defeated the enemy whenever he could get a chance at them.

The Regular Brigade, composed of the 1st batt. 15th U. S. Infantry; 1st and 2d batt. 16th U. S. Infantry; 1st, 2d, and part of the 3d batt. 18th U. S. Infantry; 1st batt. 19th U. S. Infantry; and Battery H, 5th U. S. Artillery, under command of Lieut.-Col. Shepard, 18th Infantry, now attached to Rousseau's division, did its duty.

I have numerous relics, Chattanooga Rebel of the 2d, and other rebel papers, some Confed money, &c., which I will send home at the first opportunity.

I telegraphed for fifty dollars, which I am sadly in need of, as I have not a cent of money, and want it daily; send it in a letter, or send a draft, and five or ten dollars with it, to use until I can get the draft cashed.

I have seen some horrible, but yet curious sights, which I will tell you of when I get home.

Love to all.—Write soon.—Hoping soon to hear from home,  
I remain with much love,

Your affectionate Son,  
BOB.

Major King, is but slightly wounded.

*Extract from a letter written by an Officer of the 15th U. S. Infantry.*

"The whole force of the 1st battalion of the 15th U. S. Infantry, in the Battle of Murfreesboro', was 319 officers and men. Of these 110 were killed, wounded or missing at the end of it. The officers were, Major King. Captains Fulmer, Wise, Bell, Keteltas, and Yorke. Lieutenants Jewet, Wikoff, Woodward, Occleston, King, Semple, Galloway, and Grey. Major King was shot in the left arm, and afterwards dislocated the shoulder, by falling from his horse. Bell, was instantly killed. Wise, was wounded two or three times, and died. Yorke, is dangerously wounded; and Occleston, badly in the side with ribs broken. King, Yorke, and Occleston, are at Nashville—well cared for—and now doing well.

"The Brigade of Regulars went into battle with about 1200 muskets, and lost 90 killed, 517 wounded, and 55 missing—662 in all—making more than one-half of the whole number."

*The following scrap is copied from the account of the Battle, by the Special Correspondent of the Philadelphia Press:—*

#### THE REGULARS.

Probably the most severe fighting which has been done by any body of men since the war commenced was that done by the Brigade of Regulars in Rousseau's division. Every officer who led a battalion was killed or wounded. The gallant Colonel Sheppard, who commanded the brigade, escaped injury. Major Slemmer, of Fort Pickens fame, was severely injured. Major King, also received a severe wound in the arm. Major Carpenter, was killed.

The Murfreesboro' pike and Chattanooga Railroad divide the battle-field. Travellers upon either road, upon either hand, can gaze for three or four miles upon the picture. The first place of interest upon the right, just at present, are the ruins of a fine brick residence; beyond, upon the right and left, are the earthworks thrown up by our troops upon that dark and stormy night. From these works to town are hundreds of carcasses of horses, breastworks, demolished houses, broken wagons and wheels, and graves. Upon the right, near the railroad, are eleven graves of the 74th Ohio; near is an equal number of the 45th Mississippi; then, side by side, farther on, repose eleven members of the 78th Pennsylvania, and eight members of the Rock City Guards. Upon the left is quite a cemetery—ninety-three prettily constructed graves, with an inscribed slab at the head of each. As you enter the ground a placard informs the reader that

"This patch of ground contains the bodies of ninety-three soldiers, of the 15th, 16th, 18th, and 19th U. S. Infantry. Do not disturb these graves by additions or otherwise." Leaving the Regulars, you next discover four graves of the 19th Illinois, and twenty-seven of the 41st Alabama. Leave the line of the railroad, travel over a spot of ground containing nearly two thousand acres, and you find like scenes everywhere. The national and the rebel dead—the old man, the strong man, the youth; husband, father, son, lover—all lie in a common grave. The interments, however, are most solemn, and the utmost silence prevails as the lost companion is quietly placed in his uncouth grave.