



## Stones River National Battlefield

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### Regimental File Donation Form

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Significant Person's Name: John P. Webb

Unit: 28<sup>th</sup> Reg. (PA)

### List Contents of Donation Below

Letter from drummer boy, John P  
Webb, re Murfreesboro

Letter written to:

Mr. John G. Webb  
Freeport Armstrong  
County Pennsylvania

Dear Parents:

I wrote a letter about a week ago informing you of the battle before this place called Stone River and of me getting through it safe and sound, but I did not know whether it would get through so I wrote again as I knew you would be anxious to hear from me. I tell you it was the awfulest sight I ever saw from Tuesday morning Dec. 30 until Sunday mornign Jan. 7. On Tuesday Dec. 30 our regiment was sent out as skirmisher and we had one man killed and several wounded. Our artillery kept up a constant fire on the rebel rifle pits but they would not answer us and towards dinner time we heard heavy cannonading on our right and we knew that McCook had commenced. It was the continual sound of cannon all day but nothing to what it was the next day. Wednesday morning the sun broke out clear and nice and a great many looked on it for the last time. About 8 o'clock heavy cannonading was heard on our right still getting closer and closer when the news came that McCook was being driven back and our division was ordered to fall in line by our brave General Myley. We had not long to wait when the gray coats were soon to come up 6 lines deep but on they came, our boys stood up like veterans still on they came driving McCook's men like sheep but when they came up to our division (The gallant old 8th Division) they received such a fire that they staggered but they quickly rallied. Our regiment made a

... company F and killed 3 men instantly but they got reenforcements and we had to fall back after fighting for 2 hours and a cross fire when we fell back about 1 mile but we were reenforced and then it came our turn and we charged them through the cedars piling them up by the hundreds. There was not much more fighting until Friday when they made a brack on our left and center but after fighting for about three hours our boys chased them over the river and into their fortifications and slaing them with grape and cannister without numbers. On Wednesday though was the longest fight of any of the five days.

Us drummers having no arms we did not have to go in the fight. Some were back in the rear but Jim Wenff and me were behind the regiment with a stretcher to assist the wounded. I saw men shot in every place you can think of. Jim was shot in the leg and had his arms tore off by cannon shots. I saw the three that were killed in Company F by the shell, one had his arms tore off and it went through his back and struck another in the breast hissing through him and killing another along side of him. Then Weaver was shot in the side and killed dead. Jim Husser was shot in the thigh and died of his wounds. We lost. Two killed and several wounded in our company. Altogether there was 150 killed, wounded, and missing in the regiment, our Colonel behaved nobly when he would hear us yell a shell was coming, he would order "down" and it would go whissing by and hit some unlucky fellow, the bullets came whissing by so fast I expected to get a touch every minute. One Rebel Regiment came up and fired a volly and I jumped behind a tree where a ball struck it on the opposite side. I saw a shell burst about 10 yards off me and scatter among

a regiment. This was the most horrible night I ever saw, and I never want to see another one like it. There must have been one hundred ambulances carrying the wounded away and they couldn't supply the want. Once where they ordered down a ball hit a limb about two feet off my head. Then I picked it up and laid down when a spent ball hit me on the back. I also picked it up. I went over the battle field on Monday and there was our fine fellows lying stiff and cold with their shoes, breeches, socks, caps, and overcoats pulled off them by the Rebels who occupied the battle ground after the first days fight. I went on further but I saw a better sight for instead of our men there by the \_\_\_\_\_ in the pile of ten and twenty all over the woods. One fellow had been wounded and crawled up to the fence and the fence got a fire and burnt his legs off. Our Regiment was the first Infantry regiment in town and General Rosenruis gave our Colonel permission to raise our flag, which was torn, over the court house where not many hours before the Rebel flag was waving. Murfreesboro is a vast hospital besides the large of wounded the Rebels took away, they left over 2,000 in turn for us to feed and take care of but there is not 2,000 now for they are dying every day, lots of them also our men. We have a nice brick house where most of our wounded in our regiments are kept. Colonel Miller acting as Brig. Gen. was wounded in the neck. Colonel Sirwell is acting as Brig. Gen. now. General Myley was on the field all the time and a braver General there is not in this country also Rosentuis and Sill the rest of our Generals, except Johnson, allowed himself to be surprised and his men cut up. I saw General Rosenruis, Rosseur, Sheridan, McCook, Myley, Miller, Stanley, Crittence killed a great many other officers. That day we lost but one general. Sill was his name, a brave man he was

others. The Rebels fought with desperation they had given them rations of whiskey and gunpowder. I saw one of the keys in their camp. Our Rey Lt. Woolsteect was killed; Lt. Maige, Lt. Ankers and Capt. Jack were wounded. Lt. Weaver of company F was wounded in the breast. This was a hard fought battle and both sides lost a great many men but still we killed the most, wounded the most and took about as many prisoners and last but not least took the place that Jeff Davis in his speech and bragged in the field promised they would hold against the South and if they could do so much on the Potomac their secession would played out and if they didn't do it the western army under Rosenevues will do it for them. I would like to see McClellun take command again. He works slow but sure, but I must close pretty soon, if you will write me as long a letter as I have you. Let me know whether you got my money. I will have this war ended by the first of July and come home and tell you of my adventures in the cedars before Murfreesboro. Mother I wish you would get me two shirts and send them by mail as one of mine was burnt up by the Rebel in the wagon. The weather here is beautiful just like spring at home and we are quartered in a nice building, give my love to Ern and Ed, tell them to write me and I will close this letter by remaining-

Your affectionate son,

John P. Webb  
78th Regiment  
Pennsylvania