69 Dearborn St.
Chicago Feby 25 1904

E. O. Stevens
South Port
North Carolina

Dr Bro.

Your last letter after your arrival home from Washington hospital received — I have no later news.

Since that time I have tried to put in shape the enclosed pages of the Printers' notes but have been handicapped by the many complaints incident to old age and the northern winter months.

Have several more ideas, soon as I can place them in shape, if not unpleasant reading, will forward them to you. Hope this will

find you in better condition than ourselves. Altho' I do not complain as long as the door of the little shop is kept open

Yours J. O. Stevens

Leaving the guns in the hands of the Sergeant, and the horses in care of the guard, and thinking I had done enough that day, and tired out with my duties; now in company with Jewett, my partner, we sought and found a quiet place to sleep.

There was a small cleared space large enough to spread our blankets on the ground, in the bushes to the right, and rear of the guns, a little below the brow of the hill from where the guns were still stationed. This position we had held all day as a battery, with the exception of the time that our gun had been to the rear - notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the enemy all day and at ar-

points to dislodge us.

From Jewett, I learned that near by, toward where our feet would be, at the edge of the bushes our two comrades lay, Wiley, who thumbed the piece, and Finney, at the time he was sponging the gun, both fell that day. One solid shot from the rebel guns killed both at the same moment. Here they were buried, side by side, with their army blankets wrapped about them.

It is a sample fact that these comrades of ours, who were buried here were the first to establish this part of the field, the burying ground of the battle-field.

I now understand, that this is a part of the ground selected by the Government, and occupied and known as the graveyard of the

sensations and feelings in taking the place and position of the dead man, a model soldier, and the picture was not inviting nor pleasant,

To sum up at this hour - with our guns out of the fight, Adams, Stagg, Griffin, Bloom, Howard, Wiley-Finney, Cambey and Carver, killed or wounded, the possible success of holding this position longer seemed impossible The enemy in the meantime had taken the advantage of the lull on our firing line: having at this hour advanced and strengthened their position by a full and fresh brigade of infantry in our front. They marched on to the field in regular order with music and Rebel flag flying: cheered on with a yell, opened up and

Battle-field of Stone River.

The bodies of our men were taken up, and buried in Rosehill according to the agreement of the Chicago Board of Trade, after the battery was mustered out of the service, and lasting peace had been declared throughout the country. Several discasters and changes to our men all along the line, occured soon after our gun was taken off the field in the morning. The cannoneers of our gun were detailed to replace those who were killed or disabled on the other guns. When the detail was made Jewett went forward and took Finney's place, withdrawing at the command "load" the ramrod still sticking in the mouth of the piece, where it had remained, when Finney was struck down - Jewett described his

wing of the Army of the Cumberland
at Stone River,

It was our
brother S.H. who made the suggestion
although it was Robinson's duty,
and business to look after the
interest of the first section; and
the idea was acted on at once;
to overhaul and by measurements,
of the old gun carriage axle
left on the field; the one we
passed in coming into position,
in the morning, would fit our
gun. The blacksmith I
had brought along, and the other
artificers were put to work taking
off our old broken and twisted
axle-tree and replacing with the
captured one to take its place,

This work was ascertained
could be neatly and successfully
completed by the artizans, with
the aid of such few tools as they

renewed their tasties of the morning.
With our range of their front
and the knowledge we had gained
of the ground in the morning and
the full view of the brigades in
motion; our guns opened our
their ranks with our appalling
effect, and a deadly execution.
A constant and rapid fire
was kept up, from this commanding
position and our pieces swept
again and again the rebel line
of attack; This was about four
o'clock in the afternoon, when the
rebels made their last final charge
and fiercest encounter of the day.
They met with an overwhelming,
sad and deadly repulse, and this
closed the fight of the day,
And as subsequent events disclosed,
on that ~~XXIII~~ sweeping tide of battle,
the end of the fight on the right

had at hand.

By my persistence and boldness in showing the gun from the rear, to the front and A.H.'s timely suggestion acted upon; it was made possible to place our gun in its old position, at the post of honor, late that night, ready for action in the morning).

There was on a certain time a little city, a great king came and fought against it, with big battering ram, and there was found a poor wise man in it, by his wisdom, who delivered the city. "Yet no man remembered that same poor man"

I had a bottle of brandy, given me by Mrs. A.H. which was in my pack-saddle, and I remarked to Jewett, at this hour of retiring, having had no supper, we should drink the contents of the flasks, before

lying down, as possibly we might not wake on the morrow.

The night was damp and cold, - no camp fire allowed,

We drank the brandy without any apparent effect, and lay down - wrapped our blankets around us; our clothes, caps and boots intact.

Through the night we spooned, to keep ourselves warm, and shivered for the morning, yet dreaded the approach of day.

At the early dawn the command was awakened, - with orders to get breakfast around a small show of camp fires, and, as quickly as possible.

There was no new attack, like the early hours said of the previous morning on our fronts. All was quiet along our line and the Rebels, Where the contending

forces are nearly matched, it was as though an unwritten law of the Commandos, should be observed in the cessation of hostilities, while the rank and file could obtain necessary sleep, rest, and food for the struggle for success, either, by strategy, or by forces of arms the coming day.

The vigilance of the guard about the guns was kept up continuously during the night, from fear of a sneak up, through the woods by a scouting party of the enemy, who knew the exact location of the battery; either to spike the guns, or turn them all loaded upon our armament in the rear.

The morning hours were taken up in refilling the caissons from the supply ammunition train, ordered up, on the field, from the rear.

On the general overhauling

of the condition of the contents of the limbers of the guns, and the replenishing of each caisson, especial attention was given to the explosive shell, and the time fuse. I noticed then, and remember now, the many bright colored flannel bags, on which the powder was encased - a very seductive looking little pellet, how gingerly they were handled.

We remained at this post and held this position with half the guns sighted to the southwest, and the other half to the south east, - covering with our right the scene of the yesterday's disasters, and our left guarding the old cotton field. A dense growth of wood and bushes intervened between our extreme right and our left. This heavy timber was a field of many a sharp-shooter, and

from their position up a tree some so many of the minnie bullets which harrassed us yesterday and to day, From this hidden position they fired at intervals at their leasure and could not be dislodged.

Not knowing in which direction the enemies line of attack for the day would be made upon us; in the event of either position being menaced, we were prepared for action. The day - the first of the New Year was quiet along the enemies front, possibly they had during the night withdrawn their forces from their left flank. Only a small show of a fight far away toward our left, where there was a desultory firing kept up during the day by the enemies guns engaged in a mild duel, with the guns of some Ohio Battery on our side - We could observe from where we lay on the ground, beside

our guns - the effect of the shots on either side - there was little damage done,

A feint as it were to engage our attention in the front, and the sharpshooters outlook on our movements, to cover the maneuvers by the enemy preparatory, to some new design on our front or flanks. According to orders we retired from this strategic point, which we had held so long with such distinguished bravery, over other competitors, with a loss unprecedented in a battery in action, of three men killed and eight wounded. We fell back a little after dark very quietly, with as little noise as possible, to a point about half way from the firing line, and our former camp, at the the bend in the river, there we went into camp. Although the sun shone out brightly most of the day - The

weather after dark was cold, damp: a drizzling rain set in, with a threatening storm for the night,

We were allowed small camp-fires. Our suppers consisted of company stew or boiled fresh meat, without salt; this with hot coffee, and our hard bread made us a warm meal; not a very healthy diet. We were indebted to Emory the Colored Cook who followed our fortunes from Camp Douglas, for the fresh meat. On coming in with one of the forage wagons loaded with corn the day before the fight, he succeeded in capturing and killing an animal, and threw it on one of the loaded wagons. This he accomplished almost by his own effort and by this means gave us one good warm meal of which at that time, we stood in so much need. It is a truthful fact this was the only substantial meal, unsatisfactory,

as mouthed food can be to the digestive organs, we had had during the four days constant duty on the battle-field.

The ground where we were located was wet and considerably cut up by the march of troops, and heavy gun carriages during the days of action, over this portion of the field -

The location of my sleeping quarters assigned to Jewett and myself was beside the roadway, both pleasantly situated in front of the camp fire.

I went back toward our old camp, to obtain some of those famous pine boughs for our bed, but in the darkness could find none. So I turned toward, and down a small gully where I found, as I afterwards learned, a plum tree, This fortunately had been cut partly over two at its base, by a shell.

Not having an axe, hatchet or knife, by considerable exertion in breaking

I broke off the remaining portion of the trunk — I hauled the brush top, over the ground, up to the camping place, in front of the fire.

On my arrival I was made a subject of remark from my company, ~~other~~ than Jewett, from whom I had encouragement, to know, "what I had there"? I assured them this bush would make a very desirable bed, when it was prepared, to sleep on, in the event of rain during the night, We lopped off some of its branches, and on these bushes we spread our blankets. We slept high and comparatively dry — our rubber blankets covering us from the disagreeableness of the falling rain over us, and the running water, and mud beneath us.

This was the third night on the field; the ~~first~~ day's ending of the first of the New Year. I am sorry I have attempted to write every detail

of the action on the field, as they presented themselves to my view, or their knowledge came to my mind at the time or later on, I would prefer to skip the events of this forenoon though to do so, I would not present the truthful account, I started out to write, taking the common soldiers standpoint of vision.

We moved out of our camping place in the morning and took up a position fronting the south-east, on a cleared space to our front — the edge of an open wood to our left, and the ground sloping to our rear. Here we were held in the early forenoon, a continuation of the fight of the previous day, by a severe bombardment from the enemies guns, till the captains in his excited condition, without orders fired into, and wounded several of our men belonging to a battery, who were defending the position in our front. It was my

The old fashioned sure way of fighting was our mode of warfare, with so long a line of communication to our rear to keep open. We had a distinct right, centre and left to protect.

With the rebels they simply recognized a right and left formation. By a simple maneuver on the field they easily shifted their line of battle, from left to right, or right to left, or, executed a series of flanking attacks at ease.

Our movements were more sure and a safer progress in so stubborn a fight, as Stone River where, there were no reserves not engaged in the fight.

About four oclock orders came to "mount" and to move by "column". Our route lay through the open woods on our left. We made this movement at a trot and then a gallop. After passing through the timber and brush we came

opinion then, at this period of the day's fight, and now, that the Captain imbibed too much of the contents of the canteen, he carried at his side, and also, I am confirmed in my judgment when I met him in the wood down in front, and to the right of the Battery, in regard to my instructions about bringing up the gun from the rear; that he was also at that time considerably under the influence of brandy.

We ceased firing, on orders by a messenger from the front, and withdrew to the left and rear of this position, where we remained in readiness to move at the word "Mount".

In the afternoon, the enemy had massed their troops, and moved forward their fighting forces, a solid formation, along the southern, the bend, and the eastern heights of Stone River, covering our entire left flank.

into a large open field, with trees and brush along the banks of the river in our front.

Where, a General acts on the defensive, our positions chosen by the General were strong ones.

We were assigned and occupied a position on this imposing situation, on the field, on the right of fifty four guns, massed along the banks of the west side of the river.

A little to our right and toward the front of our guns was an old deserted house. Our forces, and the enemy were engaged before we came on to the field. We came into position quickly and began our usual rapid fire. All the guns along the banks front fired shot, shell, grape and canister, while the infantry who supported us on the right, opened up with a continuous musketry fire like

along their line.

These missels hurtled through the air; carried along the banks and over the Stone River, and into the solid ranks of the advancing rebels. Or, in many an artillery duel, such a one, as we were engaged in, with the Washington Artillery Company of New Orleans, in our immediate front across the river.

The shot and shell from the enemies guns fell on its banks, or else, from the past & occupied went far over our heads to the rear. Plainly the enemy did not have the range of our position, like the fight of Wednesday, for, in this hail of shot and shell balls and bullets none took effect in our Battery. My gun was again out of order. This time it was dangerously hot from the rapid fire, Sergeant Deane was

ready to excel in this engagement. and his replies to the enemies guns were given without a slack hand, by the amount of ammunition he threw into their ranks, and the battery of the New Orleans Company.

He was distracted at the thought of the silence of his piece, and the means of obtaining water from the river in the enemies front, to cool his gun. He finally obtained a bucketful for that purpose, at the old house to our front and right. The continuous firing ceased along our front, the attack was sustained and the enemy repulsed.

On the selection of this ground was the probable defeat of the attacking party, from the security of the position, and surrounding, and to this choice location was

more than all else, and the massing of so many guns made further advance by the enemy, an impossible feat, to march, and to fight in face of the mass of metal thrown into their ranks.

To the bravery of his artillerists, and position on the field is alone attributable the success of Stone's River, Friday's Battle.

This last efforts of the Rebels lasted about forty minutes, at an estimated loss to them, in that brief time of two thousand men.

When the order was given to "cease firing", we also were ordered to 'limber up'. We left our companions in arms, and moved across the field in their rear, to the left, toward the bank of the river, to a point easy of access to the water front. We forded the stream at once. The water came to the edges of the cover of our limber-

with the dead, wounded, and dying soldiers of both sides.

The calls of the wounded were for water, and the groans of the dying were pitious - I could give them no assistance, nor leave my post of duty.

We retired from this post, greatly to our relief, without exchanging a shot, for there was no enemy in sight - It was dark, and began to rain, when we moved off the field, to the right, and wound along in our passage, under cover of the woods, following an old dirt road, on the sloping banks of the river in the direction of the ford - It was in these woods where many a fellow, friend or foe, in the darkness called to me, not to run over him, for he was wounded, and unable to move himself out of our track, I gave

the ammunition chests of the guns and caissons. We gained the opposite shore in safety with our powder dry, at that hour it was toward night, threatening rain,

On the vicinity of this ford, Col. Jos. Scott of the 19th Ills. Infantry, was wounded, from the effect of the wounds he died after, I believe, coming back to Chicago.

We marched up the hill on the east shore of the river, and gained a position in advance of all other batteries, occupying the ground where in the attack of the afternoon the New Orleans Company, planted their guns and threw shot and shell, point blank at us across the stream - On coming up the river bank, and at this part of the field, we came in contact

at their pleading cry, a wide swerve of the gun carriage, but in our onward tramp, I could not tell or make known to the other drivers, at the various appeals for help along the road, in our return to the rear,

I fear many were crushed who were already badly wounded and killed perhaps by our guns and heavy caissons, in passing stumps and stones, in the noise and darkness of that rainy night.

We recrossed the river at the ford, and took up a long drive, to the rear of all our former locations on that eventful battle ground.

For a camping place it was a safe retreat. The situation was in the ravine, the low ground, near where I had torn the plum tree from its stem, for my bed during the night before. This part of the field

I remembered, in passing to the rear, with the disabled gun was sparcely covered by a dismal growth of black timber and pine stumps, with ledges of rock cropping out toward the bank of the river. On coming into camp the night was dark, and the hour was late, and the rain which began in a drizzle, when we left our post on the field, now continued to pour down, in torrents. The ground was soaked in this flood. I lost my partner in the darkness - my blankets were wet, I lay down on the edge of our tarpaulin, thrown down on the rough ground near the gun. I have been on many a battle scene since - In latter campaigns, when fighting was constantly kept up all hours of the day and night - on the raid - on the scouts - all night without sleep - in cold and wet - in cross and rain - with nothing to eat - not dry

for the day, yet dreaded its approach.

It was one of my cardinal points while in the service not to complain - I had taken the oath of office belonging to the soldier, and this trust I held sacred, during the period of three years, and deemed it an unworthy act, to find fault with the service and attendant hardships, which at the outset was expected to fall to the soldiers lot in the field; This might of all others would have been an exception, unless harnessed in with the right spirit of forbearance and endurance. O.K. that night slept or lay alongside, or curled up on the roots of an old pine stump. They were some protection from the wet beneath ones person, though not particularly soft - Vinnie's better bed, or resting place than where I lay.

for days - I have anticipated in this narrative; but this my first severe experience, stands a sad reminder of first impressions, said to be lasting.

As far as my personal comfort was concerned that night, there was also the other thought, of the surroundings. The additional dead, dying, and wounded, left on the stormy field - The prisoners in the hands of the enemy, The dread disasters to our cause; the loss of the battle, The influence of these facts on the minds of the soldiery and with these vague ideas floating in ones mind, and worn with hunger, and the excitements of the day, lying on this grim scenery, without a headrest was a more dreary night, in comparison, to Wednesday night, when we marched

that time of the afternoon was then blowing furiously.

This with our proposed camp fire, in front would be a grand protection to our weary bodies from the threatening rain, and cold of the approaching night. It was my duty, after the horses were cared for, in company with three others on the detail to chop in three parts, an old dry log in the rear of our gun. In this size, we could the more easily roll the sections up toward the pitched tarpaulin's front. ~~[illegible]~~ there with the other accumulated fuel we proposed to build our fire.

By a great effort so weak were all of us, that it took a long time to chop this fallen tree in parts,

We rolled these portions along on skids, placing them against our back log. Beside this we

This was the eventful Friday night,

Saturday morning we moved back near by the ford, but not across the river, and went into camp at this point.

The command was worn with excitement, anxiety, marching, fighting, loss of sleep, the wet, cold and hunger during these historical days. Our supply wagons were well on their ~~to~~ way toward Nashville, in their mad rush to get back to the rear. This abandonment left us without camp equipage, and much needed rations of all kinds.

Our squad raised the wet tarpaulin, on which we had assayed to sleep the previous night, by rails, inclined at an angle toward a large log, a fine place to make a fire, beat away from the opposite direction, from which, the wind at

heaped on the fuel and lighted the fire, large enough to dry out our wet coats and for our warmth, and to cook by.

It continued to rain with some sleet falling during the night, with our simple protection, and our big fire, renewed in the house while we slept, by the guard on duty, we were made comfortable in our exhausted condition.

Our supper was of necessity a very frugal meal.

In the rapid advance by gallop to the front on Friday afternoon, passing through the bushes, my haversack was torn from my saddle. I lost my knife, fork, spoon, a few watercolours, cradles, my china cup and crockery plate. The cup I especially missed, for I never could obtain the flavor, or realize a pleasant taste to

my coffee, drunk from one of the Soldiers tin cups. And I usually provided (when they could be obtained), myself with one of these plates and cups. I used them while I continued in the service, beside, they were the more easily washed and kept clean.

We lay down on our blankets this night more like human beings, and good soldiers in need of rest, than any of the previous nights on the battle ground.

I was not disturbed during the night - In the morning I found my cap full of water. I had placed it under the edge of our shelter, where the rain fell and caught the drippings along the edge of the tarpaulin. Turning the water out I put it on, but when the sun came out, and the warmth of my head the next day,

in the morning, of the evacuation of the field by the enemy.

Positive news did not reach us till about five in the afternoon. The enemy was on the retreat and the victory, ? was ours,

It is considered in military parlance, that no matter to what extent the loss incured on either side of the contending forces, the one who gains the field, is the victor.

— Official —

These are the results of 43,000 men engaged on our side — A larger number on the Rebel side,

Our loss	1294	Killed
	7945	Wounded
	1,027	Missing
Rebel Killed & wounded	10.000	(Probably estimated)
	500	Prisoners
Grand Total.	20,766 —	

it gave a disastrous and un-military curl to the front-piece.

Having received a ten days leave of absence it was on Saturday the 3d that S.H. started for Nashville. He in his intriped, masterly way rode through without escort, though not without hindrance, by many of the enemies' scouting parties, at intervals along the road.

And gave to the Chicago people, the first news, the famous dispatch telling of our loss, and achievements.

It reads;

"Nashville Tenn, January 3rd 1863.

" Murry Nelson & Co,

" Chicago.

"Murfreesboro is ours, Terrific fighting
"on Friday, No more casualities in
"the Battery; it has won a
"glorious distinction.

S. H. Stevens"

Rumors came to us in camp

during a little curiosity, and some leisure on Sunday, I visited alone the old position of Wednesday, for the purpose of looking over the ground, from the point where the rebels shot at me, during the engagement, while I was trying to, and did get my horses into position, to "limber up" that disabled gun in the morning,

I walked down the hill, where the General ascended in company with his escort, - I crossed a shallow stream at the bottom of a ravine, and passed upon the other side, to a small, slight elevation, and came into a circular opening in the woods. Here enclosed by rails, a temporary preparation I suppose, were gathered nearly a hundred of rebel dead, They were killed in this vicinity, and undoubtedly were hit by shot and

shell by the evidences of the mutilated condition of the remains.

Arms and legs torn asunder; held to their bodies by a scrap of clothing - Faces in an unrecognizable condition, but with a dread appearance, Some heads entirely gone, Bodies in a bent form or lying on one arm, Some with hands raised as if to ward off the approaching shell, Others crouching or in a sitting position; All dressed in an undressed uniform, of butternut clothing, their pockets turned inside out,

I passed around this enclosure satisfied with the curiosity, I had had, to see the position of the enemy lying here all unconscious, and I stole away; like as a murderer would, who had looked upon his victim the second time and

he was assured in his mind, his man was dead, and he could see him again in cold blood before taking his silent departure,

In retracing my steps and looking upward and toward the top of the hill on which had been located the Battery, during the fight, I saw how easily the Rebels could interpret the certainty of the position of our guns and, silhouetted at every blaze from the discharge of the cannons mouth, made us a sure target, dressed in our red and blue uniforms, And I also saw the true disguise of their position so well hidden from our rapid fire, from which we could not discern, neither dislodge or silence their guns,

Yours

J C Stevens