

Edward Ward, Confederate Officer, 4th Tennessee  
Letter to his sister

Camp near Shelbyville

Jan 12/63

Dear Sister

I have written a great many letters home lately and am in hopes you have received some of them. The last letter I received came direct by a friend and was dated Dec 9th. I have written to you once since the battle of Murfreesboro giving an account of the battle Thanks to a kind providence I am again safe and so is Marshall On Sunday 28th we were ordered to strike tents and pack up every thing in the wagons. We also moved our Qatermaster [sic] and Comissary [sic] stores to the rear, and in fact every thing as though we were going to evacuate On Monday morning early (with three days rations) we marched about a mile from town, and formed in line of battle (our division being the reserve) With the exception of skirmishing along the line nothing occurred worthy of note. We held a good position, and were waiting for the enemy to attack us It was pretty cold sleeping Sunday and Monday night with only one blanket. On Tuesday it was raining pretty much all day and was very disagreeable. Our forces engaged the enemy on the right and drove them back with great slaughter, capturing a great deal of their artillery. We still remained in the line undisturbed except at times by their shells But Wednesday the 31st of Dec it came our time and as usual we played our part well – This day the engagement became general along the whole line About 9. Oclock [sic] our first line charged the enemy. We followed up and were soon in a very hot place We fought them until night driving them through a cedar woods into an open field. We would have followed up his retreat, but he had his artillery in a strong position well supported and it would have cost too much to have driven him from it. We held the battle ground from which we had driven him. Wednesday night and Thursday Friday and Saturday. The enemy could be plainly seen fortifying, and did not fire a shot as we quietly withdrew our forces Sunday at 2. Oclock [sic] for three days. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, we lay flat down on the cold wet ground, under the most terrific shelling I ever saw. Besides it was raining and a groan or scream occasionally would show the mangled corpse of some one who had paid his last sacrafice [sic] to freedom. It was here on Friday that Capt. Francis was wounded a cannon ball having first passed through a tree took off the fleshing part of his foot without injuring the bone. Saturday night I was on pickett [sic] untill [sic] about 2. Oclock [sic] when I was ordered to draw off my picketts [sic]. We then started on the road to Shelbyville (a distance of twenty five miles) Reaching there Sunday evening completely exhausted I fell down and slept all night in a hard rain with no shelter save a blanket. I never would have thought that human man could have suffered the exposure we were subject to. But we are all right again and the yankees [sic] must (If any difference) have suffered more than we did. Well Rose having given you some faint idea of the engagement. I will now give you as accurately as possible the result leaving you to judge whether the yankees [sic] with more than double our numbers gained the victory they are sure to claim. The enemys [sic] loss is about 5000 killed, about 15000 wounded, with a loss of about 7000 prisoners, while, I am confident 5000 will cover our entire loss. I never was in a fight

where there began to be such a disparity [crossed out as in the]-It is reported that eight of their generals were carried dead into Nashville. I am certain we captured three and killed three. We captured 42 pieces of artillery and a great amount of small arms, all of which we sent off on the cars. Our Cavalry did good service in their rear, having captured a great many prisoners and mules and capturing and burning their commissary [sic] and Ordinance trains We hurried [sic] our dead and brought away every thing except our badly wounded. Among those left behind is Capt. Francis. Bart Hills has got a furlough to go after Mrs. Francis. He will escort her beyond our lines. Our company was indeed blessed in not having a single man killed and but two badly wounded. Capt. Francis and Van Ellis I can safely say we got twenty to one. We lost one Brig General killed. Gen Rains of Nashville Gen Hanson of Ky was badly wounded The enemy are at Murfreesboro, and there is no telling how soon we may have another engagement, and when it is ended I only hope I will have the pleasure of recording as great a victory. But, how much rather would I learn that peace had once more crowned our banners, and we could meet again as in the olden time. I fear to think that it may be we shall not all meet again on earth, but trust a kind providence will grant us this boon Christmas day I wrote you a letter, which has not gone yet but will be carried by Dr. Eddings who will see that this too is delivered. I wrote for some things, but I beg you all to do nothing, which will invoke the wrath of your present brutal masters. You never speak of them and that is right, but you know I have a right to call them what every good Southerner thinks. I enclosed in my last a letter to Miss Ettie which please give her and I will also enclose in this note to her, a one to Miss Mollie. Be sure and give my love to [9 words illegible as they are cut off] and tell them all the news I have been able to give Since the fight The first of Jan I commenced reading the bible [sic] through. I commenced the 1st chapter of Genesis – and read two chapters every night, so about dark if you would know what I am thinking off [sic] turn to your bible and read with me. This is 12th and to night [sic] I read 23 and 24 chapters of Genesis Give my love to Misses Mary and Beck Park and Miss Anna Faulkes and tell them I frequently think of them and now goodbye and my love to Rose and tell them [crossed out] her I want her to send that photograph along and you send one of yours to Marshall I would give any thing in the world to see Pa and Ma and you all once more Write as often as you can to your aff [sic] Brother  
Ed