

Freeman S. Dunkler Letters

Co. A 36th Regiment Illinois Volunteers

Murfreesboro Tenn. Jan. 2nd 1863

Dear Parents and Friends

Although my present condition is precarious and my future uncertain [sic] I am happy and truly thankful to the preserving power of God that I am as comfortably situated as I am. Before you receive this you will have heard of the battle of Murfreesboro and doubtly [crossed out] indoubtely [sic] suffering under a terrible suspense. I send this by a friend who preceeds [sic] me a few days, and will write at the next oportunity [sic]. But I will rehears [sic] my experience in the battle. The 30 of Dec. we met the pickets of the enemy and skermished [sic] in the P.M. 2 of our Co. were killed and Chilton wounded not badly. We slept in line of battle that night and our co. were sent out as skermishers [sic] the next morn. and exchanged bullets with the enemie's [sic] skermishers [sic] for ½ an hour, when the enemy appeared in solid rank, we fell back to the regt. who opened a deadly fire which was answered by the enemy. The 24th Wis. on our rite [sic] fled like cowards leaving our regt. to be flanked, yet the 36th stood & foughed [sic] like tigers. I fired 5 or 6 times & had the satisfaction of seeing at least 2 of the enemy fall before my gun when a ball struck my left leg half way above my knee and I left the show, seeking the hospital. While I was retiring the bullets played a perfect tune & one went into the blanket on my back. Soon after I reached the hospital the enemy had possession [sic] of it, and I with many others was taken prisoner. I walked (By the help of a Confederate soldier) to town a distance of 3 ms. [sic] We are quated [sic] in a deserted store, a very comfortable building. They have ishued [sic] rations to us and our sergeons [sic] who are prisoners with the help of some of the Confederate doctors have dressed all our wounds. I had the ball cut out of my leg yesterday morn. and it is getting along finely. We have all have [crossed out] taken the oath of paroll [sic] and shall be sent to Vixberg [sic] as soon as we are able. Now Mother dont [sic] give yourself any uneasiness about me for although I am unable to walk I feel well and contented and as happy as "cupid in the rose" The citizens seem [crossed out] appear friendly and use us well. I know nothing of our co. except that some were wounded, others killed and others taken prisoners among whome [sic] are [crossed out] is our 1st Lieut, [sic] [rest is missing]

[written in left margin] This is brief but so hoping to give more detailed acc's, soon,

I still remain your son F.S.D.

Murfreesboro Tenn. Jan 5th 1863

Dear Parents!

With pleasure I address you hoping this may find you all in health. I have not gone to Vixburg [sic] yet and as things look this morning I shall not go. You find in the envelope [sic] with this a letter of the 2nd but I didnot [sic] send it Vya [sic] Vixberg [sic] and will send it a shorter rout. [sic] The rebels [sic] left this town saturday [sic] night and our forces came in this morning and I will send this at the first opportunity. We have been parolled [sic] and left here to wait the arrival of our forces. I presume we wounded boys will be sent to a northern hospital. We have been very well cared for and have suffered but little. My wound is getting along finely. I can walk a little.

I have not seen any of our Co. but have seen a Sargt. [sic] of the regt. He says the regt. draws rations for 271 men while before the battle number was 650.

Our co numbers 28 and before it was some 75. I have a chance to send this so good bye.

From your son F.S.D

Murfreesboro Jan 8th 1863

Well Charles

I have nothing else to do and will drop you a line. I enclose a copy of the "Constitution of the Confederate States". After you have read it Please let Uncle Daniel and Father see it. I found it in a desk in the old store in which we are quartered. There has been about 150 wounded soldiers in this building but they are removing them and I hope the 36th boys will be removed today. I tell you they say a great deal up north about prisoners in the hands of the secesh being ill used, [sic] but for my part I prefer their care to the treatment we have had since our forses [sic] came to town. But I trust relief is close at hand. The wound is getting along finely, I can walk by the help of a cane. I expect to be sent to Nashville soon, and soon as I get there I will give you my address, but any letters come to the regt, [sic] they will be sent to me for I am acquainted with the P.M. I have had no mail for some time but look for some today. I had but very few particulars of our company understand that out of 60 men that went into the battle 27 came out unhurt, some 5 killed, but none you know. Ed Nute [sic] is unharmed. Milton wounded but not severe. I will write again soon and must close for the present. Good bye. From your brother

F.S. Dunkler

Camp near Nashville, Tenn [sic]

Dec. 14

Dear parents

I recd [sic] yours of the 8th w 4 containing the stamps & envelopes last night. Since I wrote last we have moved camp one mile nearer N-ville & are now camped near a nice little creek in a heavy timber land. Our Brigade is now under the command of Brig. Gen. Sill & Col. Grisel is again with the regt. but I presume his stay will be short as it is report that he has the offer of another Brigade, He says he will not except it unless he can take the 36th with him. We are living close neighbors to the enemy & have strict orders against wandering far from camp. The pickets have an occasional skirmish [sic] and the forage trains find some opposition in gathering forage outside the pickets, but we have had no general engagement. It is the mind of many that we shall have a battle not far from this place as soon as we attempt to go south. We heard cannonading on the pickets [sic] lines the other day and were ordered into rank in great haste and marched out to the scene [sic] of actions but found the enemy gone. They had been shelling the reserve picket but had not the cheek to stand when the whole Brigade appeared against them. A few days ago the quartermaster brought some of the little shelter tents for the regt [sic] but upon opening them they proved to be nothing but common drilling and so small that two men could hardly be accommodated [sic] in one of them. Fearing you will not know what these shelter tents are, I will describe them. A tent consists of two pieces of cloth 6 ft long by 5 wide with the edges buttoned together and supported by stakes driven into the ground, the two outer edges resting on the ground thus forming a roof with the gable ends open. Each tent when in order is sufficient for 2 men and are to serve as knapsacks for the occupants, and in this way the men are not only required to carry their his [crossed out] own clothes but his [crossed out] their tent also. If these tents were rubber they would be of some use but as they are not they would neither protect us from cold nor wet and we plainly told the officers we would [sic] not carry them and would [sic] not give up our old tents, poor as they are, until we are obliged to, and even then we preferred [sic] sleep in the open air to carry tents that would be of no use to use. Gen Sheridan called a board of survey to inspect them and I understand that they are to be returned and we are permitted to have the old ones.

We have had a little winter weather. On the 5th snow fell to the depth [sic] of 3 in, but it disappeared [sic] today it is warm and indicates rain. We are [illegible] to rear of the forward movements of Burnside expect to hear soon that we have entered Richmond. I was at Nashville yesterday business [sic] is progressing [sic] slowly [sic]. Goods, such as soldiers need are very high caused by the difficulty of getting them from the cities on Ohio river. Government has possession [sic] the RR and has hard work to get through the needful supplies for the army without carrying goods for merchants.

[written in the margin] The mans name who stole my shirts is Tom Hornby Co. B 36th Ill.
We are all well Milton has been complaining but is well again. A corporals wages is the
same as a privates & therefore a wagoners would be no [illegible][job?]

[in left margin] This the second letter I have written today and supper is ready so I will
close sending you my best wishes, hoping this will find you all well.

I remain your song

F.S. Dunkler

Direct as before