

## Peter Greggers' Letters

Dear Wife,

The lovely wedding is over and everything seems to be quite [sic], at least I didn't hear any Cannon thunder today, the first day since Christmas since we marched away from Nashville Everyday [sic] we heard the thunder of the artillery in our ears and everyday [sic] the enemy was driven out of their positions Friday did not go by without the loss of life on both sides but thank God for his protection for his hand he held over me and my comrades until now. Difficult to write because I am trying to develop a picture of what happened starting the 24th of December until today. Before these lines reach your hands maybe different rumor has reached you already. On December 24, we got our marching orders and marched 3/4's of a mile and an hour longer to our camp where we stopped and rested. We expected we should be used to give the rebels a few rounds as a Christmas greeting but we had to get back to our old camp. In the Afternoon we got orders for the seconds [sic] time it went like before and we put our small tents up which had been delivered the day before and went to bed in the evening.

On Christmas day the regiment was called I was on guard duty and stayed in the camp so Christmas went by quietly for me. On the 26th of December we left the camp for sure at 9 in the morning we marched towards the enemy. Our division was behind, the front division had to do the fighting. In the evening we camped in an open field and our little tents, which everybody got, helped us a great deal. It rained for days and most often during the night but we put a lot of hay on the wet dirt and our little dog house above helped to find some sleep. All the sick from the camp had been transported to Nashville, and our company was 116 men strong. With a doctor and his wife we marched into the middle the next day and it got pretty cold. Because of the sound of the cannons, we had to wait where we were. we were in the second line on the left wing, next to the center. On that day it was quite tough and miserable. It rained most of the time in the afternoon and the dirt (mud) in the meadows and cornfields was bad. We were able to drive the enemy from his position several miles back and on Monday we marched back for a couple miles and then on a side road to Murfreesborough [sic], where the rebels had their main camp.

On the 30th of December we reached the enemy lines. During the night the regiments had to take turns to get the rifles ready and in the morning of the 31st of December with the sunrise we were surrounded on the right wing by the enemy. Our regiment was on the very end of the right wing and so this was a good opportunity to engage in a fight. This didn't take very long we were about 1/2 a mile away from our brigade. The messenger came and we were ordered to join in at the border. Our commander was

already heavily injured, and three of our people had already been caught by the enemy. The rebels stood in battlefield lines and 3, 4 double rows and marched towards us. Nothing kept them back. The rifle fire was like thunder and the bullets flew hail thick around us when we marched up, and we had to march through a thick rain of bullets before we ended up where parts of our brigade was located. The rebels were in a field ahead of us. We held our position for a while and then we were ordered to retreat. I had fired three shots.

I had just fired three shots when I was injured by a bullet on the left side of my head, but the bullet didn't go further then into the flesh, then disappeared and went further, but it was bleeding heavily, however it did not keep me from participating in the battle all day long. Our wing where the rebels concentrated their power about 45,000 men were in danger of being flanked and surrounded so we retreated about 1 1/2-2 miles. Our right wing was totally destroyed. When we regrouped in battle formation there were only 20 men of our regiment left and our brigade wasn't a regiment anymore we were asked to retreat and when our division went back, another division took over for us in that position. We lost a lot that day, but you will probably find a lot more and more definite information from the papers. Our regiment lost significantly but our company seemed to be one of the lucky ones, since we had no dead soldiers on the field. Our wounded ones are mostly lightly injured, those are Smith and Michael James got a shot thought [sic] the lung. Jacob Brom got a shot through the right upper leg, but its [sic] only a flesh wound, the bones did not get hurt. Hans bane [sic] got a shot in the back, flesh wound, william [sic] wensten [sic] lost his right hand, it was shattered by a piece of a bomb (cannon ball) and schnuck [sic] got captured and released again in Nashville. Peter schnuck [sic], Woodward, and charle [sic] hareld [sic] were captured and were sent to feedbrook. [sic] William landel [sic] and someone named claren [sic] were caught as well, but were saved. Uigan [sic] kuza [sic] wasnt [sic] with us, Peter gruck [sic] and hansvialto [sic] wilsinson [sic] are so far fortunate we got through everything. Yohan Dohan wasn't with us, he was sick and in the morning when we went into battle he went by himself on a different path.

Since then we heard nothing from him so we think that he has probably been caught, because many of us got caught. I cant [sic] report anything about freedrin [sic] Schtoliz, only that we don't know where he is he was in the battle, but since that day we have not seen him again. He came back from the battleground so he is probably captured. We went to the battlefield yesterday, looked at the dead soldiers, but we couldn't find anyone from our company so I'm convinced that none of the two were killed, and as far as yohan [sic] is concerned, yohan [sic] doran [sic], I believe that he was not part of it in the first place, so probably they got captured

This would be a better thing than being dead on the battlefield, those who got captured and then released had been treated nicely by the rebels. I went to Claus Boscholm, Fritze Folster, Claus Mumm, Heinz Stanze, and Klinke. Fritz Von Lester and Charley Struve all were lucky and got through this, only Siem Bielfeld got shot twice through the left arm, but if im [sic] not mistaken, its [sic] just a flesh wound. He also got caught. Everybody sends best greetings to friends, to relatives, to acquaintances and let them know that they got through this Jakob Brahm will probably be better in a month, the wound is not dangerous.

We are now 4 miles south of murfreesburo [sic], Sunday the rebels left the place and our army was a part of the 8th division are following them. I think we were be here a couple days to gather ourselves, now our company is 20 men strong, our regiment, 160. We went into battle with 350 men. Many are still gone and will hopefully show up again. Our division looks quite miserable and our artillery was lost. Until the third we battled with the troops of the rebels and the second, the rebels had a heavy loss. Not much more how we celebrated Christmas and new years. [missing text] It was a huge battle.

We are thankful that God held his hands over us. It was quite a new years [sic] shooting. The most intense I've every [sic] experienced since it wasn't individual shots, it was like continuous thunder. Greetings to all friends and family. From your husband,

P. Greggers  
79th reg Ill volenteers [sic]  
Comp. B. Tenn