

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On the Steamer Leni Leoti
Jan 3d 1865

Dear Parents.

We have just embarked, & are on our way up the Tennessee River. I cannot understand our strange movements, they seem to be clouded in mystery. We had an idea what we were after, when leaving Nashville, & until arriving at Pulaski; but from that place to the River, we know no more than so many Hogs. The report now is, that our destination will be East Port on the Tennessee River, in Mississippi State. But what we are to do after getting there is not known among us Privates. I guess it is as much as a bargain if our Generals know. General Thomas in my opinion is not the man he is cracked up to be. He may know how to fight a Battle, but seems to be at a loss how to follow up a Victory. We were about twelve days going from Nashville to Pulaski, a distance of 80 miles. Now this is no way of following up a whiped & demoralized Army. If he had issued 5 days Rations to the men & left his imense train behind, Hood never would have crossed the Tenn - I will bet if old A. J. Smith, if he had 30,000 men he would have captured the whole of Hoods Army. It is true, it was one of the greatest Victories of the war, but it might have been greater. I may be wrong in my estimation of the man, so you had better keep this to yourselves. I believe his Train amounted to 4000 Wagons. As soon as I saw this I thought it will never do it is too much on the Banks order. The present rumor is that Hood has fortified at Corinth but I do not believe this, he is out of all harms reach by this time. He knows too well that he dare not stop so far North. Besides he must be short of Rations, & I know he has not enough Artillery to do much good. Smith now has full controle of his men, for we have been by ourselves since we left Pulaski. We struck the River at a place called Cliffton it is not on the Map, but can tell you where it is. About 30 miles North of Savannah. I think after leaving the Boats we will have 4 or 5 days rest, at least until the rest of our Corps comes up. The Boats cannot take more than two Brigades at once. We are .among the first to go. Tomorrow will be Grandfathers Birthday & I will try to write a letter in German for him if I have time to congratulate him.

How did you spend New Years Day & Christmas? I wish I could have been there to join in the fun. We had a bard march, through the cold & rain.

I will now close with a wish for a happy New Year to you all. I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

Dolph

Please write soon & tell Fritz to do the same.

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117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Notes: Corporal Wolf's criticism of how General Hood troops were pursued may be legitimate, but it has also been said that the forces of Union Gen. George H. Thomas were plagued by weariness and swollen streams.¹

On December 27, 1864, Confederate Gen. Hood's forces completed crossing the Tennessee River and headed toward Tupelo, Mississippi approximately fifty miles South of the State of Tennessee.² On January 13, 1865 Gen. Hood asked to be relieved of the Army of Tennessee, and on January 23, 1865 was so relieved.³ The Army of Tennessee by that time had been reduced to about 17,7000 men. The main force of this Army was sent East to try to halt Union Gen. William T. Sherman, but due to desertion and other causes only about 5,000 of them arrived there.⁴

Corporal Wolf's use of the phrase "on the Banks order" is a reference to the unfortunate Red River Campaign in which Corporal Wolf had participated under the the command of Union Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks.

Savannah, Tennessee is approximately fifteen miles North of the Mississippi State line.

When Corporal Wolf says that Confederate Gen. Hood's army was "whipped and demoralized" he was certainly right about the whipped part at least. As Hood's troops retreated South, some of them were singing to the tune of "The Yellow Rose of Texas",

"But the gallant Hood of Texas
Played hell in Tennessee."⁵

¹ Long and Long, 614.

² Ibid., 616.

³ Yoseloff, Volume IV, 437..

⁴ Long and Long, 628.

⁵ Bruce Catton, "The Confederate Legend," The Confederacy record album (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, n.d.), record program notes 16.

LETTERS OF CORPORAL ADOLPHUS PHILLIP WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Eastport Miss Jan 10th 1865

Dear Mother

Once more I have the opportunity, to write a few lines so as to set you at ease on our account. These lines leave us in the full enjoyment of good health, and I hope they may find you enjoying the same blessing. It sometimes is the greatest wonder to me how men can keep their health, & suffer as much as we do, laying out in the cold & rain. Often since leaving Nashville, we have come into Camp without a dry stitch of Clothing, & then sleep all night with our wet garments, in the mud shoemouth deep. But this can hardly be considered the worst. The weather in this Godforsaken country, changes so suddenly, from rain to frost. Sometimes in one night we have rain, Snow & five or six degrees below freezing point. Persons not accustomed to outdoor life would naturally suppose, that this exposure would kill any common man, & it must surprise you to hear, that there are but few sick in this Command. There seems to be a kind of providence guarding the health of our Soldiers. Pray that it may keep guard over your two Sons, while they are engaged in this awful struggle, as it has heretofore. I think that Otto & I have had better health since we have been on the Campaign, than while laying in Camp at Memphis, I do not know of one day that I have been really sick except some slight colds in the last twelve Months. It is the same with Otto. The 16th Corps has at last got a camp at this place, & to judge from appearances are likely to remain in Camp some time. We have been busily engaged, since our arrival here in building winter quarters & Entrenchments. As I told you in my last letter, I do not know what to think of our movement. It is the greatest mystery to me & one which I will not be able to solve, with my limited knowledge of the Rebel, as well as the movements of our other troops, besides those of Gen., Thomas. I have not read a paper since we left Nashville, therefore am ignorant of any news be they good or bad. I could do without Newspaper News well enough but to be without news from home goes against the grain, as they say in the Army. If I could only get one or two letters per week, it would be a great satisfaction to me, & make the time pass off twice as smooth. You at home might change about in writing for there are so many that can write, so we would get a great many more letters, without exertion on your part. For instance there is Fritz Theo Tilly could write once a week, then between times you & Father might fill up the blank, I am sorry to say that I have to thank my Brothers & Sister for but few letters, since my enlistment. Fritz used to be the most punctual, in answering letters, but of late I have not had the pleasure, to acknowledge the reception of a single line. I hope he will make up for lost time as soon as most of his outdoor labors are over.

I have but little of importance to communicate today. We arrived here last Saturday the 7th inst. Nothing worthy of note happened on our Journey hither. There is something I came near forgetting, & which will no doubt interest & amuse you; They have got Otto out in the Trenches at work! I suppose you can come as near guessing the amount of work they will get out of him. My turn will come tomorrow, if nothing happens. Ever since we have been here I have been angry with myself. I will tell you why. The last day of the Battle of Nashville, I had a chance to capture a Rebel flag, by going up a hill in front of our Regt & bringing down a prisoner who showed us a white flag. I was the first

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to see him, but was so near tired out, that I told one of the boys standing by, to go & get him, & he did so. This prisoner proved to be a color bearer of a Battery, & the flag with him & gave it up to his captor. Now the worst of it is, from a late order from Gen Thomas all Flags captured in the late Battles are to be sent to Washington with their captors, to receive from the President & Sect of War, their praise & such gifts as they see fit. This man from our Regt started back last Saturday, & I understand he is to get a 60 day Furlough. Now may I not box my own ears? I think I would be justifiable in doing so. Instead of having a sixty day Furlough I am here living on half Rations, it is too bad but serves me right. Speaking of half Rations, puts me in mind, that if such a thing were possible, & you would send us something to eat it would be quite acceptable. Something substantial. Such as Meat dried fruit prepared Mustard & such like as you see fit to send. I think it could be done by Express. It matters not what the cost will be, so we could get it. I think we will stay here long enough if you would do it right away, or as soon as you can. It would be invaluable to us. Send a good size Box if any, so that it will pay. I must now close for it is getting supper time, & am too cold to write much more at present. Please write soon. Give my love to all at home but keep a good share for yourself. I remain as ever,

Your Affectionate Son,

Adolph

P. S. Yesterday evening while sitting around the Campfire, all rather on the hungry order, we were speaking of good things to eat; first one would wish himself something then another. My wish was, to have what was left on the table after you were through eating. Now if you can remember what it was, I wish you would tell me in your next letter. Dont tell Copperheads we have not to eat.

Note: Eastport, Mississippi is on the Tennessee River in Northeastern Mississippi.

eating. Now if you can remember what it was, I wish you would tell me in your next letter. Dont tell Copperheads we have not enough to eat.

Note: Eastport, Mississippi is on the Tennessee River in Northeastern Mississippi.

* * *

Eastport Miss
January 19th 1865

Dear Parents:

We received your & Fritz's letters on the 15th & we were happy to hear that you were well. I would have answered your Letters before this, but was too busy building our Shanties for winter quarters, to do much else. You know how unpleasant it is to live outdoors, therefore I am not at all uneasy, about my delay, for I know you will excuse it, when you hear the cause. Our houses are about all finished. I suppose you would like to know what kind of houses we have, been putting up. I have no doubt, but what you would laugh to see them; as you may imagine they have not a very fine outward appearance, much less polished on the inside. But when we have a fire in the fireplace, they feel comfortable & warm. They are built of logs about 5 or 6 feet high (something of the Hog pen style, with a small hole to slip in & out) the spaces between the logs, are well filled with mud, (the floor inside of the house also) then our Tents stretched over the top for a Roof. These kind of Houses are not quite as comfortable as the one you live in but will answer for a Substitute,

until we can find better, & I hope that the day may not be far distant, when we can live in respectable Houses in the place of Hogpens. The one that I stay in is a little better than most of the others, it is larger & but two stay in it, the Captain & I. For the past few days, we have been Bunkmates. Our Camp is very pleasantly situated, (if it were summertime) on a high Ridge, about a hundred & fifty feet above the River, & about three quarters of a mile from the same. I am well satisfied with our Camp ground & would be willing to remain here six Month, if the Government could find it convenient to let us alone for that space of time. Judging from appearances, we are likely to remain a month or two longer. I also wish it would be convenient for the Government or its Commissaries to furnish us with full Rations; so far we have had but Field Rations, which consist of Hard Tack Coffee Sugar & one third Ration of Meat. Have you received my last letter requesting you to send us something to eat? I have found out that it can be sent by Adams Express Company. I am exceedingly sorry that we have caused you any uneasiness, but it was not our fault that you did not receive the letters sooner. I can assure you that not a single opportunity was let pass without either Otto or myself sending a letter or two. I think you will get all at one time, when they come. Rest assured that, after every Skirmish or Battle, we will let you know the result as soon as possible.

Jan 22d. I was prevented from finishing my letter on the 19th. Therefore rather than throw it away, will try to fill the few remaining lines today. Captain Blake left this place this Morning, for Madison County, on a 20 day Leave of Absence, in company with Lieut Kerr, who also has a short Leave of Absence. Captain Blake promised to pay a visit to you if he should happen to come in that neighborhood. I

requested him to do so, so that you could ask many questions, about our mode of living, which otherwise could not be so well explained. Of late we have had various peace rumors in Camp, some have even gone so far as to risk large sums of Money on the strength of it. I for my part am little inclined, to place much confidence in them. It is too good to be true. But why should we doubt its possibility, after the many Victories that have been achieved within the last year, is a question that I have asked myself over & over again. When I think of Hoods unsuccessful Raid into Tennessee, I become more & more convinced that it was planned by Jefferson Davis, to dishearten his Southern Brethern, & enable him to more successfully agitate the question of Peace, without running his own neck in the Halter. I cannot believe that Jeff Davis is so blind, as not to see that his cause is a hopeless one, & wishes to throw off the Yolk, which must most naturally press heavily upon his overburdened shoulders. But enough of this, for time must soon develop what now remains in darkness. Please give me your opinion on this subject in your next. I will now close for my paper is full. Give my love to all at home.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

A. P. Wolf

Notes: The type of house or shanty that Corporal Wolf describes was quite commonly erected by soldiers to use as winter quarters. 170

It seems rather strange that Corporal Wolf was staying in a house with his Captain, since normally officers and enlisted men did not live together. Since Corporal Wolf seems to have been a Company Clerk, it is possible that the house in question was being used as Company headquarters.

The peace rumors were not entirely false. In early January, 1865, Francis P. Blair, a founder of the Republican Party, had gone to the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia and talked to Confederate President Jefferson Davis regarding possible peace. On February 3, 1865, President Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward met with three representatives of the Confederate government at Hampton

Roads, Virginia to discuss peace. President Lincoln insisted that the Confederacy had to come back into the Union and had to abolish slavery, and the Southern peace commissioners could not agree to this, so the Conference failed. 171, 172, 173.

(American Heritage Picture History, p. 564; Blair; Catton Never Call Retreat p. 419-423)

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Eastport Miss
Feb 3d 1865

Dear Brother Fritz:

I hope my long silence has not created any ill feeling toward me, your absent Brother. If it has, I beg a thousand Pardons, which I know will be granted, for you are too good natured, to bear malice against anyone; much less your Brother. It is a difficult task to write long letters, when you have so little to write about. Camp life is always a monotonous one and more so, in an out of the way place like this. If it were not for Picket and Fatigue duty, men would go wild with impatience. I am excused from all such duties, but have others, not quite so exciting. All my outdoor labor, amounts to a little Cooking and cut enough wood for my own comfort. This is very little for an industrious man like me, but too much for a lazy one. Well Fritz, I am glad that you enjoyed the Hollidays so pleasantly. It gave me as much pleasure to learn that you were all well and enjoying yourselves, as if I were there to partake of the amusements. I am very well satisfied with my lot when I know that all at home, are in the full enjoyment of good health. I very often feel uneasy and wish myself at home after waiting a long time for a letter, with the greatest expectations, then be disappointed when the Mail comes, with the doleful words; nothing for you. You must not think it strange, if I sometimes get impatient, and sometime lose

all patriotism, when these spells come on. But then when the kind missive comes, how quick all these gloomy thoughts disappear, and pleasant ones fill their place, is quite amusing to behold. This does not only apply to myself, but any in the Company. For two or three days, after the arrival of letters, there is little else to be talked about, but the news received therein. All other subjects seem of too little importance to be brought up for discussion. I hope the good old time will soon come again when there will not be any use for letter writing, when we can express our thoughts verbally, in the place of committing them to paper first, then send them thousands of miles, not knowing when they will be received, if ever. As you said in your last letter, you see the dark clouds, that have been hovering around the destinies of this Nation clearing gradually away. I have noticed the same for the last eight or ten Months. If all other troops have been as successful as those under Sherman and Thomas, there is little doubt but what this Rebellion will be crushed within the next Six Months by Military power. If I mistake not, we will soon hear of more great victories from Sherman; perhaps the fall of Charleston. I have such confidence in Gen Sherman, that I believe he can go where he chooses, through the whole South. Besides Rebel papers acknowledge, that they cannot concentrate a sufficient force to oppose the march of either Sherman or Thomas. But as things appear at present in this Department, there can be but little expected from Thomas. His splendid Army, has been scattered too much of late. The 23d Corps has been sent East and Gen Smiths Corps is leaving as fast as Transportation can be furnished them. The 1st and 2d Division have already left, and we expect to go tomorrow or day after. The supposition is, that we are going to New Orleans. I do not mind the

change so much, although we are comfortably fixed for winter now. This is too far out of the way from all communication to suit me. Our Commissaries are rather deficient in the Grub line, for nearly two weeks we lived on Corn and dried Beef. For fear that you might be mistaken in the kind of dried Beef I am speaking of I will try to enlighten you a little on the subject of dried Beef. This is Beef dried on the Hoof. In the first place the contractors buy it away up North and ship it to St. Louis per Steamer without water or food, then it is sent to Memphis in the same way without food, from there to Nashville without water or food, then the Cumberland to the Ohio, then up the Tennessee to Eastport without food. When it gets here it will be nice and dry. Then a detail is made to carry the Cattle off the boats, to kill those that are not already dead. I will now stop this description, for you must certainly know the whole process of drying Beef on the Hoof. If not write to me about it, and I will give you a more minute description. We have been having considerable peace rumors in Camp of late, but I fear that they will not amount to much.

When you write again direct to Memphis or in the field for we will be passing that place befor long (that is Memphis).

I will now close this uninteresting letter with my kindest wishes for your well fare. Give my love to all at home and inquiring friends. I remain as ever Your Affectionate Brother.

Dolph

Notes: At the time that Corporal Wolf wrote his letter, Charleston, South Carolina had not yet fallen, but it was occupied by Union troops on February 18, 1865. ¹⁷³⁴ (Long, p. 639)

The 23rd Corps was sent to the vicinity of Wilmington, North Carolina to set up a base of supplies for Union Gen. Sherman's forces advancing North from Savannah, Georgia. ¹⁷⁰⁵ (Boatner, p. 200)

The water route for the "dried beef" was South on the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri to Memphis, Tennessee. It would seem that

it would have had to go at least part of the way by rail from Memphis to Nashville, Tennessee unless it went back up the Mississippi to the Ohio and then East. Then Northwest on the Cumberland River from Nashville to the Ohio River, West on the Ohio River a relatively short distance and then South on the Tennessee River all the way across the State of Tennessee to Eastport, Mississippi. This seems a very round-about way to go, unless beef was being dropped off at various points along the way. ~~It~~

* * *

Please send a few
Postage Stamps in
your next

On Steamer Des Moines
Cairo Ills. February 10th 1865

Dear Parents:

Once more in sight of Ills soil. I wish I might never lose sight of it again; if this were our homeward bound trip, I doubt my ever leaving the good old State again, unless for a short time. But as it is God only knows where we will be in ten days from this. We do not know our destination, but the general supposition is, that we are bound for New Orleans in the first place. Where we go from there is uncertain; some think to Mobile Alabama some Galveston Texas, I think the former the most likely. The weather has been rather cold so far, which made it disagreeable for Deck passengers, the weather has moderated considerable today, which promises us more pleasure the rest of the way, such pleasure as can be had on deck of a Steam Boat. If there are any in this Corps, that are lovers of variety, they can get their fill, as long as A.J. Smith keeps Command. But rather than have him removed, I would keep on the tramp until our time will be out. The farewell all that belongs to a Soldiers life.

Do all in your power to prevent Fritzes enlisting, if he ever should take such a foolish notion, not that I call a man foolish, for showing his patriotism in that way, but when two out of one family

have already joined the Ranks, the third should remain at home. Besides there are a great many men in the Country, who would not be missed as much, and could go with much less sacrifice to themselves and theirs. I understand that Frank Springer has raised another Company, I am glad to hear it, and wish him much success, he is a good officer and is deserving and capable of filling almost any office within the gift of the Government. If ever I should enlist again, (which I doubt very much at present) he would be the very man that I would go with. If Frank would have gone into the service at the commencement of the Rebellion, I doubt not but he would now hold a high Commission in the Army. Give him my best Respects and tell him I should be very happy to meet him and his Company somewhere in Dixey.

I must bring this letter to a more speedy close, than was my intention at first, because it is getting too dark to write. Please write soon, for it has been over a Month since I heard from you, therefore am getting uneasy. The last letter was dated 1st of January. Give my love to all at home, but accept a good share for yourselves.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

Adolph

P.S. I guess you had better direct to Memphis, then we will be the most apt to get the letters.

* * *

Camp near New Orleans La
February 18th 1865

Dear Parents:

Your letter of the 2d has come to hand, and was very glad to learn

that you were all enjoying good health. We received your letter while at Cairo; what a change since then, in distance, of over one thousand miles and the difference of Temperature is equally great. While at Cairo it was nearly impossible to go without Over Coats, and here it is warm enough to wear Linnen clothing. I like this part of the Country very well, with one exception, and that is, the land is too flat, and low. The low part of the Mississippi River is undoubtedly the most beautiful as well as valuable of the Miss Valley. It is one continued Sugar Plantation, from the Mouth of Red River down. We are Camped eight miles below the City, on a fine Plantation, near the river, between two rows of stately Live Oaks, with long grey moss that nearly sweeps the ground it is decidedly the pleasantest Camp ground that our Regiment has ever had. We are now in the land of Oranges and Oysters, but I fear that we will not derive much benefit thereof, for the men as a general thing have not the wherewithal, to purchase them with. But our stay in this land of Paradise, will be short, for as soon as the rest of Smiths Command comes down we will be likely to shove out, for Mobile or some other Sea Port. There have already, near 20000 troops left this Port, supposed for Mobile or to cooperate with Sherman, perhaps in due time to help Gen Grant Bag Lee & Co, for it is my opinion that that will be the winding up of this Rebellion. Be not surprised if you should hear from me, from Mobile, Pensacola Savannah, Charleston, Willmington, or in rear of Richmond, all within a short space of time. It may seem nearly impossible for us to go the rounds in seven months, but for the 16th Corps, all is possible.

Our Regiment was fortunate by getting a Boat that could not wait for the Fleet, but had permission to come down as fast as it wanted to and unload its freight, that accounts for our being here before the

rest. I saw Otto at Cairo, he is still on Detached Service as Clerk in the Quarter Master Dept. I am glad he has the place, it gives him more to do, besides he has a chance of learning something.

I cannot account for those letters that were written from the time we left Nashville until we reached Cairo, I thought that for once you would be well satisfied with the number of letters written. I think I wrote two per week and Otto wrote a great many. I had about 35 Postage Stamp when we started & now I have 5 so you see that I am not telling stories. I am very sorry that you did not receive them for I wish much rather you had.

I will now close this uninteresting Letter, for there are no news in this part of the country. Give my love to all at home, but keep a good share for yourselves.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

Adolph

Please send some Postage Stamps

* * *

Fort Gaines Dauphines Island
March 11th 1865

Dear Dear parents:

You will hardly be astonished to hear from me at this place, after reading my letter Dated at New Orleans wherein I gave you a full program of our line of March. So far it has been fulfilled to the letter. We are now within Twenty five Miles of Mobile, and while I write I can hear the ominous thunder of Artillery, a sure sign of what is going on in the vicinity of the beleaguered City. I could

not say for certain which of our forces are engaged at the present time, for there is a possibility, that Thomas has come up in the rear. But I think it is most likely with our Gunboats. Rest assured, there will be some important news from this point before long although the 16th Corps may not be engaged in the struggle, therefore not be allowed to share the glory of the victory. I say Victory, for I am confident that this Army will come out victorious, unless some serious mismanagement takes place among our Generals. So far I have great confidence in Gen Canby, and think he will conduct this Campaign, with honor to himself and those under his control. I like his appearance very well. I should judge him to be about 55 years of age, and looks something like Judge Gillespie, perhaps not quite so pleasant, this may be because he has a great deal upon his mind at the present time. But still he may be defeated with the best of Military Genius, and troops, if the subordinate Generals do not carry out his orders to the letter. B Besides this Department is noted for having poor Gens. There remains one consolation for us (that is the 16th Corps) as long as we can keep Pappy Smith, that we have one, who can be depended on. I think Smith and Sherman the two best Gens. in the Army. I wish Smith had command of this expedition, then I would be still more confident of success, and he would get all honor due him.

Well now a little about this place and our trip hither. In the first place we left New Orleans on the 7th on an Ocean Steamer and arrived here on the morning of the 8th. We had considerable of a storm while out on the Sea, which made almost all the boys Sea sick. I never was so sick in my life. I felt awful, but could not ease myself in the least, the whole Iland kept swinging for two days after I got off the boat. I thought that we were out of the world while at

Eastport, but I have found out since that there are worse places than that. I would believe if such a thing were possible, that this place is entirely out of the knowledge of God. It is one Sand heap surrounded by water. The only living things that can be seen are Sand Crabs, Sea Crabs, Grey Backs, Oysters and Yankees, the two latter the most numerous, in fact I have had Oysters every day since we landed, some we caught ourselves, and some we bought.

I wish Otto were with us so he could get his fill of Oyster. You perhaps know that he had to stay with the Brigade Quarter Master at New Orleans to help him settle his Business. He promised to write the day I left, to answer your last letter which I hope he has done.

There was no need dear Father, for any excuse about that Box of provisions, for I know too well that you would not have delayed one moment could you have known our desperate dilemma in the Grub line. But alls well that ends well and so it was in our case. We are now in a Department where they feed better than in any other.

I must now close this uninteresting letter. Give my love to all at home but keep a good share for yourselves.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

Dolph

Write soon and tell Fritz Theodore and Mathilda to do the same.

Our Brigade has been changed to the Second Brig so please direct it that way.

Notes: On August 5, 1864 in the Battle of Mobile Bay the Union Navy successfully closed the city of Mobile as a Confederate port. Fort Gaines was situated on Dauphin Island (proper spelling) which helped to guard the water approaches to Mobile Bay. ^{176 (Long, p. 551-552)} On August 8, 1864 Fort Gaines surrendered to Union land forces on Dauphin Island. ^{177 (Long, p. 553)} Fort Morgan, the last major Confederate post at the entrance to Mobile Bay, fell to Federal troops on August 23, 1864, but Confederates still held the city of Mobile itself. ^{178 (Long, p. 559)} Union General Edward R. S. Canby, born 1817, was graduated from

the U. S. Military Academy in 1839 and served in the Mexican War, in garrison and on the frontier before the Civil War.¹⁷⁹ (Long)

Union General William T. Sherman, born 1820, was graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in 1840, was stationed in California during the Mexican War, resigned from the Army in 1853 to become a banker and later the superintendent of a military school in Louisiana before he volunteered for Federal service in 1861. Sherman and Union General U. S. Grant worked well together, and some historians feel that Sherman was the top Federal commander of the war.¹⁸⁰ (Boatner, p. 750-751)

"Grey backs" or "gray backs" were Confederate soldiers, undoubtedly so called by Union soldiers because of the gray uniforms which the Confederates wore when dressed in regulation fashion.^{181, 182} (Facts, p. 71; Lord, Civil War, p. 281)

"Yankees" was the Confederate appellation for Union soldiers.¹⁸³

(American Heritage Dictionary, p. 1482)

* * *

CEASED

The Rebel works, creating quite a confusion among them. The firing has gradually ceased for the night. Our killed and wounded up to this time amounts to 130.

2. P.M.

March 29th

The firing at the Fort has been heavier today than heretofore.

Our gunboats cannot do much on account of our men, they are so close to the Rebel works, as to endanger them of being killed by our own shot, they are so close that the enemies cannon cannot be brought to bear on them. 4. P.M. Firing has now ceased all together. As yet we know nothing definite of today's work. I must close this without giving you any satisfactory information, about our 3 days fighting, for the Mail will leave in a few minutes & I do not wish to miss the precious opportunity of informing you of our present safety. Give my best love to all at home, but remember to keep a good share for yourself.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son

Dolph

P.S. Please excuse this piecemeal way of writing

Notes: The first page of this letter appears to be missing.

On March 25, 1864 Federal troops neared Spanish Fort and the fortifications of Mobile, Alabama on the East side of Mobile Bay, and there was skirmishing for several days as these troops converged on the Confederate defense lines.¹⁸⁴ (Long, p. 657-659)

* * *

In Camp Near Fort Spanish
March 30th 1865

To the dear ones at home.

I will try to take up my Diary where I left off on the 29th. The fort still holds out, and replies with more vigor than ever. It is rumored that they received reinforcements today. Every thing goes to show, that the Rebels intend to make a stand, and hold the fort at all hazards. If we succeed in capturing that fort then Mobile will fall with very little resistance. How soon this will be accomplished, is impossible to say with certainty. Today I took a bird's eye view of Mobile. I accomplished this while on Picket, by Climbing to the top of a Pine tree, on a high hill, at once gratifying my curiosity of seeing the place.

March 31st

Today we were all engaged in a new and novel employment. Our whole Division turned out to make Baskets to be used as Gabions, on our new fortifications. It looked rather funny to see several thousand men scattered through the woods making baskets, and you will hardly be surprised if I tell you that many an odd shaped concern was brought into Camp to pass for a basket. These baskets are used for portholes, where our cannon are planted, to prevent the breast works from caving

in, while our Artillery is at work, the soil ^E being sandy, makes them invaluable. Our Siege pieces are mounted as fast as possible, by tomorrow morning they expect to have 80 pieces ready for use, all within short range. I expect to hear some awful cannonading in a short time. Three shots from one of our Batteries knocked down the Rebel Wharf and sunk it.

April 1st

Perhaps April Fools Day has something to do with the various rumors afloat. General Steel is reported to have taken Blakely yesterday evening which, if true, would give us a decided advantage. Another rumor, that Canby has stoped all communications from this Army. This is too bad, and I have been in a stew ever since I heard of it; for I know how uneasy you would feel, without a letter from us for sixty days, that is the length of time it was to be stoped. Well, we must do the best we can, and submit to orders. We are entirely destitute of all news, except what is going on in our immediate front. If you should see anything of interest in the papers, I wish you would let us know in your next. Fritz, you might take the task of writing Newspaper News. I understand our men are trying to undermine the Rebel works, and if successful blow it up. The same Regiment that blew up Fort Hill at Vicksburg, has undertaken this job. I think it is the 14th Wis. We have the most pleasant weather here, that a person could wish for. I am now sitting under a shady Pine, without coat or shoes with my Portfolio on my knees for desk to write on. My quiet retreat is on a hillside about 100 yards from Camp near a nice spring of water, that furnishes enough water for the whole Regt. The nights are so cold in this country, that I have not slept warm since we come

here, for all Otto and I have One woolen blanket and two Rubbers. I think this Campaign will last us until our time of service expires. I can now see why Gen Grant has been laying before Richmond so long here we are 12 miles from Mobile and have been 10 days coming here, and God knows how long we will remain. I fear old Canby is a slow go. Please send Uncle Karl's address, I want to write to him some of these days, not that I think him or Aunt will care much to hear from me but I owe him a letter, I have already written to him once since my sojourn in the Army for which I have never received an answer.

April 2d

We are still in Camp, near the old place. Quiet seems to be the order at the Fort, there has been but little firing today. It must be because it is Sunday. Two hours passed today without firing a cannon, the longest interval since we have been here. Since I commenced the above we have made a reconnaissance between our, and General Steel's forces, resulting in the explosion of two torpedoes, killing one horse and wounding several others. Our Lt Col come near being killed by one of them, the shock was so great, that he felt very ill from the effect.

We have orders at present to be ready to move at a moments warning. So there is no knowing when we will be ordered to leave our present Camp or where to.

I will now close this letter and Mail it if the opportunity offers itself.

Give my love to all inquiring friends

I remain Yours most Affectionately

Adolphus

Notes: Gabions were cylindrical baskets with no top or bottom about three feet high and two feet in diameter which could be filled with earth and stones. They were used as a form of bracing for the sides of trenches and gun emplacements. Sandbags, which were also used in the Civil War, are now most commonly used.^{185, 186, 187}

Union General Frederick Steele (proper spelling) was in command of troops which moved on Mobile from Pensacola, Florida. The rumor which Corporal Wolf mentions was false; Fort Blakely, also defending Mobile, was not taken by Gen. Steele until April 9, 1865.¹⁸⁸

Corporal Wolf refers to a regiment which blew up Fort Hill at Vicksburg saying that he thinks it the 14th Wisconsin. The Fort in question was probably the Third Louisiana Redan, and it was blown up by various men from the 17th Army Corps chosen for their knowledge of coal mining and under the immediate command of Lt. Russell of the 7th Missouri and Sgt. Morris of the 32d Ohio.¹⁸⁹ (*Battles and Leaders*, V. 3 p. 539)

The reference to Union Gen. U. S. Grant "laying before Richmond so long" is a reference to the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, then the key to Richmond, which commenced on June 18, 1864 and so had been going on over nine months at the time that Corporal Wolf wrote.¹⁹⁰

The "torpedoes" referred to are what would be called land mines or anti-personnel mines today. They usually consisted of artillery shells buried in the ground so that they would be exploded on contact. The use of these land mines was probably originated by Confederate Gen. G. J. Rains in 1862. Confederate Gen. James Longstreet felt that it was not "a proper or effective method of war," and the Confederate Secretary of War, G. W. Randolph, agreed with him. Mines were not much used after 1862 until the closing months of the war. They were used by Union troops occasionally but more often by the Confederates who were more apt to be on the defensive.¹⁹¹ (*Long*, p. 524-525) (*Lord, Civil War*, p. 171-172)

¹⁸⁵ = *Boatner*, p. 320, 693

¹⁸⁶ = *American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 536

¹⁸⁷ = *Coggins*, p. 102

¹⁸⁸ = *Battles and Leaders*,* V. 4 p. 411 *

Camp 117th Illinois
April 6th 1865

My Dear Dear Parents

Your letter dear Mother of the 15" M reached us day before yesterday, & we were very glad to hear, that you were all well. I must beg pardon for any hasty remarks that I have made regarding the number of your letters, that we wished to receive from you; I hope you will excuse my anxiety for it was from no other motive to hear from you, perhaps oftener than convenience allowed. I will also explain why I did not get the letters sooner of which you speak. Otto

was at New Orleans at the time, those letters arrived, and stopped all directed to me for he was as impatient as myself to get new from you. As I remarked in one of my former letter, that we have of late been well supplied with letters, I must now acknowledge again, and thank you with all my heart for them, at the same time promise never to appear rough, in my letters hereafter.

I will now give you a short description of our doings, here in this Pine forest. I do not exactly know where I left off, but will go it at a venture. We broke up Camp on the 3d and marched to this place, distance about 5 miles, to make a juncture with Gen Steel's forces on our right. Our line is now complete and I should judge about 12 miles in length with good fortifications throughout the entire line. We have extended our Rifle Pits to within 300 yards of the Rebels main works, and expect to work up under their guns, as soon as possible. It is the object of the comdg Generals to get close enough, so as to effectually silence the Rebel Cannon, by our sharpshooters. Their cannon have done but little harm so far, but we consider the noise they make a nuisance so what's the use of being annoyed by them. So far the loss in our Division does not exceed two killed and eight wounded, and some of these through carelessness of their own. Many laughable instances occur, on the Picket line; for instance, when a cannonball comes close over the reserve post, the way the Boys hunt their holes is a caution, sometimes when in a hurry, they go in head foremost like a frog into the water. Every man or two, dig Bombproofs, large enough to protect them from shot & shell. When the men are busy in the Pits digging, one in every squad acts as lookout, and when he sees the smoke rise from the Portholes, he sings out, to your holes, here she comes; you better believe they do not

wait to be told twice, for it does not take long until you can hear the old shrieker comes, for it's not more than 700 yards.

April 8th at 4 O'clock this morning I was relieved from Picket, after 24 hours duty. I believe I have never laughed so much, in that length of time since my enlistment. I sometimes could not help laughing, if it cost my life. The most risable scene occurred while going from the Reserve to the Picket line last night, to relieve the old pickets. In going we had to cross an open field for about 200 yards, and to see a long string of men crawling on all fours is enough to make the most sober laugh. It is surprising to see how flat men can lay on the ground, when a Minnie Ball comes whistling over. I crawled about half the distance, then got up and walked the rest. About one this morning the Rebels made a charge on our Picket line, trying to take us prisoners, but the way they were met by our men, proved clearly that they misjudged our metal. At some parts of the line they came within 20 yards of the works. Our Regt lost one man killed, yesterday; the Bullet passed through his lungs. He was the only man hurt in our Regt.

April 9th Fort Spanish fell yesterday evening, at eleven P.M. I do not know how many were captured. The Rebels evacuated before our forces took possession. They spiked their guns before leaving.

I must now close this letter, for the Mail goes out in a few minutes. Give my love to all at home, and I will remain as ever
Your Affectionate Son Adolph

Please write soon for we wish to hear from you as often as possible

Notes: Sharpshooters were expert marksmen, and to "silence the

Rebel Cannon" they would probably have had to fire at the cannoneers.¹⁹²

The "holes" of the pickets were rifle pits, equivalent to the modern day fox hole, and a protection from rifle and artillery fire.¹⁹³

"Bombproofs" were shelters dug into the side of a hill or heavily covered with sandbags or earth to protect men from artillery fire.¹⁹⁴

Corporal Wolf says that the soldiers could be forewarned about the approach of an artillery shell, and this is not pure imagination. An account is given of action on a Union gunboat when one gunner would shout, "Down," when he saw a shot coming, and two men were killed when they failed to heed his warning.¹⁹⁵ (*Battles and Leaders*, v. 1 p. 434-435)

The Confederate forces retreated from Spanish Fort the night of April 8, 1865. About 500 Confederates were taken prisoner and about fifty guns were captured.¹⁹⁶ (*Battles and Leaders*, v. 4 p. 411)

To spike a gun (cannon) could be done by putting a metal spike through the vent, the small hole drilled through the top of the gun for transmitting a spark to the powder charge in the barrel. This spike was then clinched inside the barrel by driving a rammer into the barrel. With the vent filled by a spike, the gun could not be fired.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² = *American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 1191

¹⁹⁷ = *Boatner*, p. 782

¹⁹³ = *Coggins*, p. 102

¹⁹⁴ = *Coggins*, p. 102 *

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Fort Blakely Alabama
April 10th 1865

My Dear Parents

When I tell you that this sheet of paper, and a new Grey Jacket that I have on was taken from Rebels, you can easily imagine that we have once more passed unhurt, through the dangers of Battle. I will here say, that Otto and I are as safe and sound as ever, for fear it may cause uneasiness. Yes dear ones, The 16th Corps can inscribe another brilliant Victory on their Banners. The 1st and 3d Divisions Fort Spanish and the 2d Fort Blakely. Our Division and part of the 13th A.C. captured about 2500 prisoners and 34 Pieces of Artillery. The Report is also very current that the 2d Division captured 3 gunboats, but I cannot get the straight of this, therefore do not believe it; that would be the greatest thing ever heard of, Infantry capturing Gunboats. Nevertheless I hope it is true. But I am running off the

track entirely. I only want to give you a short description of the Battle. I think yesterdays fight, a much harder one than Nashville. Here we had to contend against the engineering of 4 years, while at Nashville, it was only the work of a few days. The Rebels at this place, had plenty of Artillery good Breastworks, and an open field in front. It was utterly impossible to flank them, for the fort runs from River to River. In front they had all the trees cut down, tops out, then all the limbs cut off, and sharpened. This was a great drawback during our charge; men would tear their clothing, fall down and hurt themselves in many different ways, but it was only a momentary pain, then all was forgotten, and away we would go again. But all things come to an end and so this charge. Our loss was comparatively small, considering the difficulties that had to be surmounted. Our Div lost 122 wounded, I don't know the number killed. Our Regt did not lose a man. A deep Ravine saved us from the Grape and Cannister. The two Guns that were intended for our part of the line were dismounted by our Battery, just before we started on the charge. One was a 30 pound Parrott, the other a twelve Pound Napoleon. Thanks to the 2d Ills Battery Co "G" for this act.

We started the charge 12 hour before we were ordered to, and it was a good thing that we did, if we would have waited until this morning we would have lost perhaps four times the number. They expected to be reinforced last night. They were busy mounting large Seige Guns and Mortars as fast as possible. One 9 inch Columbiade lay within a few feet of the Breastworks, waiting for the darkness of night to be put into position. The rebs were also taking the Guns off their Gunboats and Mounting them on the Works. They undoubtedly intended to make a determined stand here.

We have the News that Richmond is evacuated and that Sherman and Grant have made a Juncture. We have these News through Rebel sources, how true they are, I am not able to say, but I hope that the Flower of the U.S.A. will have a chance to spread its Perfume over the whole Land. The Western Army has already brought fourth fruit enough, to let them rest after the fall of Mobile. Is it not strange, that the 117thth Regt can go through the thickest of a fight without loosing a single man? Providence seems to have lent us a helping hand. Let us pray that it may never be withdrawn as long as the Regt may stay in the Service. I just now heard that Peace was made. Gen R. E. Lee of the C.S.A. has turned the Confederacy over to Gen U. S. Grant. Oh! How I wish it were true. I also heard that all operations against Mobile will be stopped on the strength of it, until something definite is found out concerning the Report.

I must now close; for Capt Blake is awaiting my my pleasure to do some writing for him. Give my love to all at home, and any inquiring Friends.

I remain as ever Your Affectionate Son Adolph

Notes: The sheet of paper on which this letter is written is a blue-gray in color.

The fact that Corporal Wolf is wearing a "Grey Jacket" "taken from Rebels" is a switch. Confederate soldiers, usually in short supply, wore Union shirts, shoes, hats, even complete uniforms, and especially overcoats, taken from Union dead or prisoners of war, even though Confederate authorities sought to prevent this. ^{198 (Lord, Civil War, p. 281, 284)}

There were five gunboats at Mobile; whether three of them were captured by the 2nd Division has not been ascertained. ^{199 (Battles and Leaders, v. 4 p. 411)}

The trees cut down, tops out, are known as abatis, an obstacle formed of trees felled toward the enemy, commonly used as an added protection for fortified positions. ²⁰⁰ One of probably many references to the use of felled trees for defense is at Chickasaw Bluffs, near Vicksburg, Mississippi. ²⁰¹

When Corporal Wolf says that two guns were dismounted, they were most likely on carriages consisting of the trail and two wheels, and the carriages must have been struck so that the guns were no longer

operable.

A 30 pound Parrott cannon was a piece of siege or garrison artillery and had a 4.2 inch bore diameter, that is, the inside diameter of the gun tube, and it fired a 29 pound projectile.²⁰²

A twelve pound Napoleon was a piece of field artillery, that is, easily moved by horses for use in the field, had a 4.62 inch bore diameter and fired a 12.3 pound projectile.²⁰³ (Coggins, p. 88)

A mortar was a cannon with a short barrel designed ^{to} fire a projectile at a high angle so that it tended to drop down on its target.²⁰⁴ (Lord, Civil War p. 30, 33)

A Columbiad (proper spelling) was a cannon with a medium angle trajectory and came in 8, 10 and 15 inch bore diameters. Corporal Wolf is very probably mistaken in describing the Columbiad at Fort Blakely as a 9 inch.²⁰⁵ (Lord, Civil War p. 30, 33)

On April 2, 1865 Confederate troops were forced to withdraw from the defenses of Richmond, Virginia, and on April 3, 1865 Richmond was occupied by Union troops.²⁰⁶ (Long, p. 663, 665)

As of the date of Corporal Wolf's letter the troops of Union Generals Grant and Sherman had not made a juncture. Grant was in Virginia and Sherman in North Carolina.²⁰⁷ (Long, p. 670, 673)

Corporal Wolf was right. His regiment did seem to bear a charmed life. During its entire service, it lost eleven men killed and mortally wounded and 119 by disease.²⁰⁸ In the Union army as a whole, battle deaths totalled 110,100 and those from disease 224,580.²⁰⁹ In other words two men died of disease to each man killed in action. Corporal Wolf's regiment does not seem to have been too fortunate as respects disease but very fortunate regarding battle deaths. In contrast to the 117th Illinois, the three hardest hit Union regiments as regards battle deaths were the 5th New Hampshire with 295, the 83rd Pennsylvania with 282 and the 7th Wisconsin with 281.²¹⁰ (Long, p. 717)

Gen. R. E. Lee of the C.S.A. (Confederate States of America) had not "turned the Confederacy over to Gen. U. S. Grant," but on April 9, 1865 he did surrender to Gen. Grant the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. The war, however, was not over, there were still Confederate armies in the field, and the government was still in existence.²¹¹ (Long, p. 670-671)

In regard to the capture of Fort Blakely, about which Corporal Wolf writes, it was assaulted by 16,000 Union troops on April 9, 1865 and taken the same day. 3,423 Confederates were captured, and forty guns fell into Union hands. On April 11, 1865 two small forts remaining near Mobile were evacuated by Confederate troops, who completely withdrew, and Union troops occupied Mobile on April 12, 1865.²¹² About this whole Mobile operation, Union Gen. U. S. Grant later wrote, "I had tried for more than two years to have an expedition sent against Mobile when its possession by us would have been of great advantage. It finally cost lives to take it when its possession was of no importance."²¹³

208 = Dyer, p. 1096

209 = Long, p. 710

212 = Battles and Leaders, v. 4 p. 411

213 = Boatner, p. 559

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Camp 117th Ills.
Vol. Infty. Montgomery Ala
May 1st

My Dear Brother

It has been some time since the last letter written to you separately by me, was sent, and as Otto is at present engaged writing a family letter, I concluded to have a little private Chat with you in the shape of a letter; this is rather a poor substitute for a Verbal communication, but the best that I can at present afford. If Camp rumor can be relied upon, there will be Peace in a few short months. You cannot imagine how many contradictory News can be circulated, throughout a Camp in a short time. A soldier at the present time is kept in a continual stew, he ~~never~~ knows what to believe. All we can do is to hope for a speedy Peace. We have also the startling News of President Lincolns and Sect' Swards assassination. This I fear is too true, for all business in the City is suspended, and cannon have been firing since early this morning. Oh! What shame and disgrace, has been heaped upon our Nation by this most foul, and cowardly act. It by far leaves all other Sins of the South in the shade. Death in its most horrible shape would be too good for the Assassin. May he live a thousand years, and daily suffer ten thousand Deaths. Until the death of our good old President, I have had more or less pity for the poor deluded wretches, here in the South, but this last cowardly act has banished, every bit of sympathy from my heart, and if the war is not stopped, I fear that I will not have enough controle over the bitter feelings in my heart, to take another prisoner. If the South knows what is good for them, they will make peace on any terms, and be glad to have a chance to make it. I am not only speaking my own sentiments, but as a general thing

of the whole Army. I have almost decided to become a Veteran on the strength of it. I am not jesting but expressing my feelings. We are now obeying the Armistice Order, and lay quietly in Camp, feeding on the best the country can afford; Corn Meal & Blue Beef. We expect to get regular Rations this evening. The Country in this vicinity has been well cleaned out, and the Citizens as well as Soldiers are glad that our Boats have come. Where we are to go next is uncertain. I hope our Campaigning is over.

Please write soon and give me all news besides your opinion of our present situation. I must now close this uninteresting letter, to be ready for the Mail. Give my love to all at home, & regards to inquiring Friends.

Good-Bye for this time. As ever Your Brother, Dolph.

Notes: On April 14, 1865 at about 10:00 P.M., while sitting in the Presidential box at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C. Watching a play, President Abraham Lincoln was shot by actor John Wilkes Booth. The President was taken to a house across the street and died at 7:22 A.M. April 15, 1865. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton is supposed to have said as soon as the President died, "Now he belongs to the ages." Never were more prophetic words spoken.²¹⁴ (Long, p. 675-677)

On the same night, Secretary of State William H. Seward was stabbed in his home in Washington, D. C. by Lewis Payne, an accomplice of Booth, but survived to continue his duties as Secretary of State.^{215, 2} (Long, p. 676; Boatner, p. 732)

When Corporal Wolf refers to the "Armistice Order" he is probably referring to the fact that on April 30, 1865 Union General E. R. S. Canby and Confederate General Richard Taylor agreed upon a truce prior to the surrender of Confederate forces in Alabama and Mississippi.²¹⁹

(Long, p. 684)
"Blue Beef" has not been identified. Possibly moldy beef is meant.

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Camp 117th Ills. Vol. Inf.
Montgomery Ala. May 17"/65

My Dear Parents

Last night there was great rejoicing throughout this Command, over the news of the capture of Jefferson Davis, Family & Staff, the arrest of Alex. H. Stephens & the surrender of C. C. Clay. The news came officially from Maj Genl Wilson to Gen A J Smith. The Camps were all illuminated and there were torch light processions and speaking until a very late hour. Our worthy Lieut Daniel Kerr made a very able speech, appropriate to the occasion. I think the war over and the armies will be mustered out as soon as possible. I am heartily glad of it for it has been going on long enough. Two years ago the prospect for Peace looked rather gloomy. But within the last six months, the tables changed in our favor, and the rebels have not won a single victory.

Now what do you think will be done with Jeff Davis? I wonder if Andy Johnson will do what he said, before the war broke out! He seems to be a man of his word, and if he is, I would not give much for the lives of these arch Traitors.

The rumor is circulated through Camp, that we are to move North in 13 days, to be mustered out. I do not place much reliance in such rumors, I only hope they may be true. What joy there will be, when the soldiers all come home, to stay. Some soldiers are making great calculations about raising a crop of wheat next year. I hope they will get home in time to put in a crop.

We have received two letter from you, and one from Theo' since our arrival here. The two former were dated 9th and 17th APRil. Theodores was of a later date, for which accept our thanks. I always

feel good for three or four days after receiving a few lines from home. I wish Fritz would write soon and tell me how true the report is about his getting married with a certain young lady in E_____ If it be true, I wish he would wait until we get out of the Army, for I want to come in for my share of the Wedding-Cake and fun. I do not wish to pry into his secrets, but should like to have my share of confidence, that is justly due me as a Brother. I do not think he would withhold it if I were at home. He used to make a Confidante of me, therefore the request.

Our News are very limited, and when we do get any, they are like Grandfather's News used to be, in the Anzeiger, all washer women have been debating them for weeks. So please excuse this short note. How is Grandfather? does he still work in his garden? Tell him, when I get home, I will be a splendid hand to help him do nothing. Three years Soldiering will make any man a fit subject for a representative to the State Prison. Not that I have any great anxiety to go there myself, but then I have served my time in the army you know, therefore stand as good a chance as any other man. Well, I will now quit this and close my letter. Give my love to all, but keep a good share for yourselves. I remain as ever Your Son A.P. Wolf.

Notes: Early in the morning on May 10, 1865, the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, his wife and a few others were captured by the 4th Michigan Cavalry in a camp near Irwinville in South central Georgia.²¹⁸ (Long, p. 687)

A. H. (Alexander H.) Stephens was the Vice-President of the Confederate States of America and was arrested and imprisoned for five months and then released.²¹⁹ (Boatner, p. 795)

C. C. (Clement C.) Clay had been a U. S. Senator from Alabama and later a Confederate Senator. In 1864 he was sent to Canada to negotiate peace with the Union but was unsuccessful and returned to the South. After the assassination of Lincoln, it was the belief that he had had a part in the conspiracy. He gave himself up, was held in prison for a year and then released.²²⁰ (Boatner, p. 158)

Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson, at the time of Corporal Wolf's letter, was in command of the Cavalry Corps of the Military Division of Mississippi. It was soldiers under his general command who captured Jefferson Davis.²²¹ (Boatner, p. 930-931)

A torch light procession was a night parade illuminated by lighted torches carried by the marchers.²²² (American Heritage Picture History, p. 49)

On May 17, 1865 the war was not over, but it was very close to it. On May 12, 1865, in the last land engagement of any consequence, Union and Confederate troops fought at Palmito Ranch in Texas on the banks of the Rio Grande River. Ironically, it was a Confederate victory.²²³ On June 2, 1865 Confederate General E. Kirby Smith officially accepted surrender terms for all Confederate troops West of the Mississippi River.²²⁴ On June 23, 1865 Confederate Brig. Gen. Stand Watie, in the Indian Territory (now the State of Oklahoma), surrendered the Cherokee, Creek, Seminole and Osage Nation, the last sizable body of Confederate troops to surrender.²²⁵ (Long, p. 693)

"Andy Johnson" is Andrew Johnson, the Vice-President of the United States who became President upon the death of Abraham Lincoln.²²⁶ At one time he denounced Confederates as traitors saying that they must be punished and impoverished.²²⁷ After he became President, he decided to follow a reconstruction policy without bitterness or malice.²²⁸

The Anzeiger referred to is probably the Anzeiger des Westens, a German language newspaper first published in St. Louis, Missouri in 1835.²²⁹ (Lange, p. 279)

This last letter of Corporal Wolf's was written on May 17, 1865. He was mustered out of the army on August 5, 1865.

223 = Long, p. 688

224 = Long, p. 692 *

226 = Boatner, p. 436-437

227 = Crompton's, v. 7 p. 434

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