

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Grand Ecore Landing, Louisiana  
April 12, 1864

Dear Parents:

I received your very welcomed letter last night and answer it immediately so as to cause you no unnecessary trouble and fear about our safety. Dolf and myself are well and hardy yet. I was sorry to hear that Theodore had not got any better yet but hope that he will be well before long.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month Banks' forces got whipped out by the Rebels. Their Captain killed wounded and prisoners is in as near as I can learn about 8,000 but on the 9<sup>th</sup> Smith's forces got up and thrashed the Rebs out handsomely took away twelve hundred prisoners and killed and wounded about five thousand. Our Cap that is of the 16<sup>th</sup> AC was all told 800. Our Regiment was on the left flank and was not under fire for the most of the fighting was done in the center where there five charges made by the Rebels. Every time they were repulsed we left our dead on the field unburied. If it had not been for Banks ordering Smith to cover his retreat we would have stayed there a day or two longer. Anyhow Banks lost twenty pieces of artillery and between eighty and 150 wagons with provisions and five wagons of ammunitions. Our boats are up the river and can't get down for the Rebs have batteries placed along the river to keep them from coming down. I guess that they will be here tonight. Anyway the mail is going out in about five minutes so I will have to close for this time. You will hear from me again as soon as possible. Excuse bad writing for I am in a hurry. Goodbye for this time. Best respects to Grandfather.

From your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf

I think we will go up the river today tomorrow if the boats do not come down.

O.E.W.

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

on board steamer THOMAS E TUTT  
Alexandria, Louisiana  
April 23, 1864

Dear Mother:

We received your last letter while at Grand Ecore, Louisiana, and were glad to hear from it that you were still well but was sorry of hearing that Theodore's rheumatism had got no better. We are still well and hardy and so are nearly all our Company. I will now give you a clear detail of the fight at Pleasant Hills than I did before.

We left Grand Ecore April 7<sup>th</sup> and marched 19 miles rained . . . all day very hard marching was wet to the skin at night. Slept in an old nigger shanty at night pretty good sleeping out of the rain anyhow. Started early on the 8<sup>th</sup> and marched 20 miles heard heavy artillery firing in the front ranks forces fighting came up to the 19 AC and camped. On the 9<sup>th</sup> our Regiment was ordered out at 2 a.m. to reinforce the picketts; laid there till daylight were not allowed to have any fires. About 10 a.m. skirmishing began and was kept up till about half past four pm when regular fighting began. The Rebs made a charge on our boys and nearly drove them off the field when they rallied and down and drove the Rebs back. There were five successive charges made. The first one side would have to give way then the other. The fight lasted a till after dark when the Rebs were drove off the field and pursued for three miles. We took over twelve hundred prisoners and I do not know how many were killed and wounded on either side. There were 800 killed and wounded out of the 16 AC. I do not know how many Banks lost. Banks lost about 21 pieces of artillery and between 80 and 150 supply wagons and nine ammunition wagons. The 13 AC was terribly cut up. Billy Gardner came very near being captured. Banks was defeated on the 8<sup>th</sup> at Mansfield 13 miles from Pleasant Hills but old A. J. Smith wasn't caught napping he wailed them up fiercely the next day. Banks gave up that if it had not been for Smith his whole army would have been destroyed. Dolf and myself had been under the weather for a while so we got on the boat when our Army was retreating for we were not able to march. I guess that Smith's command will go back to Vicksburg as soon as they arrive here then there is some talk of us going back to Memphis again. I guess that will be satisfied to stay where we are when we know where we are well off.

You wanted to know what we wanted you to do with our overcoats. The best thing you can do with them is to have them died over and take the military buttons off and wash them; wear them for it will cost more to have them sent to us than it would to buy new ones. I guess that it is time for us to close for it is getting late and I do not know of anything else to write about. So goodbye for this time. Best respects to Grandfather. What is Uncle doing? I remain as ever

Your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Vicksburg, Mississippi  
June 1, 1864

Dear Brother:

I received your letter dated April 28<sup>th</sup> and was very glad to hear from it that you were all us still well excepting yourself. Dear Brother I am very sorry that you are as bad off as ever but I hope that under the good care of Dr. Wiegel you will soon be able to be about and go to work for I know how to sympathize with you that is and has been sick for if a person was not born to sympathize with a sick man that is a soldier I do not know where he should learn though we got Fritz's letter the same day that I got yours and were very glad that he did not forget to write to us. I hope that you and him will continue to do so in future and often and you may be sure that we shall answer them promptly for you do not know how much good it does a soldier to hear from the loved ones at home as I am sure you would write oftner. Let us hear from one of you once a week if possible and write about everything that happens on the farm or in town even to the least particular for everything interests us here which we would not think of at home. Dolf and myself are perfectly well and so are all of our Company, although our boys have not seen the inside of a hut for the last five months yet I do not think I ever saw them in better health for such living as we have had since we left Memphis, has showed who could stand hard marches here hunger cold and pain without flinching and yet when we would get to camp at night after marching from 17 to 25 miles the boys were all so lively as crickets no matter how tired they were before getting within sight of camp just as soon as they saw the campfires in the distance they would raise the yell loud enough to wake the dead and it would be caught up all along the lines and raised the spirits of the men that could hardly raise one foot after the other and they could walk 2 or 3 miles without any truble without the prospect of camp close by. We hardly ever got to bed before midnight and we were fortunate if we got to bed by that time this was ? but on the Red River Expedition we did not have such a hard time although from any hard marching that Red River Expedition has proved a perfect failure we have lost more men and ? and artillery there if the plan had been successful and we should have Shrevesport. I guess that you have already seen an account of the Expedition so I will not give any account of it. The latest camp rumor has it that we will go to Memphis in a few days but it does not look very rational for most of the Regiment are drawing stocking and garrison equippage. I ? cooking utensils and tents but I hope that we will go there in a few days of an are for I am heartly sick of Vicksburg. News there is none but what you up North have already got. We have received no mail since we arrived here. I guess that I will have to close for this time for it is getting bedtime. Tell Uncle that our Regiment has one of the best equipped bands in the service all ?

Best respects to Grandfather. Goodbye for this time Remember and write often

From your affectionate Brother,  
Otto E. Wolf

P.S. Best respects to all the family from Dolf and myself. Excuse handwriting.

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF  
117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry

LaGrange, Tennessee  
July 4, 1864

Dear Parents:

We received your kind and welcome letter a day or two ago and were glad to hear from it that you were still well. We are also well. You will undoubtedly be surprised to hear of us taking the field again after taking so hard a campaign as we had but it seems that they are never going to give us any more rest for whenever there is any need for troops General Smith's men are the ones that are taken. I expected that would get some rest after we got back to Memphis but we have hardly got there when we were sent out on the M[emphis] & Charleston Railroad to keep old Forrest from taking all of Sturgess' men. We went out on the cars as far as Collierville where we got off and sent the cars back with the men that were give out and could not walk while we ma, marched back from there to White Station distance 16 miles. We started from Collierville at 9 pm and got to White Station just at daybreak. Old Sturgess was whipped out worst than Banks was. It was an We went back to Memphis when we got orders to get ready to march at an hour's notice. General Smith was to take command of the Expedition. He was going to try to retrieve Old Sturgess' defeat. Started from Memphis June 23<sup>rd</sup> got on the cars and went out as far as Moscow where we stayed till the bridge over Wolf River could be rebuilt for the Rebs had destroyed it. We then marched out to LaGrange 10 miles. This was the hardest day's march we ever had for it was so hot that men fell dead in their tracks, sun stroke. I never straggled before but I did that day for it was impossible to march in the worst of it was that we could not get any water. LaGrange is a very nice little town but it is almost deserted. We are expecting orders to march every day but I hope it will be a long time before the orders come. I guess we will spend a pretty dry fourth this year as there is nothing going on here worth writing about. I should like to be where I was this day two years ago. I should enjoy myself much better than I do today. I assure you. But by this .time next year my time will be nearly out and then for home awhile. We received Matilda's nice presents and thank her very much for them. Dolf wrote her a letter thanking her for me as well as himself. I chose the one with love's gift on it. I guess that I will have to close for this time for there is nothing more to write about. I hope you will enjoy yourself very much today. Best respects to Grandfather and Uncle. Goodbye for this time. I remain as ever

Your affectionate son;

Otto E. Wolf.

I have got a very poor pen or I would have wrote more.

O.E.W.

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Headquarters Company F  
117th Illinois  
Memphis, Tennessee  
July 26, 1864

Dear Parents:

We received your kind and welcome letter a few days ago and were glad to hear from it that you were all still well and hard at work. We are also well and none the worse of wear by going on this last Expedition. I will now give you a little history of our Expedition. After Old Forrest started from LaGrange. Tennessee on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July at about 5 pm and marched to Davies Mills distance seven miles. Started about 6 am and marched 12 miles. The roads are awful hot and no water. Crossed the Tennessee and Mississippi line. The 7<sup>th</sup> marched 12 miles today.

8<sup>th</sup> Got up at 2 am and started at 4 am. Marched 12 miles passed through Ripley Mills where Sturgess had a fight and got whipped. Very pretty little town. Camped 7 miles the other side of Ripley.

9<sup>th</sup> Marched 13 miles.

10<sup>th</sup> Marched 12 miles to camp at 11 am

11<sup>th</sup> Marched 9 miles passed through Pontitoc. We were expecting to have a fight but there were only a few Rebs there but they left as soon as we came in sight.

12<sup>th</sup> Laid over today about 1 mil from town.

13<sup>th</sup> Started early and marched to Tupelo. Distance 20 miles. Camped in line of battle at night. General Mowers fought them all day. He being in the rear. The Rebs charged on the wagon train three times and each time they were driven back with great loss. General Smith outfoxed General Forrest at Pontitoc for he thought that we would go to Oakalona from Pontitoc and instead of that we went to Tupelo. He had heavy earth works there up on the Oakalona Road thinking that we would surely come that way. But he was badly fooled for we turned around and took the other road.

**[EDITOR'S NOTE: HAD TO SKIP TWO PAGES DOUBLE WRITING]**

bullets whisled hauntedly over there. Our boys raised and five or six volleys charged down the hill towards them and the Rebs left in a bigger hurry than they came. That was all the fighting for the night. The Rebs being beaten at everything they undertook during the day in the day's fight their loss is estimated at 1,000 killed wounded and prisoners while ours did not exceed a 500. \*\*\*

\*\*\* On the 15<sup>th</sup> we marched about 12 miles and camped about 10 am. General Mowers being in the rear. He had some fighting with him though we had hardly got to camp and had dinner cooked when this Reb began shelling us. They pitched a few into our wagon train which liked to have occasioned a general stampede among the teams. We got out of there in a hurry. First Division got into line and charged up the hill on which the Rebs have planted their battery and drove them off. The Rebs lost about 100 killed and wounded. Our loss was pretty heavy but not as much as the Reb's loss. On March 16<sup>th</sup> marched 15 miles. Camped early.

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

17<sup>th</sup> Marched 13 miles and camped at New Albany on the Tallahatcha River

18<sup>th</sup> Camped at Natchis and marched 22 miles very hilly country not very tired but hot and hardtack day and no meat only a little coffee.

19<sup>th</sup> marched 14 miles and camped at Salem. Here General Hatch came to meet us with rations. It is also my birthday 17 years old and only a little over one year more to serve. I know full rations of hardtack a bite of meat and coffee and sugar had one good meal anyhow. Ate up all my mat at once.

20<sup>th</sup> Marched 14 miles and camped at Davies Mills.

21<sup>st</sup> Marched 7 miles camped at an old ground at LaGrange and beat him into Tupelo sending part of our Cavalry ahead to tear up the railroad. They tore up about six miles of it destroying one mile and a half of tressel work burning the depot and doing all the damage they could.

\* \* \* On the 14<sup>th</sup> at about 6 am picket firing commenced and from then on till night there was no session of firing. Our Brigade had a splendid position on some hills where we could overlook the battlefield. We were on the extreme left. One negro regiment on the left of us. About 9 am the Rebs advanced and charged on our line drove our skirmishers back and charged over a field of about one mile. A crop our skirmishes fell back over our line of battle and the Rebs right after them until within about 75 yards of them when the boys raised and gave them two or three volleys they turned and skidaddled across the field and our boys right after them. They were within 500 yards of our battery. The Second Illinois who opened on them with cannister and done fearful execution as they retreated three of our batteries had a cross fire on them while our infantry poured volley after volley of bullets into them which swept them down so that there were about 500 dead left on the field and about three times that number wounded. All those that were slightly wounded went off with them. It was the grandest sight that ever I saw to see them charge over such an extent of ground and come up so bravely. After the charge they opened on the left where we were with six pieces of artillery and shelled us for about an hour wounding more men in our Regiment. Never saw shells fall as thick and as fast as they did. There our line was right on top of a hill in plain view and it was a wonder that they did not hurt more of us than they did. Our Battery replied to them as fast as they could but it did not do much damage for they could not get into a position where they could do much damage. Gen'l Smith was sitting on his horse close to one Battery when a bullet hit his hat and just did miss his head and that was all. He then moved out of the way of stray bullets. A man out of Co. B or D was taking a chew of tobacco when a piece of shell hit him in the mouth and knocked four teeth and did not touch his lips. It also hit him on the arm it did not hurt him much. The Brigade suffered pretty severely great many of the shells struck in the ranks and killed a good many; there was a cessation of firing for about an hour, in this time the ambulances were sent out on the field to pick up the rebel wounded. All drummers and fifers went out on the field with the ambulances to help pick up the wounded. I went out with them and helped load an ambulance and went back with it to the Division Hospital where all the wounded were taken to and staid there all day helping the doctors amputate arms and legs. I helped take off fifteen or twenty arms and legs; it looked more like a butcher shop than anything I can compare it with. It is an awful sight to see the Doctors sawing and cutting away at a man's arm or leg, it is sickening, but enough of this. About 9 pm the Rebs made a night attack on the left but our Brigade were so prompt in meeting them that they had to get

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

back as fast as possible. None of our Regiment was wounded for on getting on the \_\_\_\_\_ that the Rebs were after we could hear the officers give the command, Ready, Aim low boys, fire, as soon as the command was given Aim low boys our boys all dropped to the ground and the bullets whistled harmlessly over them, then our boys raised and gave them five or six volleys charged downhill towards them and the Rebs left in a bigger hurry than they came. That was all the fighting for the night the Rebs being beaten at everything they undertook during the day in the days fight their loss is estimated at 1,000 killed wounded & prisoners while ours did not exceed five hundred. On the 15th we marched about 12 miles and camped about 10 am. Gen'l Mowers being in the rear he had some smart fighting with them though we had hardly got to camp and our dinner cooked when the Rebs began shelling us, they pitched a few in our wagon train which like to have occasioned a General Stampede among the teams, we got out of there in a hurry the first Division got into line and charged up the hill on which the Rebs had planted their battery and drove them off, the Rebs lost about 100 killed and wounded our boys losses were pretty heavy but not as much as the Rebs. On the 16<sup>th</sup> marched 15 miles camped early 17<sup>th</sup> marched 13 miles and camped at New Albany on the Tallahatchie River. 18<sup>th</sup> crossed the Hatchie ? and marched 22 miles very hilly country not very tired but hot, only one Hardtack today and no meat only a little coffee. 19<sup>th</sup> marched 14 miles and camped at Salem (now \_\_\_\_\_) here Gen'l Hatch came to meet us with Rations. It is also my birthday, seventeen years old and only a little over one year to serve. I drew full rations of Hardtack a bite of meat and coffee & sugar had one good meal anyhow ate up all my meat at one meal, 20<sup>th</sup> Marched 14 miles and camped at Davies Mills (now \_\_\_\_\_) 21<sup>st</sup> Marched 7 miles and camped at our old ground at La Grange, 22<sup>nd</sup> started from LaGrange and marched to Moscow started at 2pm and marched 12 miles in four hours camped on the same place we did coming out, 23<sup>rd</sup> Marched 15 miles to Collierville. I stopped at LaFayette to see some of the 14<sup>th</sup> 100 days men saw Will & George Putman, Ed Phillips & Bob Gillespie waited for the evening train and was to Collierville when the Regiment had stopped, got on the cars on the 24<sup>th</sup> and went to Memphis went to the same camp. We have had a very hard trip of it no troops ever marched in hotter weather than we did, very little water and only I hard tack a day all the way through there were any amount of Blackberries and every evening when we got to camp we would go out and pick a bucketfull and cook them. If it had not been for that I do not know how we would have got along. Got up every morning at 2 am no difference if we did not start till 10. I stood it a good deal better than I expected I could. I wish you would send us our overcoats, 2 shirts, and some socks and something to eat if you please we want our overcoats to cover up for I have thrown my blanket away for it was too heavy to carry. Send a large box for we have to buy a great deal of what we eat, send it by Adams Express it will not cost too much and send it as soon as you can if you please for we do not know how soon we will leave here, be sure and send us the overcoats. It is now 10PM and I will have to close      My love to Grandfather,

Otto F. wolf

[Editor's note: This was a 10 page letter written vertically over the previously horizontal lines. Otto's letters are missing until Oct. 3, 1864.]

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Franklin, Missouri  
October 3, 1864

Dear Parents:

As there is a chance to send in some mail from here I will write you a few lines to let you know how we are getting along. We are well yet and the boys in our Company are the same. On Sunday after we came back from home we got on the cars and went out to DeSoto on the Iron Mountain Railroad. Distance 43 miles from St. Louis. Laid there four or five days then came back to our Camp at Jefferson Barracks. Laid there a day or two when we got on the train and took all our baggage with us and came to Franklin. When we came within about three miles of Franklin, we saw a big fire there. The Rebs had got into the town and had set the depot and other public property on fire plunderance the stores and other private property and set the bridge over the Meramec on fire. We got off the cars and marched up to the town. Skirmishing with them a while when they and ran. I picked up about 25# of coffee in the road that some of them had dropped and sent it to Schiffnocker. When Fritz goes there he can get it and take it home. The mail is going out in a minute so will have to close for now.

From your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf

P.S. I bought me a new drum for \$21.00. Best respects to Grandfather. I have not seen Mr. Steiners yet.



**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

On board Steamer MOLLIE McPIKE  
Cairo, Illinois

November 27, 1864

Dear Parents:

I have arrived safe at the Regiment again and got on the C&M train and got to Cairo at 6 am. The boat did not come in sight until about 4 pm. I have just come on board have not got anytime to write anymore as the boat is about to shove out. We are going up the Ohio. Don't know where to. Goodbye for this time I remain as ever

Your son,

Otto E. Wolf

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

On board Steamer MOLLIE M<sup>c</sup>PIKE  
in Cumberland River  
November 29, 1864

Dear Parents:

I guess by this time you have received a few lines that I wrote you from Cairo telling you of my safe arrival at that place. I arrived safe and sound at Cairo in the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> after spending a very disagreeable night on the cars not getting to sleep a wink for the cars were pretty crowded and that was not all the trouble for I was nearly choked for water there being none on the train and the cars did not stop long enough for to get off to get some until we got to Cairo. We changed cars at Sandoval about 11 pm and got to Cairo at 6 am. Our boats did not get there till 4 pm. They lay there all night; took on 2500 bushels of coal for a long trip. On the 28<sup>th</sup> we started and laid up for the night at Smithland, Kentucky. On the 29<sup>th</sup> we struck the Cumberland River. I think we will go to Nashville, Tennessee, but I have no idea where we will go to from there. We opened the last can of peaches today that Dolf brought along. They were splendid. I wish we had some more of them. I will write again as soon as we get to Nashville if we go there. A man out of our Regiment [Richard Dingle] fell overboard today and I think was drowned for some of the boys saw him sink and never rise. He belongs to Company H. I have just been finishing up our Company clothing book. It is nearly twelve midnight and I will close for this time. My love to Grandfather and the rest of the family. Goodbye for this time. I remain as ever

Your affectionate son,  
Otto E. Wolf

Write soon

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Camp near Nashville, Tennessee  
December 12, 1864

Dear Parents:

As we have nothing to do at present I do not think I could improve my time any better than by letting you know what we are going. We are well as usual and hope you are the same. We landed in Nashville on the first of this month commenced digging breast works on the 3<sup>rd</sup> worked all night and all day of the 4<sup>th</sup>. Then had to leave them and went to work and built another then had to tear them down it being in the wrong place. Built another and are laying behind it now expecting Mr. Hood and Company. But I am afraid he will not come. My private opinion on the subject is leaving and all I am afraid of is that we will have to follow him which I would hate very much to do in this state of weather as it is very cold. We have been nearly froze to death but it is getting warmer now. We have about 3" of sleet here. This is the first day we have seen the sun for three or four days. They are feeding us pretty nice here. We have to buy a good deal of our grub mostly meat but we are used to do that so I don't go very        hence

Look over my letters and see if you have got them all yet. For if you have not I will copy a journal from some of the boys. I will send you a price list of our clothing so you can have some idea of what our clothes cost us. I will have to cut my writing short this time as my fingers are so cold that I can hardly hold the pen. My love to Grandfather and Uncle. Well goodbye for this time. Write soon and believe me

Your affectionate son,

Otto E Wolf

PS Tell Theodore to write to me excuse my bad writing

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Camp twelve miles from  
Nashville, Tennessee

December 14, 1864 (or 17)

Dear Parents:

You have doubtless heard of the fight at this place on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> out of which we both came with hides and none the worse for having smelt Rebel powder again. This is the hottest fight that we ever were in. Our Chaplain first came around said there would be a chance of sending mail in tomorrow so I thought that I would let you hear from us as to cause you no unnecessary anxiety about us. On the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> we received orders to have Reville at 4 am and march at 6 am.

15<sup>th</sup> The whole army consisted of the 16<sup>th</sup> Corps on the right the four troops next and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Corps on the left. We have besides about twenty-five thousand Calvary. Our whole Army numbered between 50 and 80,000. We formed just ahead of our breastworks. Our Brigade in the first line formed in three lines of battle about one mile from the breast works. Skirmishing commenced pretty lively. We steadily advanced. I must now tell you by what plan we were going. The whole right was to swing around and drive the Rebs from in front of our works and drive them down before the center and left so that they could shell them from the fortifications. The whole plan is told by seeing that we were to flank the Johnnies on them until we cover about two miles from where we started where we came upon their breast works. When a furious artillery duel commenced on both sides. Our men laid low until the order came from General Smith to Charge. At this the boys all raised the yell and started for their breast works. The batteries of the Rebs meanwhile throwing and cannister into our ranks most of which however as luck would have it clear over our boys and did not do much damage. The First Division of our corps captured 8 pieces of artillery and about 700 prisoners while our Division captured four pieces of artillery and about 300 men. There were nine men wounded in our Regiment and none killed.

16 the thought w/out any blankets mine being in the wagons in the fortification advanced about two miles with little fighting when we came upon their second line of breast works. We lay under fire of this artillery for about three hours when General Smith gave the order to Charge. Again we raised the yell and went for them. Our Regiment charging over a cornfield [GERMAN WORDS IN PARENTHESIS] and unto their works in a hurry. The Rebs running like the devil. This day we captured 24 pieces of artillery and 5000 prisoners. Our Regiment alone captured over 100 prisoners. Our Brigade captured General Johnson's own Division captured 14 pieces of artillery. It rained all night and all day today. We will go to Franklin tomorrow. I guess Hood will have to fight or give us a footrace. The report is that the Calvary captured 13 pieces artillery from them today. I will have to close for it is raining and besides it is dark as pitch. Goodbye for this time. Write soon as believe me as ever

Your true son  
Otto E. Wolf

My love to Grandfather and Uncle. Direct to Second Division instead of Fifth and it has been changed O.E.Wolf

Madison County Historical Museum and Archival Library,  
Edwardsville, Illinois

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF  
117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

Camp this side of Duck River,  
Tennessee

December 23, 1864

Dear Parents:

As there is a mail going out in a few minutes I think I had better let you know that we are well yet. We are this side of Duck River yet. They are putting down pontoons as fast as possible for the troops to pop over. We are now 42 miles from Nashville. There have been some talk of sending the 16<sup>th</sup> AC back but I don't hardly think they will though I think we have had our last chance at Hood for I think he is crossing the Tennessee River by this time. So you are not troubled yourselves about us anymore for I do not think we will get into any fight. As the mail is going out in a few minutes I will have to close for this time. If you get General Thomas' report of a fight at Nashville save it and send it to us if you please for we have not seen it yet. Write soon so no more from us for this time but we remain

Your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf.

**[Part of a long-letter with December 24, 25, & 26th?]**

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

December 24<sup>th</sup>. I did not get a chance to send my letter as the mail had gone before I got my letter ready. Got orders to have reville at 1 pm the night of the march at 3 am. We started at 3 pm and went to Duck River but the Pontoon had broken down so we had to lay there till after the fight and fight before we could cross. Got across at passed through Columbia which is just across the river. A very pretty little place if it had not been torn up so. Marched about 8 miles from Columbia and camped just after going into camp. I went out foreaging and got us a bacon and one of the other boys of our unit killed a hog so we had a splendid supper on Christmas eve. I thought what a good time you would have at home but by next Christmas we will be there to enjoy it if nothing happens.

**[Part of a long-letter with December 23, 25, & 26th?]**

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

25 Christmas I hope you will all have a happy Christmas. I went out to a house just after daylight and got some more bacon and had a good breakfast. Coffee, hardtack, sourbelly and fresh pork. . Good enough for any man. Laid over all day.

**[Part of a long-letter with December 23, 24, & 26th?]**

**LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF**  
**117<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry**

26<sup>th</sup> Got orders to march at 9 am. Colonel R. M. Moore of our Regiment came back to the Regiment this morning. He has been home. Started about 12. Marched about 12 miles. Passed through Lynnville. I think that I will get a chance to send my letter today by somebody that is going to the rear so I will close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon. My love to Grandfather and the rest of the family. Goodbye for this me. Write soon and between and believe me

Your true son,

Otto E. Wolf

**[Part of a long-letter with December 23, 24, & 25th?]**