

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board Steamer LemiLeoli
January 3, 1865

Dear Parents:

As we are on a boat now and I have more leisure time than usual I think I could not improve my time any better than by writing to you and letting you know how we are getting along. We are still well and none the worse off from having to march from the Cumberlandlands to the Tennessee River. The last letter I wrote you was on Christmas I believe as have lost my day book. I forget the exact times.

The 26th Marched about 12 miles over very muddy roads and camped. Past through Lynnville a small town on the Nashville and Decatur Railroad.

27th Marched 14 miles today and camped about 4 miles from Pulaski, Tennessee. I went out foreaging and after getting into camp and got some flour and had a bully supper consisting of slap jacks, bacon and coffee. I must tell you have these slapjacks are made. Take some flour and mix it up with some cold water some salt and fry it in grease. That makes fine cakes. They are a little tough but that makes no difference with a soldier for what he can't eat ain't fit to eat. This explanation taken up more of my paper than I at first supposed it would. So I will drop it.

28th Laid over all day while out foreaging one of our boys by name Peter Munson shot off one of his fingers while getting over a fence. He is getting along fine now. I don't think it will cause any serious damage only the losing of his fingers.

29th Passed through Pulaski a pretty little place if it had not been torn up so by both Armies. Here ends the turnpike and we also leave the rest of the Army while the 4th and 23rd Corps take the road to Florence. The 16th Corps will take the road to Clifton a little village on the Tennessee River. When we expect to take boats we marched 14 miles had pretty good roads a little muddy but that is nothing when you once get used to it.

30th Marched 15 miles today and went into camp. It started to rain about 3 pm and rained pretty hard till night.

31st Passed through a little town called Lawrenceburgh where there is a monument dedicated to the citizen soldiers of Tennessee who were killed and died of disease during the Mexican War.

31st Woke up this morning and was very much surprised to see about three inches of snow on the ground. Started about 9 am and marched 8 miles. The road were in such a bad condition that we had to camp for the train could not keep up with us.

This is the last

[EDITOR'S NOTE: PAGE ENDS HERE; NOT COMPLETED]

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Special Requisition No. 1

East Port Mississippi

January 22, 1865

Dear Father:

As Captain Blake is going home in the morning I think this a good chance to send there for some things I am sadly in need of especially about ten dollars in greenbacks as Dolf is pretty near out and I don't want to sponge on him any longer for we have to buy considerable of our grub and I should like to have money to buy tobacco with. We are still well and hardy and have got our shanty built. I will send you a sketch of mine some of these days. As it is getting late I shall to close for it is getting late. I will write more in a day or two. Goodbye for this time. I remain as ever

Your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

East Port, Mississippi
February 4, 1865

Dear Parents:

As I have not wrote to you since we have arrived here I think it about time to let you hear from me. The reason I did not write sooner was that while on the march I wrote more letters home than Dolf did so I thought that I would let him write a while till something happened that was worth writing about. We are still well and very anxious to hear from home as we have only received two letters from you one from Mother and one from Fritz. I had the good fortune of being detailed as Clerk in the Quartermaster's Office at Brigade Headquarters. A pretty good place but I do not know how long I will get to keep it. You may be sure that I will improve my time while here improving my handwriting. I have not got much to do at the present time but will have before long. Colonel Moore of our Regiment now commands the Brigade which consists of the 117th Illinois, 34th New Jersey, 178 New York and 52nd Indiana. The 49th left us at Duck River to go back to Paducah to be mustered out and the 34th came from there to take its place. We landed here on the 7th of January; went to work and built our log shanties and got fixed up pretty well. We started here on the 7th of January, went to work and built our log shanty and. got fixed up pretty well. They have been feeding us pretty rough since we have been here. Giving us nothing but corn to eat over a week, but we are getting more rations now but not more than we know what to do with. When we first came here Dolf wrote home to send us a box of vitals but as yet we have seen nothing of it. We have been anxiously waiting for a sight of it but we have been disappointed this far. Well if we don't get it we shall have to do without it as best we can. There is a rumor here that we will go down the river to Cairo in a short time but I do not know how true it is. I don't care about moving just now I would as leave stay here as go down to Cairo for when we leave this place I think we will go into active service again which I do not live very much. Yesterday is just one year ago since we left Vicksburg under Sherman for the city of Meridian. Since then we have marched about 2,000 miles through the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri and Kansas and now we are back in Mississippi again. As it is getting late I will close for this time hoping to hear from you soon. Has Grandfather received my letter yet? My love to Grandfather and Uncle. Goodbye for this time. I remain as ever

Your true Son,

Otto E. Wolf

direct as usual

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board Steamer ST PATRICK
Cairo, Illinois

February 11, 1865

Dear Parents:

Once more we are here but we will only stop a short time I think. We are well and expect to see New Orleans in a short time which I believe to be our destination for the present. We started from East Port on the 9th and arrived here about 3 am this morning. Our Regiment was on the Steamer DES MOINES till we got here when we got off it and embarked on the LUMINARY.

I will have to quit writing for the present as the mail is just going out.

Fair thank you well for this time I remain as ever

Your true son,

Otto E. Wolf

Direct your letters via Cairo. That is all you need put on
My love to Grandfather

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board Steamer ST PATRICK
Memphis, Tennessee

February 13, 1865

Dear Mother:

We received your welcomed letter dated February 2 and were very glad to hear from it that you were still well. This was the first letter we received since we landed at East Port. There we received yours dated December 21st and Fritz's dated January 1st both on the same day. Since then we have received none till we arrived at Cairo where we got yours of the 2nd. You said in your letter that you had not received any letters from us for a month. The mail is to blame for that as I have wrote about 15 letters since I was home last and Dolf has wrote nearly as many so we are not to blame because you have not heard from us oftner but enough of this. Our boat landed here early this morning then went down to the Fort of Tucoal where I got off and went to see Sydel whom luckily I found at home. He is fat and in good health. He has been promoted to 2nd Lt. of Company C, 3rd Regiment U.S. Heavy Artillery Ft. Pickering, Memphis, Tennessee. This is his address if anybody wants to write to him. He sends his best respects to all of you. He did not get to see Dolf for the boat he is on landed Tucoal about the middle of the night so that he did not get to see him. He felt pretty bad about it for Dolf and him are fast friends. Theodore is a first rate fellow and I am glad he has been promoted. I will now write you abut our trip down here.

We started from East Port, Mississippi, on the 9th. Our Regiment on the Steamer DES MOINES. Brigade Headquarters on the Steamer ST PATRICK on which boat I also took up my headquarters. We started down the Tennessee River at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 9th and arrived at Paducah on the morning of the 10th. Laid there nearly all day coaling got up steam and ran down to Cairo; arrived there at 3 am. Laid there all day of the 11th and started from Cairo about 8 am on the 12th. Ran all day and all night and arrived here this morning. I looked for the boat our Regiment was on but it has went on down the river at Cairo. Our Regiment got off the DESMOINES and got on the LUMINARY. This is a very large and splendid boat. The DES MOINES was a very dirty sickly old thing that was not fit to put hogs on let alone soldiers. From here we will go down to New Orleans and from there I think we will go on to an Expedition to Mobil. It may be we will go to Sherman but I hardly think we will if we go to Mobil. There will be either b a big fight or a bigger foot race. As there is nothing more to write about at present I think I shall close for this time. I have one request to make before closing which I wish you would do that is write to us oftner. Write about once a week for you do not know how much we like to hear from you no difference how little you write just so you write and we be sure we will answer immediately.

I remain as ever

Your true Son,

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Vicksburg, Mississippi

February 16, 1865

Dear Father

By the heading of my letter you will see that we have got this far on our journey down the river. We started from Memphis on the morning of the 4th. Went down the river as far as the mouth of White River. Laid up there all night could not run on account of the fog. Started at 4 am on the 15th and arrived at Vicksburg about 9 pm. We have a rumor here that we are going to stay here instead of going to New Orleans. The LUMINARY that is the boat our Regiment is on has gone down the river. It would be a joke on us if our Regiment was to go on down to New Orleans and we had to stay here. Things are mixed up pretty badly here and I don't know what to make of it. As I have nothing more to write about I will close for this time. In the next letter you write to me send a dollars worth of postage stamps as I have got none for I have to have my letter franked this time.

My love to Grandfather and Uncle. Tell Theodore to write to me right soon and believe me as ever

Your true son,

Otto E.. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Camp 3 miles from Vicksburg, Mississippi
February 17, 1865

Dear Father:

As we have gone into camp here I thought I would let you know hear from me again although I wrote you a letter yesterday. The rumor we had proved true and we have gone into camp but how long we will stay I can't tell. Our Regiment went on down the river instead of stopping as we did and they went on their own responsibility. I think they will be back here in a few days but not before they get to New Orleans as we could not stop them before they got there. The general opinion here is that we are going on an expedition through Mississippi again that we will go to Selma and Augusta and all through those states. The object of my writing tonight is to let you know that I am going to send my drum home. I think I shall send it tomorrow or day after. I will send it by Adams Express Company in your name to St. Louis, so the first time you go there call and get it. As there is nothing more to write about I will close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon

My love to Grandfather and all the rest of the family.

I remain as ever

Your affectionate son,

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board the ST PATRICK
Vicksburg, Mississippi
February 19, 1865

Dear Father and Mother:

By the heading of this you will see that we are once more on transports. We disembarked here on the 16th went out to Tublank Old Camp and laid till about noon today. As yet I have seen nothing of our Regiment but I think we will go down to New Orleans this time sure. If we do we will be sure to meet them there. I wrote to Father that I would send my drum home before I left here but I have changed my notion for as today is Sunday I don't think the Express office is open so I will not send it from here but wait for a better opportunity. I have been writing all day making our invoices and receipts for clothing we drew yesterday. As this is nothing more to write about I will close for this time hoping to hear from you soon. I remain as ever

Your true son,

Otto E. Wolf

P.S. My love to all at home

[Part of a serial-letter with February 20 & 21st.]

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board the ST PATRICK
Vicksburg, Mississippi

February 20 - I did not get to send my letter yesterday so I had to keep it until we go to New Orleans. Passed the mouth of Red River before sundown. Laid up all night at Plaquemane Court House a little village on the right bank of the river.

[Part of a serial-letter with February 19 & 21st, 1865]

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board the ST PATRICK
Vicksburg, Mississippi

[Part of a serial-letter with February 19th & 20th, 1865]

21st Started about 8 am this morning and arrived at New Orleans about sundown. We have passed the most populated country today that I have seen since in the service. All along the river it looked like one continually town. The plantations are so thick. We passed the city which is 8 or 10 miles long and tied up about 5 miles below the city. Our Regiment is about one mile from here at it is raining very hard. I will not go up till morning. I have no idea where we will go from here so I cannot write you anything about it. I don't think we will stay here more than 3 or 4 days. As there is nothing more to write about I will close for this time. Goodbye for this time I remain as ever

Your true son,

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Office Aaqm
3rd Brigade
2nd Division 16th Army Corps

New Orleans, Louisiana

March 2, 1865

Dear Father and Mother:

As we do not receive any letters from you I think I shall write to pass away the time. Dolf and myself are still well and hardy and anxiously expecting a letter from you as we have received none since leaving Cairo. My object in writing to you today is that I have send my drum home addressed to Father in care of John Schiffmann I sent it by Adams Express Company. Dolf also sent a box addressed to Fritz in Care of G. F. Gillham Randall House, St. Louis, Missouri. The box Dolf sent has got clothing in it belonging to some of the boys in our Company. Leave it at home until called for by their friends. The boys will notify them of it. We have received orders to store everything that we cannot take along on a march. We will go to Lake Ponchartrain embark on boats there and go to Dauphine Island in Mobil Bay. From there I do not know where we will go. We expect to start in a few days on a week. We turned over the Quartermasters tent and only kept a tent fly which we have got up on our desk. Captain Blake has not got back yet but we expect him back any day.

I must close for I am in a hurry. Goodbye for this time.

My love to Grandfather. I send you the receipts I got from the baggage I sent away soon and believe me

As ever your true son

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

Camp near New Orleans, Louisiana

March 11, 1865

Dear Theodore:

I received your ever welcome letter dated February 25th, 1865 day before yesterday and was glad to hear from it that you were still well. I am also well. I took the bellyache last night but I have got over it so I am alright again. The Regiment left here on the 8th of this month on the Ocean Steamer EMPIRE CITY for Dauphin Island near Mobil. All the transportation such as wagons, artillery, horses, etc has been left here. They are to go by Lake Ponchartrain to Dauphin Island although I was relieved just before the Regiment left. I stayed with Quartermaster Fike as he had considerable writing to do yet. I don't think we will get off for a week yet. You said in your letter that Mother and Matilda had wrote me a letter but as yet I have not received it. I hope it will come soon. From what you said in your letter about my being detailed you must think that I was detailed in Vicksburg, but you have got the wrong impression. I was detailed as Clerk in Brigade Quartermaster's Department not to stay at Vicksburg. As you thought but to go along with the Brigade but I was relieved on the 5th just after doing duty for one month and 5 days. I guess you have received my drum by this time. You want to know why I did not send it from Cairo. The reason why I did not send it from there was I could not get a chance because the Express office was so crowded and then I had not made up my mind whether to send it or not. But I sent it from here. The drum and overcoat both. We received the post stamps you sent us and are very much obliged to you for them. If you would I wish you would send about a dollar's worth more for the more stamps we have the more we will write. About our cash you are right for Dolf nor me either one have a cent so you would oblige me very much by sending about ten dollars for you have no idea how a fellow feels with not a cent in his pocket. Send it at your earliest opportunity. I am very sorry to hear of Fred Phillip's death. I hope that they will find out how he was poisoned. I got a letter from Ed the same night that I got yours. Newt Cole of our Company died here on the 5th last. I wish you would break the news of it to his sister as easy as possible. He was sent to the Division Hospital and the first we heard of it was two days after his death.

As it is getting late I shall have to close for this time hoping to hear from you soon. My love to all the folks, and believe me as ever

Your affectionate Brother

Otto E Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

New Orleans, Louisiana

March 16, 1865

Dear Parents:

I received your very welcome letter of the 5th just day before yesterday with the enclosed stamps and was glad to hear from it that you were still well. I am also well. Theodore in his stated that Mother and Matilda had wrote us a letter but as yet we have not received it. The object of my writing to you again tonight is to let you know that we have orders to get on the boats at 4 am. I wish we were over the lake already for I don't like the idea of venturing out of sight of land on a common riverboat. I don't think it would be healthy to be on one of them and a storm should come up but enough of this. I was very sorry and very surprised to hear of Johnny Eppings death. It was so unexpected that I hardly could believe it. For the last time I saw him he was well and hardy and now he is no more but that is the trouble with soldiers. They are not sure of their lives. They have them so to say in their hands for one day they may be well and hardy and the next in their graves.

As it is getting late and I must get up early I will close and retire to my couch that is on the ground. My love to Grandfather and Uncle and the rest of the family. Tell Uncle that I shall write to him one of these days. Write soon and believe me as ever

Your loving son,

Otto E. Wolf

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

On board Steamer STARLIGHT
March 21, 1865

Dear Parents:

We received your letter dated March 6, 1865, with the enclosed ten dollars and were very thankful for it as it came just as it was most needed. We received the letter about two hours before leaving Dauphine Island. I left New Orleans about 5 pm on the 17th on the Steamer TARASCON. We run till 10 at night; then anchors out in the lake. The next morning we started by daylight and arrived at the Island about sundown on the 18th, I went up to the Regiment and stayed all night and the next morning we started for the boats. Got on the gunboat #44 and left the Island about dark. Before leaving the Island I expressed a box by Cookers Express Company directed to Father in care of Mr. Schiffmann. Put the number of the house and street on it and I think it will go there if not you can go to the office and get it. All the things in it belong to me but two shirts which belong to Dolf. I sent you a few shells but could not get a very nice collection, but they will do to remember Dauphine Island by. I wish you would save them all. Fort Gaines is on this Island. It is a pretty strong place. After leaving the Island, we went about 15 miles and anchored out for the night. Next morning the at 9 am and crossed the bay and went into Fish River. When we got fast on a sand bar. Laid there all night (rained all night) and today we got off the 44 and on to the Starlight.

We are now fast on the same bad and the Lord only knows when we will get off. As there is nothing more to write about, I will close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon. Mobil will soon have to fall. Write soon and believe me as ever

Otto E. Wolf

PS Dolf received Mother's and Matilda's letters.

LETTERS OF PRIVATE OTTO WOLF
117th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

In camp 15 miles east of Mobil

March 24, 1865

Dear Parents:

I am almost ashamed to send you this dirty sheet but it can't be helped. It got soiled by the incessant rains coming from Daulphin Island to our present camp. We are now within 15 miles of Mobil and can daily hear cannonading in the vicinity of the besieged city. Between our gunboats and the Rebel batteries.

Day before yesterday the Rebel gunboats came out of the harbor and gave fight to our fleet but were glad to return to their retreat after a sharp engagement of half an hour. But during that time the cannonading was awful. We have slight skirminishing on the picket lines daily with little effect. I must say that this is the pleasantest soldering we have seen since we have been in the field. Our present camp is in a beautiful river grove. One of the nicest I have ever seen with plenty of good water and all that is needed to make a good camp. I would be perfectly satisfied to remain here the rest of my time if by so doing the war would close just as soon. Soldiers are fed here as well as can be expected. Abelest better than we have been used to. Before I could finish this short note we received marching orders to move at daylight. We received notice that there was a chance of sending letters if they were ready so I close this for fear it may be a long time before we can send another.

Give my love to all at home. I now bid you goodbye from

Your affectionate sons

Otto and Dolf in haste

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Page 1 in Camp March 26, 1865

My Dear Mother:

It was impossible to write a letter soon enough for you to receive it as a birthday present so I thought I would do the best I could and write it now. Otto and I congratulate you and hope you may live to see a great many more birthdays and may they all be pleasanter and happier than any heretofore. We also wish and hope that the next anniversary will find us at home sharing the pleasures and festivities of the day. I could not but notice the contrast of our different employment on that day. Here we were fighting the Rebels while you at home were engaged in the social walks of everyday life. Can there be a wider difference? I think it hardly possible. Perhaps you have no idea that while a soldier is engaged in active conflict with the enemy his mind is so much absorbed with his immediate duty that he thinks of nothing else. I must say that you are badly mistaken if you think so at best it is so with me. I feel less an anxiety for my own safety after the conflict has begun than might naturally be supposed. I always think how badly you would feel if one of us [s]hould be hurt doing this day's skirmish. I thought more of those most dear at home than anything else. Our Regiment happened not to be actually engaged in the skirmish live but were a kind of support for them. We were close to them though. I often wish that we were deployed as skirmishers for I always like that kind of fighting. A person sees more sport than you have any idea of but you will think it rather rough sport throwing lead and bullets at one another and so it is Page 3

In camp 12 miles east of Mobil March 27, 1865

Dear Mother: After 2 days light marching we are again in camp. The reason our stopping here I must explain. Early this morning all troops except our Brigade started for a Spanish fort about four miles from here leaving us to hold the road leading to Blakely. A small town 6 miles distant on the Tennessee River where the Rebels are strongly fortified. We have not heard from the Expedition that went to the Fort but judging from the continuous cannonading it is not taken yet. While I write the artillery is thundering away and perhaps it carries death and destruction to both sides. We had heavy skirmishing yesterday from the time we left camp yesterday until we got to this place. Our loss was one man wounded that of the Rebels four killed and several wounded. I am anxious to learn of our progress at the Fort. It is now 4 pm if they do not take it soon they will have to wait until tomorrow for it is raining and it will be too dark to do anything tonight. We have not been troubled today. Our fortifications are good and it would take a strong force to drive us away from them. Our orders are to fortify in the rear and front every night after going into camp. This is rather hard and something that the 16th Corps has never done before. It may all be for the best. So we do not grumble. I wish it were a clear day for then we could see Mobil from our present camp. But I will not be impatient. I may see it soon enough.

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

March 28 - It seems that this strength of Fort Spanish has been under estimated. All day the firing has been very brisk and at present they must be in close quarters for I hear a continuous rattle of musketry relieved sometimes by the dull boom of a cannon. We have not heard anything definite from there but report says that it is surrounded and they are cut off from all communications with Mobil. Last night the Rebels tried to reinforce the Fort.

Page 6 But were driven away by the men. I understand that General Smith wanted to charge it last night but was prevented by Canby Smith thought he could take with little loss and in a short time but Canby at least I think so wishes to make a great a thing of it as possible. Therefore, I doubt not but what it will be a week before it falls. I hope it will all be for the best. He seems to be fighting duly for the good of his country and not for idle praise. The strength of the Fort is estimated to at about 5,000 with good breast work and the Rebel gunboats. They will be able to make a stubborn resistance. I estimate our force in that immediate vicinity at about 20,000. So there is not much of danger of their being driven back. Judging from the awful rattle of musketry there must be charging. May God protect our brave boys and soon convince the Rebels of their error. Lt. Col. Merriam just returned from the scene of conflict and reports things prosperous. Five gunboats have come inside of the fort. The first shell thrown by them bursted over

[COMPILER'S NOTE: NO END ON THE LAST LETTER]

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Camp near Blakely, Alabama
April 5, 1865

To the Dear Ones at Home:

I received Mother's letter dated March 15 yesterday and was glad to hear that you are all still well. Dolf and myself are all also well. I will now give you a little sketch of our doings since my last letter dated March 21st, 1865. On Steamer STARLIGHT in Fish River we landed and went into camp about one mile from the river. Laid there until the morning of the 25th, when we started and marched 8 miles. The weather was very hot and we marched through a pine forest all day. Did not see a house from the time of starting until we went into camp. Camped in line of battle. Threw up breast works till 12 midnight. Old Canby is not going to be caught napping. Next morning 26th started about daylight and marched 8 miles still through a pinery. Our Brigade in the advanced commenced skirmishing from time of leaving camp till camped for that day.

We are now six miles from Blakely and three from Fort Spanish. Our Regiment was ordered out on picket but was relieved in about an hour after word came back and camped. One Reb killed four or five wounded and five captured. Our loss was one man out of the 10 of 11 Kansas wounded in coming to this camp. We have left the road to Fort Spanish about a half a mile back on our left and one and three divisions of our corps went back and took the road to Fort Spanish and advanced on it leaving our Division to guard the flank facing toward Blakely. Soon the roar of artillery and the sharp rattle of musketry were to be heard which lasted until dark.

April 3rd From 26th to April 3rd we lay in camp all this time. Our forces were throwing up breast works at Fort Spanish and shelling them every day just to let them know that we were there yet. On the 3rd we got orders that is our Division to march. We tore up camp and started toward Blakely which place Steele had invisted a day or two before. We marched about seven miles when we camped in line of battle making a connection with Steele's left.

4th This morning I was detailed to go to the Division Hospital as stretcher bearer. This is only while we are laying here.

5th Laid in camp pretty heavy picket firing

6th Drew one fourth of a pound of tobacco to a man. Canby has ordered that no sutters should be allowed to go along with this Army so he is going to issue tobacco. We are allowed one pound tobacco per month.

7th This morning I was detailed to go out on the reserve skirmish fire with an ambulance to take any wounded off the field. I went down to first brigade which lays closets to the bay. We had very good breast works. The Rebs opened with artillery on us and shelled us nearly all day. At about 11 am a Rebel gunboat opened on us. It threw a few shells then one of its shelled a 64 pounder flew over into the ditch where we were all laying and stopped within five feet of where I was sitting. It hit one man on the side of the head and knocked him senseless and grazed another one on the hip. Our breastworks run in a zig zag direction and I will give you a slight explanation of how it was on the other page. It is a very poor explanation but I have not time to show you more of it when I was laying directly in front of Fort Blakely. The shell from the fort could not hurt us for

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

they passed over our breast works but the gunboat had a raking fire right down the ditch. You better believe I did not want the experiment tried over again but I can explain better when I get home than now.

8th Laid in camp all day today. Dolf was on picket yesterday. He said the Johnny's shot might close. This evening we had about as heavy cannonading as ever heard down at Fort Spanish for about two hours

9th This morning it is reported that Fort Spanish has fallen with 4,000 prisoners. It is hard to believe but I hope it is true. Commenced this letter on the 7th and closed it on the 9th as I have been busy nearly all the time. I will now answer some of Mother's questions. We received Fritz's letter at New Orleans. Received Matilda's letter at Dauphin Island. Father's letter with postage stamps I got at New Orleans. Received Theodore's at the same place. Received Mother's with ten dollars at Dauphine Island about two hours before we left the Island. We received all the letters mentions in Mother's last letter. You wanted to know why I did not send my drum from Cairo. The reason was I had not made up my mind whether I should send it or not and when I had such a poor chance. About my being clerk I can say I liked it very much. I do not know who got my detailed but I think it was Col. Moore. It don't pay anything only exempts me from other duties. They seem to like me pretty well as I always done my duty and wrote a very good hand. I think although this don't look very much like it. I will have to close up. My paper is getting short. My love to Grandfather and Uncle. I congratulate you on your birthday Dear Mother and hope you will live to many more. Write often and believe me as ever

Your true son,

Otto Wolf

P S received your letters in New Orleans on the field.

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Camp near Fort Blakely, Alabama
April 12, 1865

My Dear Sister:

We received your kind and welcomed letter dated March 29th yesterday and were glad to hear from it that you were all still well. We are also all right yet and went through the charge of the 9th all safe. We were sorry to hear that Mother has been having the sore eye but I hope that by this time she has got over them and it is well again. I will give you a little description of the charge on Fort Blakely. About 1 pm on the 9th we received orders to get ready to go out on the skirmish line by 6 pm with two meals of rations and what bedding they wanted to take along with them. The boys only took along a rubber blanket. We were out on the picket line by 6 pm and were ordered to charge. Our skirmish line was about one half a mile from this Rebel fortification. The Rebs had cut down all the trees in front of the breast works and sharpened all the limbs so that it was nearly impossible to get over them besides having two lines of battle all around the fort. Well our Regiment charged over it all in about fifteen minutes after starting charge right over the breast works and all the way down to the Tensaw River which is about a mile back of the breast works. We captured in all 26,000 prisoners, 38 pieces of artillery and plenty of rations. Our Brigade captured about 800 prisoners. I don't know how many pieces of artillery we got. Our Regiment took a small camp color. Fort Spanish was taken the evening before with 34 pieces of artillery and about 800 prisoners. Last night the Rebs evacuated Mobil. There was also a battery out in the bay on an island which was taken with ten pieces of artillery. We have pretty good news here if it is only true that is Richmond was evacuated and Lee had been whipped. Also rumors of peace but the new is much too good to be believed. You said that Theodore was going to college in September. What college is he going to? If he goes by the first of September we will not get to see him for we will not get out before the 19th. But let that not hinder him from going for after we get home we can go to see him. I am glad to hear that he is helping Father so well. Tell him to be a good boy and work hard and you also Matilda be a good girl and help Mother all you can. We have five months and 7 days to serve yet. These will pass of pretty quickly if we only think so. I have just got a pot of beans on the fire that needs tending to. So I will close for this time.

Hoping to hear from you soon. I sent a box from Fort Gaines just before we left there. Tell Theodore to wear the shoes if he can. One pair are mine and the other Dolf's. My love to Grandfather and all at home. I remain as ever.

Your true Brother

Otto E Wolf

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Camp 117 Illinois Volunteers .
Five miles from Montgomery, Alabama

April 26, 1865

To the Dear Ones at Home:

You will no doubt be surprised to get a letter from me at this place for the last one I wrote was headed at Blakely. After the fall of that place since then we have marched 172 miles over some of the poorest country that I ever saw. I will give you an account of our march in the form of a journal.

Started from Blakely on the 13th of April at about 10 am and marched 8 miles. It had rained the night before so that my tent and Dolf's woolen blanket was wet. So you can judge that we have no light loads to pack. Felt pretty tired. I also had a drum to carry one that had been captured at Fort Blakely. It ain't much account but I will take it home with me as a trophy.

14th Started this morning at 7 am and marched 15 miles our Division in the advance. Our Regiment was strained guards had our knapsacks hauled by tying them on the outside of the wagons. Pretty bad road

15th Started about 11 am and marched 12 miles. The roads were very bad and just before going into camp it rained as hard as it could pour down for about an hour soaking us all to the skin. But after we camped it quit raining and we started a big fire and dried ourselves. No difference how hard we march a day how wet we are just as soon as we get into camp and have a cheerful fire burning we forget our hardships and feel contented with our lives. That is the way all soldiers feel. I lightened my load a little by throwing away a shirt and Dolf's sees

[COMPILERS NOTE: NEW PAGE] No. 2

away his woolen blanket yesterday so my load consists of two pieces of tent, one pair drawers and three pair of socks. Dolf carries one piece of tent and a rubber. I have also an old rubber as my new one was stolen from me at Fort Blakely.

16th Started at 7 am and marched 17 miles. Our Brigade in advance of the Corps. Felt very tired by the time we went into camp. Had miserable roads to travel over being swampy and in piney timber.

17th Had Reville at 4 am. Marched at 6 am. Our Regiment marched 18 miles and camped at General Smith's Headquarters. To do picket duty for the night. The rest of our Division went on two miles further before camping. I threw away my knapsack this morning. The way I work my things now is to roll them up in a piece of tent and throw them over my shoulder and trudge along all day like a mule in harness. We crossed the Escambia River today. It could not be forged so we laid our pontoons and crossed over. We also waded another little stream which was about knee deep.

18th Started about 10 am and marched 12 miles. Our Division in the rear. I got pretty tired before night.

19th Marched 16 miles today about 10 miles before 1 pm. We received a dispatch from Mobil that peace has been declared. Such yelling and rejoicing was never heard in

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

this country before. The boys were perfectly wild with joy. Our news was so unexpected that it could hardly be believed. I will continue this on another sheet. ** I will have to quit for a while to help cook supper.

As it is getting late I will have to close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon and oftner. My love to Grandfather and Uncle. Write soon and believe me as ever

Your true Son,
Otto E. Wolf.

**

20th Had Reville at 4 and marched at 6 am. Our Division in advance of the Corps. Marched 18 miles. Stopped four hours to build a bridge across a little stream. Had pretty good roads to march over today. Did not feel very tired after getting into camp.

21st Started about 12 pm our Division as train guard. It commenced raining about middle of the night and rained hard all day. We were all wet to the skin traveling 6 miles. Could not go any farther because of the badness of the roads. I never saw roads in a worse condition in my life. The first and third Division went on to Greenville.

22nd Started at 8 am and marched 8 miles past through Greenville and pretty little town on the Pensacola and Montgomery Railroad. And camped about half a mile from the place. At 3 pm General Smith had a salute of 200 guns fired in honor of peace.

23rd Started early this morning and marched 17 miles. Our Division on the center of the Corps. Distance from Greenville to Montgomery 47 miles. Just 3 days march.

24th Reville at 4 and marched at 6 am. Marched 18 miles today. Our Division in advance of the Corps. Killed a hog about three miles from camp and carried it there. I felt pretty tired by the time I got to camp.

25th Started about 10 am and marched 7 miles. Our Division on the rear. Camped in an open field. The weather was very hot.

26th Laid over today. Drew rations of corn meal as our rations are out.

27th Started at 8 am and marched 8 miles. Passed through the city of Montgomery. As we only passed through it I can't give you a good description of it. I do not like it very much. We camped two miles and a half from the city. The boats did not get here until yesterday and the 30th we had been out of rations ever since we arrived here. General Steele came up on the boats with some negroe soldiers. I believe I will quit for this time as Dolf is also writing a letter. Write oftner and long letters for that is the kind we like to receive. My love to all the family. Write soon and believe me as ever

Your true son,

Otto E. Wolf

P S Direct via New Orleans. I wrote the first part of my letter in pencil as I had no ink and am finishing it in ink

May 1, 1865 O.E.W.

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Montgomery Alabama

May 10, 1865

To the Dear Ones at Home;

We received 3 letters from you in the last three days. The first mail that came up brought us two from you dated April 10 and April 16 and this morning we were much surprised and gratified at seeing another from there written by Theodore in which he also sent us an account of President Lincoln's death. We had already heard of it but had not seen the details before. We had a funeral honors in conformity to orders received from General Canby minute guns were fired nearly all day. And in the evening we had dress parade with arms reversed. And drums muffled. Our Chaplain made a very good prayer for the occasion. On the whole it was a very solemn sight to behold but enough of this. General Steele and his niggers left here yesterday of which we are very glad. Also the First Division of our Corps left here this morning. I think they went to Selma.

It is rumored that we are to leave also in a few days. How true that I cannot tell. I should hate to leave here now as we are foxed up so well. We have got a splendid camp two miles and a half from the city. All of our tents raised up off the ground. The wells dug for every company plenty to eat and are very well satisfied to stay here the balance of our time. The only thing that troubles us is that we have no money and a very poor prospect of getting any very soon. I was up to the city yesterday and while there got a lot of Confederate money. I will send you a sample of it which I wish you would keep for me as it will do to look at for a curiosity. I will send \$320 in this letter and send some more in my next letter. There was any amount of it here in the State House. It is not worth any more than so much paper for the citizens here won't take it at all. This that I send you has "all been cut I do not know for what purpose unless it is not to be redeemed

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Montgomery, Alabama
June 18, 1865

To the Dear Ones at Home:

As we have received no letters from you for sometime I think it best to write once more to let you know what we are doing way down here in this out of the world place. We are still well although I had a pretty hard spell of sickness for more than a week but I am as well as ever gain. We received an order about a week ago to be mustered out but since then this order has been countermanded until further orders. We have got the muster out rolls and some discharges but have not gone to work on them yet. I don't think we will get home before the middle of July if that soon for we are way up here where transportation is scarce although we have the river on our one side of us and the railroad is running orders to Mobil on the other. There would be enough transportation if they only wanted to send us but military movements are at best slow. So we can't expect to get away from here very soon. We may get away from here this week but the prospect looks dark. We received four months' pay on the 7th which came very handy as we had done so long without. Dolf and myself have lived on the best the country afforded ever since and intend to as long as our money will last. I don't intend to eat a bite of Government rations as long as I am in the service just the thought of hardtack makes me sick. Today is Dolf's birthday. I hope I shall be able to spend mine at home with you. One year ago today we were at Memphis and now we are about 100 miles south of there. I did not then expect to see the State of Alabama but it now I wish we were most anywhere else than here for it is hot that you cannot stir around only in the morning and evening. We don't stand picket anymore don't drill well in fact we don't do anything so that time hangs pretty heavy on our hands. There is nothing at all going on in the city so that is not much to write about. How much did that stuff cost that we expressed home?

As my letter is pretty light I shall put some Confederate money in it. This is some of different denominations. I guess you had rather see green backs than Confederate but we have more use of it here than at home for I think I can earn enough after I get there. As there is nothing more to write about I will close for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon. My love to all the folks and my friends. Hoping to see you all soon, I remain as ever

Your true son

Otto E Wolf

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Fort Pickering
July 3, 1865

Dear Brother:

Your last letter was a welcome one but how sad were the news therein. I feared that all was not right because we had not heard from home since the first of June. I was certain Mother would have written sooner if she were able to do so. I hope that our dear Mother will soon get well again and that this may be her last attack of that fearful disease the cramps. She had been spared so long that I thought it would never trouble her anymore. Last Wednesday I was sadly disappointed in this way. There had been a detail made to guard prisoners to Alton and it so happened that I was one of the fortunate ones. After getting ready and going up to the city, we were all sent back to the Fort. I had pictured a nice time at home and thinking what a surprise it would be for you all to come among you unawares. You can easily imagine how I felt after knowing my disappointment. I thought that there was not a person in the wide world as unlucky as myself. It seemed to me as if I were to be disappointed in everything except my stay in the Army for I think we will get out when our three years are up. But then if I am alive and well I shall go home to try mighty hard. It will seem strange to me when I am free once more to go and come when I please without asking the Captain and Colonel 20 different times if I want to go half a mile from Camp and must have a pass signed by the Commander of the Post. There countersigned by the Colonel and Captain. You know not under what restrictions a garrison soldier is placed. I hope we may get out of this as soon as possible and never be obliged to do garrison duty again. It is true we have more hardships to endure while in the field but anything is preferable to this. It is worse than slavery. The blacks can go where they please but they are bought and sold and we are not. That is all the difference between us. I am glad to hear that you are going to celebrate the 4th up there. I hope you will have a nice time and that Mother will be well enough to participate in the enjoyment of that great day. I fear that will not be as happy faces here in Fort Pickering as at the fairgrounds at Edwardsville.

I understand that we are to be paraded by the Division Commander after which he will deliver a speech. This will be our 4th of July. You can picture for yourself how it will be enjoyed. It will be a fine thing to stand in the hot sun with your coat buttoned up and toting a musket. I must now close for it is getting late.

Write soon so we can know how Mother is getting along. Give my best respects to all. I remain

as ever your Brother

Otto E. Wolf

Give my respects to and Fanny.

OTTO E. WOLF
CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Montgomery, Alabama
July 6, 1865

Dear Parents:

It is now about a month and a half since we have received any letters from you although we have wrote three or 4 since we have any from you but I think that is the fault of the mails for some of you would surely write our letters in that time but I hope that we will receive some in a few days. We are well and hardy yet. We moved camp since our last letter. We have got a very good place to camp if we had water handy but we have to do down a hill about 200 yards to a spring for our water. In our old camp we had a well in our Company that had better water in it than' is in the city. We were not troubled with mosquitoes in the old camp but now we have our full share of them. We are camped a mile and three quarters from the city right on top of a big hill with swamps on each side of us but the health of the Regiment *is* very good as yet we having no sick men in our Company. We had a dry time here on the 4th. There was a procession of soldiers and citizens who went to a grove about a mile from the city where they had speaking. There was a horse race in the afternoon neither of which I attended. I did not start to the city till the procession was over in the forenoon and it was most too far to the races so I stayed around town for a while. Got my dinner which cost one dollar and a poor one at that. Then came out to camp. It was a very dry 4th but if nothing happens I will make up for it on the next. About our getting out of the service. I don't hardly think we will get out before the last of August. Our chances of leaving this place looks pretty slim. But only two months and a half then they can't keep us any longer. I hope peaches won't all be gone by the time we get there for I should like to have some of those larger ones that grow in our garden. Peaches are nearly ripe down here but they are such little ornery things they can't hardly be called peaches.

As there is little or nothing going on here that would interest you, I shall close for this time.

Hoping to hear from you soon. My love to Grandfather and Uncle.
Write soon and believe me

As ever your true son,

Otto E. Wolf