

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES

Nashville, Tennessee

Saturday Dec. 3d 1864.

My Love,

Day before yesterday after arriving at this place I hastened to write you a sort of a letter [dated December 1] to allay apprehensions for my safety. I got some rest that night on my downy bed of mother earth, but yesterday we were in much confusion, shifting and moving about, making reports &c. finally in the evening [we] got our position in the [defense] line and, tired as we all were, had to work all night throwing up works to make ourselves secure so that today I am again the victim of another night's broken rest, with a crick in my neck and shoulders. - can with difficulty turn my head, but I think it is only the result of cold, and this evening it is passing off. We have our lines compactly formed in a semi-circle around the city some two miles out [and] reaching from river to river, strengthened with a cordon of heavy works, with a very large force in position, and only wishing that the desperate Hood were reckless enough to dash upon our lines. There would'nt be much left of his army. I hav'nt been in the city yet and dont know when I can get in, or whether at all, or not. Capt[ain] Davis, who had been acting Major[,] was severely wounded [at Franklin] and I have no help and cannot leave the line, although I greatly need cleaning up. I have had nothing washed since I left home, and since this campaign commenced scarcely my face. Davis was hit in three places but will get along. Capt[ain] Hull [was] also wounded, and Leuits. [sic] Thompson, Arick & Smails. I have but four company officers for duty. Genl. Wagner has been relieved of command of the

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Division by Genl Elliot[.] Dont know whether he will come back to the Brig. or go elsewhere. [Major] Charly [Moore] is looking well and much pleased with his position. Charly[,] poor fellow[,] heard that I was mortally wound[ed] that night at Franklin, and hasted [sic] off to Genl Stanley and got permission to take a house for my benefit. he seemed wonderfully relieved when I turned up all right. This evening we were [sic] got into line of battle expecting an attack. Genl. Wood came riding along and and shook hands with me very cordially - told me he had heard I was badly could [?sic] [wounded] &c. and expressed himself very happy to know it was a mistake. he commands our corps temporarily[,] Stanley having been wounded, very nearly as I was in july - in the neck. I lost my colors and color sergeant in the fight - he was the same brave fellow who behaved so nobly at Mission Ridge. I felt the loss sorely, but had the satisfaction of capturing one of theirs in place of it. so we came marching into Nashville with a rebel flag - a sergeant - a Barnesville boy - saw it in front of the works, leaped over and grabbed it, and returned unharmed. There were quite a lot of them captured in all - some thirty I think. I gave you[,] in my last, [letter dated December 1] some idea of the fierceness of that fight. The charge was so sudden and so fierce that it came very near stampeding our whole army. They struck us in front and [on] both flanks at once. our Division sustained the heaviest shock[,] being found in front with nothing to shield us in an open plain. we had to fall back or all be captured. I never came so near being captured before.

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Night came on as soon as we reached their main works and the fighting was kept up until 10 o'clock, so dark we could'nt ~~recognize~~^{recognize} each other. Had they broken our lines, there is no doubt our three divisions would have been all captured or destroyed, but the men fought like demons, [and] so did the rebels. Their heavy columns came surge after surge & every successive time ^[were] sent reeling back until their dead and wounded lay in perfect heaps. finally they abandoned the attempt, and withdrew[,] and our well nigh defeat was turned into victory, overwhelming & decisive, but the original plan was to fall back to Nashville and so, that night at 12, we quietly withdrew. I regretted to have to leave a great many of our wounded in the hands of the enemy in the darkness it was impossible to find them all. I am very thankful indeed to get off so well.

[Inverted at top of page 1:]

I recd [sic] a very nice letter from Jimmy [Barnes] written with his left hand. I think he writes better with his left than his right hand. Poor fellow, he is sick of his adventure [of] soldiering.

Love to Muzzer and Tirza[.]

[Unsigned]