

MILTON BARNES to RHODA BARNES

Camp near Nashville, Tennessee

Thursday, December 1st 1864

My very dear wife,

I have barely a chance to say "I am safe" after the fight yesterday with Hood at Franklin, one of the most terrific little engagements of the war. We had been falling back slowly to this place for some days. Yesterday while we were getting our train across the river at Franklin he came upon us with his whole army, and attacked us with most furious desperation. we were compelled to fall back from our first, an outer line, into the main line of works, where our terrified and disorganized battallions [sic] were rallied and defended the works with the energy of despair. I have never seen quite so fierce an attack, nor a more gallant defence in all my experience in this war, and while we were compelled to evacuate the place, we did it at our leisure after punishing the enemy most severely. our loss is small, theirs is counted by the thousand. The fight was kept up for six hours, when they drew off. At 12 o'clock last night we moved out and reached here at noon today. I am entirely exhausted for want of sleep and rest. I went sound asleep today riding along the road. Otherwise I am quite well. I have been in command of the regiment for some days back. Col. Lane [is in command] of the Brigade.

I can hardly imagine how I escaped. Surely it is the work of that Great Unseen Hand, that ~~has~~ so mercifully sheltered me heretofore. O how thankful I feel. I was very much exposed at one time, but did not realize it until afterwards. when we got into our main line of works we were sheltered from the fire very much.

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Well, my love I am so tired and need rest so badly I must ask you to pardon a very short note. Our campaign thus far has been exciting and pretty rough but I have no reason to complain. Our forces are concentrating here in such numbers as to preclude the probability of Hood coming here. we all want him to, or to pass us and go north. We will destroy him utterly if he does. I will enclose a list of the boys from the two Guernsey Co. companies who were killed[,] wounded or missing, which may interest their friends if they call to enquire. Your dear good first letter from "at home" was recd, but I will answer it and write more fully in a day or two. let me go to sleep dearest, wont you? O, I have lots of things to say next time. Preparations seem to indicate that we will rest, recruit and reorganize here for awhile.

There dear[,] good bye and a sweet good night to all
the "families"

Your own Milton

[Inverted at top of page 1:]

I have just now rec [sic] [received] your Thanksgiving letter. God bless you all[.] Ill write a great big one.