
William Knight Civil War Letters, 1861-1863
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Knight, William W., Letter to Mary Knight, July 22, 1863

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Scott County Mississippi July 22nd 1863

I was dead to hear of this matter but I will get it for you if it had not been for the young of the 10th I would not have been here

Dear Mary Again I will try to write a few lines after a silence three weeks unavoidable on my part I wrote a letter to you the morning after we got to Jackson but every thing was torn up so there it did not get off and I got it back again after it had rotted long enough to get to you I received one from you dated that we were in line of battle when we left Big Black the 4th got Jackson the night of the 8th in a very hard rain the 10th followed the army all the way our cavalry fought them all the time here marching we met the 9th but our cavalry and out fast fought them that day the 10th we were ordered in line of battle at day light our brigade and Gen Sisto's was held in a reserve for Gen Walker's Division he held his best disciplined troops as reserves and well he did for they suffered more than those in the trenches or on the skirmish line we were put in an oak grove in rear of our batteries the 11th the Yankees opened fire on

the left of our division the first ~~one~~ shot
killed or ~~skinned~~ killed two of the Ca. Battalion
of our brigade struck the ground and ~~paraded~~
the balance of our brigade hills a wagon driver
and wounded another man in his brigade
we staid there and the shells passing over us
for half an hour Gen Walker had us moved
out of the range of them we remained at
that place till evening when we our regiment
was sent to support the battery on the left of our
division the 13th we were in the same position the
Feds opened at 8 O'clock with two batteries the
balls and shells passing across our line they had
eight guns two in one place six in the other one
man ~~of~~ of Thomas was killed and four
wounded Sergeant John Herndon of our company
was wounded in the foot slight with a musket
ball out of a Shrapnell shot 13th we were in the
same place the Feds open about the same time about
ten minutes after the fire open Maj Lamb was
hit with a twelve pound round shot on the
head it knocked off half his head kill him
so dead he did not move but very little he was stand
ing on his feet among or at the feet of our men
in two feet of Jonathan and Lt Baxter we had all

been ordered to ~~go~~ down in our march and
tract in a slight ~~cut~~ the edge of it was all the pro
tion we had three men of our regiment wounded one man
tally he belonged to company D; from this ~~cut~~ he
was hit just above the left hip in the belly with a
mini ball. we were moved from there about 11 o'clock
and put behind the rail road bank 14th we were
in the same place 15th also 16th Feds batteries
had been silent ^{from} 8 O'clock ~~to~~ yesterday our still ~~play~~
ing on their lines about 10 O'clock a ~~mississippi~~
regiment on the skirmish line give way and fall
to the trenches leaving the 50th Ca exposed to
be flanked by the Yankees which they did and
the 50th had to retire. our batteries shelled them about
an hour and the 50th and 9th Texas in the place of the
cowardly Mississippi regiment charged them and drove
them from a strong position in the name of the creek
and rifle pits they our regiment and another Texas reg
relieved them on the skirmish line at dark we ~~remained~~
on the line till after one o'clock ~~that~~ by that time
all the rest of the army had left the city we left then
the Feds fired at us all the time we were on the line we
were about three hundred yards out side of the trenches
we were where the charge was made in the day there was
some dead Feds lying right at the line and their pick
ets was in one hundred yards of us some of them tried to

the body of one of their officers that had been killed close
to our line but it was too close for them they had certainly
withdrawn their batteries and the most of their men
and we had to leave before they got round ahead of us and
cut off our beef and bread we left the skirmish line after
one o'clock and the city as quick as we could march through
we were the last regiment that left the city we marched
the balance of the night and next day with a mouthful
to eat our provisions had been cooked up and sent on a wagon
for us to get it at day light but the wagon broke down
and all the rations for the regiment was lost we march
seventeen miles after being on duty all night without any
sleep or any thing to eat from dinner the day before
we do not know where we will go or which way from
here I know you are uneasy but I could not get a
letter off to you till we come the Jonathan has been
killed with the perimatism in his right breast but he is
getting better and I hope he will be well in a day
or two Lt. Davis Knight and Baxter are well some
of the boys are troubled with diarrhoea very bad and
broke down marching Albert Chapman was shot to
death for desertion according to the sentence of the
court martial that tried him the yesterday evening
at 6 o'clock all the regiment petitioned for his pardon
but it done no good he had been in service out five
five months been in several fights and his officers
said he had been a good soldier but he has paid
the penalty for leaving his regiment and nothing
more can be required of him in this world at least
well anyway was in hopes the money I sent you had
paid off the debts I owe long ago the interest is mounting
on all the time and making the debts more every
day ask your father to pay it at once do not delay
and longer hands than the money so it they will not
pay the debt and put it to the job and notify
them that I will not pay any interest after that day
the following are the debts I left due when I
came in the service I'll pay about fifty dollars
William Erickson Seven dollars and a half A. J.
Liles twenty two dollars and the interest L. J. Liles
is forty five dollars and interest I owe Godfrey
McLain four and Godfrey owes me some the dish
is about four dollars I owe him about that much
more than he owes me if he will settle and give a receipt
for paying that much do it do not let him alone and
I will settle with him when I come home your friend
Please attend to it at once do not put it off W. W. Wright

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Scott County, Mississippi. July 22nd 1863

Dear Mary,

Again I will try to write a few lines after a silence [for] three weeks, unavoidable on my part. I wrote a letter the morning after we got to Jackson, but everything was torn up so there it did not get off and I got it back again after it had settled] long enough to get a letter to you. I received one from you dated [the] 7th last. We were [in the] line of battle when I got it. We left Big Black the 6th, got [to] Jackson the night of the 8th in a very hard rain. The Yankees followed the army all the way and our calvary fought them all the time we were marching. We rested the 9th but our cavalry and our post fought them that day. The 10th we were ordered in line of battle at day light. Our Brigade and Gen. Gist's was held as a reserve for Gen. Walker's Division, he held his best disciplined troops as reserves, and well he did for they suffered more than those in the trenches or on the skirmish line. We were just in an oak grove in rear of our batteries. The 11th, the Yankees opened fire on...

...the left of our division, the first shot fired at us killed two of the Ga. Battalion of our Brigade. It struck the ground and passed the balance of our brigade, kill[ed] a wagon driver and wounded another man in Gist's Brigade. We staid [sic] there and the shells passing over us for half an hour. Gen. Walker had us move out of the range of them. We remained at that place till evening when our regiment was sent to support the battery on the left of our division. The 12th, we were in the same position. The Feds opened at 8 O'clock with two batteries. The balls and shells passing across our line. They had eight guns, two in one place, six in the other one man. [?] [boys of Thomas?] was killed and four wounded. Sargent John Herndon of our company was wounded in the foot slight with a musket ball off of a shrapnel. That 13th, we were in the same place. The Feds opened about the same time. About ten minutes after the fire open[ed], Maj. Lamb was hit with a twelve-pound round shot on the head. It knocked off half his head and killed him so dead he did not move but very little. He was standing on his feet among or at the feet of our men, [within] two feet of Jonathan and Lt. Baxter. We had all...

...been ordered to go up [as?] we were on [illegible] tract in a slight cut. The edge of it was all the protection we had. Three men of our regiment wounded, one fatally. He belonged to Company D from Floyd County. He was hit just above the left hip in the belly with a minié ball. We were moved from there about 11 o'clock and put behind the railroad bank. [On the] 14th we were in the same place. [And the] 15th, also 16th, Fed batteries had been silent from [2?] o'clock P.M. yesterday our[s] still firing on their lines about 10 o'clock. A Mississippi regiment on the skirmish line gave way and fell to the trenches leaving the 30th Ga. exposed to be flanked by the Yankees which they did and the 30th had to retire. Our batteries shelled them about an hour and the 30th had to retire. Our batteries shelled them about an hour and the 30th and 9th Texas in the place of the cowardly Mississippi regiment charged them and drove them from a strong position in the run of the creek and rifle pits. They [sic] our regiment and another Texas regiment relieved them on the skirmish line at dark. We remained on the line till after one o'clock [that night?]. By that time all the rest of the army had left the city. We left then the Feds fired at us all the time we were on the line. We were about three hundred yards outside of the trenches. We were where the charge was made. In the day there some dead Feds lying right at the line and their pickets was in one hundred yards of us. Some of them tried to [steal?]...

...the body of one of their officers that had been killed close to our line, but it was too close for them. They had certainly withdrew to their batteries and the [rest?] of their men and we had to leave before

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they got round ahead of us and cut off our beef and bread. We left the skirmish line after one o'clock and the city as quick as we could march through. We were the last regiment that left the city. We marched the balance of the night and [the] next day with a mouthful to eat. Our provisions had been cooked up and sent on a wagon for us to get it at day light but the wagon broke down and all the rations for the regiment was lost. We marched nineteen miles after being on duty all night without any sleep or anything to eat from dinner the day before. We do not know where we will go or which way.

If [illegible] you are [uneasy?] but I could first get a letter off to you till we come there. Jonathan has been [illegible] with the rheumatism in his right knee but he is getting better and I hope he will be well in a day or two. Lt. Parish Knight and Baxter are well. Some of the boys are troubled with diarrhea very bad and broke down marching. Elbert J. Chapman was shot to death for desertion according to the sentence of the court martial that tried him. Yesterday evening at 6 O'clock all the regiment petitioned for his pardon but it done no good. He had been in [illegible] out here five months, been in several fights and his officers said he had been a good soldier but he has paid the [price?] for leaving his regiment and nothing more can be required of him in this world at least.

Well Mary, I was in hopes the money I sent you paid off the debts I owe long, [illegible] on all the time and making the debts more every day. Ask your father to pay it at [once?] and not delay this any longer. [Illegible] them the money [illegible words] they will not pay the debt and put it to [illegible] and notify them that I will not pay any interest after that day. The [following?] are the debts I left due when I come to the service. Tell Ray about fifty-dollar, William [Jackson?] seven dollars and a half, and [Illegible name] twenty-two dollars and the interest, [Illegible name] fifteen dollars and interest. I owe Godfrey [illegible] and some and Godfrey owes me some. The difference is about four dollars. I owe him about that much more than he owes me. If he will settle and give a receipt by paying that much do it, if not let him alone and I will settle with when I get come home. Please attend to it at once do not put it off.

Your faithful Husband,

W.W. Knight