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MC073: Folder 38: J.W. McGuire to Thomas Sharp Palmer 1864 October 20

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Headquarters 26th Iowa Vol.

Strasburg, Va. October 20th, 1864

To S. Palmer

Dear Sir

I write you these few lines hoping that you will try to let the friends of the killed and wounded men of Co. A know of their misfortune, as it is out of my power to write more than a very short note.

You will recollect that you left us on the 15th. Well, we got under way for the front that evening and arrived at our old camp in the evening of the 18. On the morning of the 19th, at daylight, the enemy began a furious attack on the 8th A Co. which held the left of our line. They were taken by surprise completely and the Rebs had it all their own way, taking and driving all before them till after 12 n. They had taken some 20 pieces of our artillery, many prisoners and killed and wounded not less than 2,000. But in the afterpart of the day we got them turned and run them back straight through Strasburg, capturing many of them, and about 40 pieces of Artillery, and killing great numbers of them, gaining a complete but very bloody victory.

The 28th went into the action just at sunrise and was in all day. We were taken to a position on the left and told to hold. Co's F and D kept that position until all the rest of the line gave way and when we were almost entirely surrounded, when to avoid capture. Co A had 3 men killed in the field as follows Tanuzin Culp, Clark Elder and Samuel Gingery. About 12 men wounded as follows Sergt Murlin, slightly on left leg, Sergt Samuel Taggart through left arm, severely, Corp Ezra B Felker in thigh, severely, Corp Henry M Worth in the foot, severely and Corp Henry Alvin H Doan in thigh severely. Privates Branson H Beller in leg slightly, James H Barnett in the thigh and foot severely. John A Campbell in the leg severely, Charles J Ford in the thigh severely. Merit S Heath in the shoulder severely, James N Murphy in the shoulder severely. Fielding F Rice In the thigh and foot, severely Corpl W L Parmater and Private William Webb are missing but as they were not in the fight, I think they are safe. This has been the hottest battle for us that we have ever been in, the Regt. lost 146 killed wounded and missing. About one half of these are missing, some of whom are no doubt killed and some taken but most of them will

doubtless turn up in a few days. I may be mistaken but I think our success of yesterday a very important one. The route of the Rebels was most complete, all the efforts of their officers to rally them were utterly fruitless. They fled pell mell through the Gap, infantry, cavellery and arillery – most encouragingly mixed together. But I have to tell you that in the fore part of the day they captured the Camps of the 18th and 19th Cos. with all of our camp and garrison equipage, leaving us without even a blanket or hardtrack, knapsack or haversack, canteen or anything else. Among other losses was that of the Brigade Medical aggon in which you will remember I had deposited the sword left by Capt Palmer. That is consequently lost unless possibly retaken. I have yours.

Yours Respectfully

J W McGuire