

## Transcription of a letter from Edward H. Estes<sup>1</sup> to his sister

Williamport Md, July 11th 1863

Dear Sister

Your kind & affectionate letter came to hand to day Which was perused with more than ordinary interest as it has been a long time since hearing from you all before. I am exceedingly glad to hear that you are all well & that the late call is creating such consternation among the substituters. I hope they will soon begin to realize the existance of war by which thousand upon thousands of the bravest & best spirits of the south are being daily sacrifice [sic] for their country while those miserable sneaks chuckle, and gloats [sic] with delight over the news of goury [sic] field. for they know that it makes widows & orphans whom they can the more easily defraud. I understand that a great many are selling out up that way with the intension of moving south. I reckon they think that they will not liable there for military service but they will find it no go. As this war will never terminate while Abe is in power. I wrote a very hurried letter to Pa & Ma after the fight informing them of Joe's and my safety which I hope they have gotten by this. Oh it is a sad thing now to look at our Division Only a few hundred answer to the rolls where thousands answered a few days ago. it was one of finest divisions in army before it was cut up so. Genl Lee thought all & all of it. Our poor Col<sup>2</sup> was shot dead right through the head while gallantly leading his brave boys on to bloody graves. What few of regt is left, can hardly speak of him without shedding tear. There never was a better man or one more universally beloved Col. Whittle<sup>3</sup> was wounded badly in two places. Every Brigadier in the Div was killed & wounded. Genl Armistead immortalized himself with every one on the field from Lee down for [his]( struck through his) gallantry of himself & brigade. He fell on the yankee breast-works waving his hat. I am glad to hear that he is wounded & not killed. Kemper & Garnett<sup>4</sup> were killed nearly every Col in the Div.

God forbid that I should ever see another such bloody field. We could have held the breastworks and all of their cannon if the the [sic] brigade of N C had not shown the white feather before they got properly on the field. they were to support our Div. All they had to do were to come up on a line with us and hold position we had gained. for we could not do it after having lost 4/5 of our men. Genl Pickett was in the thickest fight & escaped unhurt. When he came out and saw how few of us were left he wept like a child, & said he wished they had of killed him too. Genl Lee & Longstreet were present on the field. I take no interest at all in the company as I use to. For it make me almost cry to look at it. but thanks be to God our Div is not all of Lee's army. other Div are not hurt badly at all. My Regt is here doing provost duty & in fact (whole) brigade. Garnett Brigade has gone to winchester with prisoners, Kemper's, is on the other side river guarding waggons. James is here attending the wounded. I shall enclose my letter in his. my love to all. Give my love to Sue and tell her she had better try & content herself in old Virginia. I am afraid Joe will never be able for service again. As the Dr (?) think that his arm will be stiff. Good bye may God bless is the prayer of your affectionate bro.

Edward H. Estes

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<sup>1</sup> Full Sergeant 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, Edward H. Estes Company K, 38<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Edward Claxton Edmonds, 38<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry

<sup>3</sup> Lt. Colonel Powhatan Bolling Whittle, 38<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry

<sup>4</sup> Brigadier General James Kemper (only wounded) and Brigadier General Richard Garnett

Williamport Md July 11<sup>th</sup> 1863

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