

Subject: [Fwd: Bell letters]

Date: Tue, 28 Jan 2003 11:05:06 -0500

From: Joan <joang@sccoast.net>

To: echols@dixie-net.com

This is the letter I received from Donald Pfanz, Staff Historian at the museum at Fredericksburg, Va.
Joan

Subject: Bell letters

Date: Tue, 28 Jan 2003 10:16:13 -0500

From: Donald_Pfanz@nps.gov

To: joang@SCCOAST.NET

Dear Ms. Gehring,

I just finished reading the letters of John L. Bell that you kindly sent to me. Thank you! Although your great-great-grandfather doesn't talk about the fighting here, his comments about the lack of food and clothing were quite interesting. As he wrote in his last letter, "It is hard the way poor soldiers are treated." The fact that Bell never made it back home makes his letters all the more poignant.

I have not been able to determine the cause of his death. Given the date and his history of illness, he almost certainly died of disease, but whether he died at a temporary hospital near Fredericksburg or at a general hospital farther to the rear I am unable to say. If you have not done so, I recommend that you write to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., for his compiled military service record and to the South Carolina State Archives in Columbia for any pension applications that may have been made in his name. The pension applications, in particular, should be helpful in determining the cause and location of his death.

I will send you a form for the National Archives via the regular mail. I don't have any forms for the South Carolina State Archives, but if you send a letter to the Archives giving them Bell's full name, company, and regiment, and requesting his pension records, I'm sure the Archives staff will be able to help you.

Sincerely,

Donald C. Pfanz
Staff Historian