

Camp Prairie Grove – Ark
Dec 13 1862

My Dear Swett –

Your telegram of the 9th announcing the death in battle of Col. McCullough, reached me last night –

His death was unlooked for and took me with great surprise. It will necessitate my return home; at least, temporarily – I am his Executor and have his will in my possession.

You will please see that nothing is done until I reach home in regard to his affairs. Just now I cannot ask for leave of absence – we are in the neighborhood of the Enemy and altho' he is terribly punished and crippled and will not in my opinion shortly again give us battle, still it would be scarcely proper just now to apply for leave of absence.

I consulted General Herron about it. He desired me to delay one week, before making the application, and said then he would aid me to obtain it. So that next week unless matters change very materially I shall apply for a leave –

Again, we are so far in the Enemy's country here, and the neighborhood is so infested with guerillas, that I will have to take quite an escort with me to get back to Springfield Mo. –

We are still in camp on our own battle ground – Many of the rebel dead are yet unburied. – Hindman sent over a flag of truce yesterday with a letter to General Blunt complaining that his (H's) dead were not all buried. –Blunt replied that he must be excused for the delay as there were so many rebel dead it kept our little army busy all the time burying them. And indeed there was as much truth as buncombe in the reply. The woods are full of the rebel dead. Their loss in killed and wounded will be about 2500. They lost one general and several field officers.

I will send you a copy of Herron's address to his troops – the underscoring is mine. –

Please see my wife occasionally and keep her cheered up. I very much fear the effect of her father's death, taken in connection with my absence and dangerous locality, upon her.

I supposed you had us all killed or wounded when you first got news of the battle.

Ask my wife to show you the address of Hindman to his troops before the battle, which I sent her – It is a great document.

Don't fail to visit her occasionally and cheer her up.

Remember me to all friends. The weather here is warm. It has been thundering this morning, and we are now having a warm rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning.

My kind regards to Mrs. Swett.

As ever yr friend,
Wm W. Orme

Orme, William Ward. *William Ward Orme to Leonard Swett*, December 13, 1862. Letter. From Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, *The David Davis Papers*, Box 41, Folder: O-9 (accessed June 19, 2014).