

Camp 100th Penn. Vet. Vols
Near Petersburg, Va.
July 17, 1864

My dear Jane,

I write you once more from "near Petersburg" but not quite so near as the last time. We were relieved from the front pits and came back about a mile in the rear of the first pits that we threw up when we advanced on this place. We are still within range of the enemys fire, but we are out of his sight, and our front line occupies his attention sufficiently to give him no time to annoy us. There was no change in the state of affairs here since I wrote you last, as far as our corps is concerned. As this is about all that we have anything to do with, I need not mention the others, neither would it be proper to do so. Our outer line where we were was a splendid one. We were continually improving them, and would prefer remaining there to changing round. I think our men will be sorry if they don't get a chance to try them. The artillery fought considerably the last few days. Ours was greatly superior to the rebels and soon silenced them whenever they chose. We are undermining their large fort in front of our left, and we will in a few days blow them up. We have gotten within forty five yards of it. The weather is extremely hot. We have no rain yet. Our springs are drying up, and we have to dig wells. Our numbers are wilting down by degrees. I have now sixteen fighting men in Co. G. Two were wounded since I wrote you last, the rest have got sick, and gone to the hospital. Johnny has given up and gone to the rear. He has intermittent fever. I persuaded him to go back to Lt. Justice's quarters till he got well. Lt. J. has gone to Fortress Monroe, but is expected back today. I have heard from Willie that he is improving. My health is excellent. I think that if the rebels let me alone I shall not trouble the doctors. The rebels appear to be very much discouraged. They are deserting in considerable numbers. Some come over every day. Yesterday there was peace for about three hours. Some of the rebels or our men (I did not see which did it first) held up a newspaper, and directly a number were displayed along the front works of both armies. The shooting ceased and then our men started off and met the rebs half way. They exchanged papers etc and there was no more firing till near evening when we worked a little harder to make up for lost time. By this exchange we got the Richmond papers of that morning. They informed us of the taking of Washington, the burning of Baltimore etc.. The news did not scare us, as we discounted it heavily.

Our corps and the 18th have commenced the siege of Petersburg in regular form. We are supported by another corps held in reserve. Every thing is taking a permanent shape, as though we were to stay here a long time. The rail road from City Point is in

running order to within a short distance of our works. We are well supplied with food. We cannot use all that we get. We get soft bread half the time. It comes up fresh by boat from Fortress Monroe. The other half is hard tack. We get fresh potatoes, onions, beets, pickles, etc., four days in the week. If we had plenty of good wholesome water, our location would be a good one.

When I wrote last I knew that I was neglecting something, but with trying all that I could, I could not tell what it was. I remember now, that it was some questions you asked about Col. Leasure. He was not arrested or court martialed. There is no danger of it either. He did disobey orders at the Wilderness. He was ordered to report with his brigade to Genl. Mott. In marching towards where he supposed Mott was he noticed Hancock's line hard pressed and breaking. Without looking any farther for Mott he wheeled his brigade into the place where the 2d Corps was giving way. He charged and took three lines of rebel pits and saved the credit of the 2d Corps and turned the scales in our favor for that day. Genl. Hancock was present at the time, and rode over and through the Col. thanked the men for their timely assistance. They will never censure a man when he does so and is successful. Had he been whipped it would have been another thing. At Spottsylvania he commanded the whole Division. On the advance they occupied the extreme left, and a most important position. Before long every regiment in the division except the 100th broke & fled. There was no other division up near enough to support him or take his place. He had noticed the enemy massing to flank us, and had sent word to Genl Burnside of the fact. Burnside came up just as the last regiment was running off & one of his aids thinking it was the 100th called over to the Col. "Where are your Roundheads now?" Genl B. supposed it was them running. But they were out beyond so few in number among the rebels that they were not noticed. The Col. supposed they would be captured and determined to go with them. He dismounted, sent his horse back, and with his son took a position with Co. E till the order came from Genl B to retire. Even then as they always have done, they never under any circumstances have left their places unless in obedience to orders. Why the rebels did not take them no one knows. They will never have a better chance. When they came back Genl Burnside reprimanded him severely for the conduct of his Division. He has been loosing a good deal of sleep and enduring a great deal of fatigue more than he was able. George noticed that he was talking strangely and giving absurd orders. He told Genl Burnside and he ordered him to go to the hospital. He came back and staid with me for four days before he could get a conveyance to Aquia Creek. I saw him take his little piece of boiled meat and a few crackers out of his pocket that he had taken from his saddle bags when he sent his horse away. He said he had put it in his pocket to nibble

at on his way to Richmond. He had two shakes of ague at my tent before he left. He is broken down but not insane. He took spells of vertigo. I think he will never again be fit for field service, and am sorry for it. But the worst of all is that Col. Bartlett of one of the regiments that was away at Spottsylvania has got the credit of the decisive charge at the Wilderness and has in consequence been made a General, while we all know that Bartlett was at the time away at home, and did not get here till two days afterward. So things go here in the Army of the Potomac. They give Genl Burnside the go by too as much as possible, and if he was like the rest of them he would have resigned long ago. I know he will when the campaign is over. There may however be some lucky shot before long that will take off Meade & then they can't keep Burnside back as he will take command by right, and will have a settlement with them. I have said enough now to get hanged if Genl. Patrick [Marsena Rudolph Patrick] saw it.

Please send me another box of those large pens, and I will try and write in ink. You will also find in a box somewhere, either in the bureau or maybe in a wooden box in a drawer in the office two or three gold pens. Look or try that the point of one of them is good and send it to me in a letter. They are small old ones, but good.

I don't remember any other questions you asked and I have not your letter here. I had quite a package of them and for fear of losing them sealed them up and left the package in Lt. Justices desk addressed to you.

It is a very quiet Sabbath back here - we hear the firing going on in the distance, but with us it is a day of rest for once.

I hope to hear from you soon again, and that you are well and in good spirits. I will write as often as I can - Please remember me to the folks & believe me still

Yours affectionately
William