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Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Francis P. Porter

Thomas S. Armstrong

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Head Quarters Fort Donelson .
Stewart Co. Senn. Feb 23rd 1862 After nearly two weeks of travel on Bailroad Steamboat & afoot Then the excitement of proparing for Battle. Then the march. Then the forming in line on the field. Then the surrender. Then the look proon the Blooch, field. Then the bivonac Then the sleeping on rails in the much our ful to a fine then commencing to rain at 12 P.M. Our blankets wet our bockes in the water then The movement of our encum prient to Dover Then my waiting whom a sick Brother (M. T.) Then the Sleeping in much walking in mud punning in much Sitting in much. Slandy Guard in hair and much you may see that we have been busy. I hardly get him for as much writing as I would like to do. Hester day the leuniberland commenced prising the clouds poured down rain with sharp sand and thursder ME had to move our tent out

of the way of the rising water, Last ring he I slept with wobert hourson in a Secesh Shoemaker Shop. This morning I awake the berds singing the sun shining clearly an awful pleasant day. I washed & at any brakfast of coffee Hard crackers & fat port fried I read a games will paper where were two puces Ligned & Wa Gellespu & A F Amsburg Then I ook a stroll to look at the fort and look some News of it and one sketch. W. F. My Brother had the Joring fever here I went to leincin nati might before last. He well slay in the hosfular there awhile Her was pretty sick. Day before yasterday or might rathe John Gelliefic fell in to the water between two sleam boats & Sunk so ofter that he came up the last him and was fust caught & no mon, I lele you he was Saved marrowly underly. George is well & in good spirits of think we shall leave This place in a day ar two. Joseph J. Kaelly was here yesterday Ho E & two other man from Devott be all came here ofte 6 dead & about grounds her 4 times, To day of

20 wounded Men 4 of the dead belong to lafter leonklin who called here this mon ing He said he was in the hearing of the shells & balls but he said he was un well and did not slay in the fight for Kelly looks well and hearly very portly. He Thinks we will be in Alabam a soon first like him. bap in Chandle has not been well since he came here. I should like to have you see our bogs in Then lends they take to Camp lefe as If they were used to it. I would like to give you a description of the batta but you have got fust as good in the pape as we could give you. I have seen lots of Secesh prisoners they wear pants of Brown homemade frans smiff colored boots like Hunting Shirts with a bell in which they Carried their Bowie Krives Our boys have Thousands of Bown Knieves, dogs are plint & Brock Reyes has a poster which crows in our tent regularly. I have been over the

saw Wash. Irwin of the 76 king O. V. one of my old school-mates well we are anjoying ourselves hugely here The Jutter Sticks the prices outs the boys charging 2 prices for articles of feel That the Good spuring our lives Frank you should make your self as happy as possible Gerve your soil & pray for us fart eway stown in Tennessee Worth to me very offer Letters are links that bund thuthful hearts to Each other. Fellering mind to mind Giving to Kindred spirits lasting & true delight Then If you would strengthen our friendship don't forget to write to me ofte From How freed Thomas Flows trong Fort Donelson Termessu leave of bot MD Leggett 78 th Kig, bo, B. O.V. M. S. A. To Miss Frank P Porter West Junes will 4

February 23, 1862

Head Quarters Fort Donelson

Stewart Co. Tenn Feb 23rd 1862

Frank

After nearly two weeks of travel on railroad, steamboat, & afoot, then the excitement of preparing for battle, then the march, then the forming in line in the field, then the surrender, then the look upon the bloody field, then the bivouac, then the sleeping on rails in the mud our feet to a fire, then commencing to rain at 12 P.M. Our blankets wet, our bodies in the water. Then movement of our encampment to Dover. Then my waiting on a sick brother (W.F.). The sleeping in the mud, walking in mud, running in mud. Standing guard in rain and mud, you may see that we have been busy. I hardly get time for as much writing as I would like to do.

Yesterday the Cumberland commenced rising, the clouds poured down rain with sharp lightning and thunder. We had to move our tent out of the way of the rising water. Last night I slept with Robert Hanson in a Secesh shoemakers shop. This morning I awoke the birds singing the sun shining clearly, an awful pleasant day. I washed and ate my breakfast of coffee, hard crackers & fat pork fried. I read a Zanesville paper where were two pieces signed J.W.A. Gillespie & W.F. Armstrong. The I took a stroll to look at the fort and took some views of it and one sketch.

W.F., my brother, had the Lung fever here & went to Cincinnati night before last. He will stay in the hospital there awhile. He was pretty sick. Day before yesterday or night rather, John Gillespie fell into the water between two steamboats and sunk so often that he came up the last time and was just caught & no more. I tell you he was saved narrowly indeed.

I think we shall leave this place in a day or two. Joseph J. Kelly was here yesterday. He & two other men from DeWitt Co. Ill came here after 6 dead & 20 wounded men, 4 of the dead belonging to Captain Conklin who was called here this morning. He said he was in the hearing of shells & balls but he said he was unwell and did not want to stay in the fight. Joe Kelly looks well & hearty, very portly. He thinks we will be in Alabama soon. Just like him. Capn Chandler has not been well since he came here.

I should like to have you see our boys in their tents. They take to Camp life as if they were used to it. I would like to give you a description of the battle but you have got just as good in the papers as we could give you. I have seen lots of Secesh prisoners. They wear pants of brown homemade jeans, snuff colored coats like hunting shirts with a belt in which they carried their Bowie knives. Our boys have thousands of Bowie knives, dogs are plenty, & Brock Keyes has a rooster which crows in our tent regularly. I have been over the grounds here 4 times.

Today I saw Wash Irwin of the 76 Reg O.V. one of my old school mates. Well we are enjoying ourselves hugely here. The _____ sticks the prices onto the boys charging 2 prices for articles.

I feel that we will be home before many months, the Lord sparing our lives. Frank you should make yourself as happy as possible. Serve your God & pray for us far away down in Tennessee.

Write to me very often. Letters are links that bind truthful hearts to each other. Fettering mind to mind. Giving to kindred spirits lashing & true delight. The if you would strengthen our friendship. Don't forget to write to me often. From your friend.

Thomas S. Armstrong

Fort Donelson Tennessee

Care of Col. M.D. Leggett

78th Reg. Co. B. O.V.U.S.A.