

2-23-1862

Letter from Thomas S. Armstrong to Francis P. Porter

Thomas S. Armstrong

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Head Quarters Fort Donelson
Stewart Co. Tenn. Feb. 23rd 1862

Frank

After nearly two weeks of travel on Rail-
road Steamboat & afoot. Then the excitement of
preparing for battle. Then the march. Then the forming
in line on 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
the movement of our encampment to Dover
Then my waiting upon a sick Brother (W.P.)
Then the sleeping in mud. walking in mud
running in mud. sitting 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
and thunder. We had to move our tent out

of the way of the rising water. Last night I slept with Robert Pearson in a secesh shoemaker shop. This morning I awoke the birds singing the sun shining clearly an awful pleasant day. I washed & ate my breakfast of coffee hard crackers & fat pork fried. I read a Jamesville paper where were two pieces signed J. W. A. Gillespie & W. F. Armstrong. Then I took a stroll to look at the fort and took some views of it and one sketch. W. F. my Brother had the Gung 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 in to the water between two steam boats & sunk so often that he came up the last time and was just caught & no more. I tell you he was saved narrowly indeed! George is well & in good spirits 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 & about

20 wounded men & of the dead belong to Capt. Conklin who called here this morning. He said he was in the hearing of the shells & balls but he said he was run well and did not stay in the fight. Joe Kelly looks well and hearty very pretty. He thinks we will be in Alabama soon just like him. Cap. in Chandle 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 paper 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. To day I

saw Wash. Irwin of the 76 Reg. O.V.
one of my old school-mates. well
we are enjoying ourselves hugely here
The Sutter 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 going
to kindred spirits lasting & true delight
Then if you would strengthen our
friendship don't forget to write to me
often
From Your friend

Thomas P. Armstrong
Fort Donelson Tennessee
Care of Col. McD. Begett
78th Reg. Co. B. O.V. U.S.A.

To Miss Frank P. Porter
West Galesville 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.

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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.