

Lookout Valley, November 4, 1863

Dear Frant,

We got mail yesterday, and I was much pleased to get two letters from you. It was the first time I had had a letter in six weeks and you may guess I felt well.

We were at Bridgeport until October 27, building corduroy road and getting out railroad ties. The morning of the 27th we got our breakfast, packed up our things by firelight and marched. We went 17 miles, drove out a regiment and a company of Rebs and staid all night in their camp. They left about half an hour before we got there.

They had us up the next morning before dawn. About 10 o'clock, we came in sight of Lookout Mountain and saw the smoke of the cannon--although we could hear no report. We were ordered to load our guns.

We marched along until about two, all quiet, when a sharp firing broke out right ahead and 5 or 6 bullets came zzzzing over our heads and a cavalryman came back wounded. Our faces paled a little, for we expected a big fight--but there was no "run" in us. Every man was ready; we were deployed left and right as skirmishers--that is, one line, with each man five paces from the other.

We skirmished about half a mile and then were ordered to charge. The way the Rebs got out of our way was fun! The fighting was mostly on the right wing of the regiment; our company is the left company.

Our faces were red enough when we stopped, for we went nearly on a dog trot with knapsack, canteen, haversack, gun and ammunition. We then formed in column and started along the road. They began to shell us from Lookout, but they hurt no one--only quickened our pace a little. One shell burst right over us and a piece struck about three feet from me. I made up my mind they'd got to hit closer than that to kill me!

We soon got out of reach and formed a junction with Grant's men. They cheered us and we cheered them until this old valley fairly rung! I tell you if the old flag didn't look good as they waved it and welcomed us to their aid. If they were not pleased, I never saw men that were, for we opened the road so they could get provisions--they were on quarter rations.

We went to sleep expecting a good night's rest, but about one o'clock I was waked up by heavy firing right in our rear, on the road we came over. We were ordered to fall in and march right up to where they were fighting. We lay down, expecting to go in for sure. We could see the flash of the guns and hear the orders. The Second Brigade charged right up the hill and drove them out of their rifle pits; two regiments drove 1700 Rebels, so we did not have to go in until after daylight, when we went up and held the breastworks our fellows drove them out of.

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The Second Brigade lost between 200 and 300 killed and wounded. I saw 20 of them laid out to be buried. One fellow was shot through three times, and I thought to myself "Will this ever be my fate"--but if it is, it will be quick and all my suffering will be done. I hope it may not. I want to see this rebellion put down, to go home and enjoy life as men should--the laws respected and the Constitution lived up to. Until that can be done, I might as well be here as there.

Frant, you said you heard I was a Copperhead. Thank God it is not so! I just as soon be a Rebel--and sooner far be dead! No!! If it had not been for those sneaking, crawling things--I can't call them men!--we would have had this war ended. We'd have been at home and the North and the South both better off.

You will not find many Copperheads among the soldiers. They are home-cowards and fools that are willing to be kicked around by Southern chivalry. I hope I am not made for that purpose.

We have been on duty every day, expecting a fight, but I do not think now that we will have one. We have got our position and got it fortified. If the Rebs think it safe, let them come. Our rations are a little short, but we get along well. I was never tougher in my life nor felt any better. I **WOULD** like a few apples and a little cider, but will try to get along without. I have not seen either since we came through Nashville.

They just called me to supper, so goodbye. Believe me to be your true and affectionate friend.

Edgar.

[*The Jamestown Sun*, Friday, July 7, 1961]