

Near Richmond July 25th

Dear Sister:

As I have nothing in the world to do now, until five o'clock this evening it being Eleven A.M. I could think of now way of passing away time more profitably than by communicating with the loved ones at home. I find that the longer I stay in the army the more I become attached to home and its quiet. I would not call those good, peaceful and happy times that I used to spend at home, "boring" now but "God sent blessings." My nature had under gone an entire change since I entered the army, the longer I stay here, the less fond I become of the excitement, that I used to wish for so much while at home. I am totally tired of all this, and no tidings would be received with greater joy by the whole Army than a proclamation of peace. You can have no idea of the horrors of this war until you visit the field of battle and stay in camp three or four weeks. I am in two hundred yards of the grave yard and I hardly ever look towards it but that I see a "fatigue party" at work preparing the last resting place for some poor soldier. There were two graves dug yesterday the day before and had the day before that. That graveyard is for this brigade only, composed of five Regts. They say it is worse in other divisions and brigades of the army. And such a horrid sight you never saw in your life as is seen in graveyard in Richmond. There are from one hundred to an hundred and fifty bodies ready for interment all the time and for want of hands they have to stay out over a week before they can be buried. The corpses swell, burst the coffins, and such a scent you never smelled in your life, it is absolutely intolerable, you cant go anywhere about them. I reckon there are a near fifty million of flies. But this is not the worst part of the horrors of war, go on the battle ground and there behold the thousand of pale corpses that were, but [?] before, full of lusty life, listen to the shriek of agony that are sent up from the gory field it would turn a heart of stone. I got so [?] I could look on the spectacle with perfect indifference. Just before I went into the battle of "Cold Harbor" a poor fellow who had the calf of his leg torn off by a bomb crawled up to me and begged for a drink of water. I took off my canteen and gave him the last drop of it. Water is the most valuable article about a soldier [person?] in time of battle, but I did not have the heart to refuse him. I knew I would be in an awful condition if I was badly wounded. As we were going on the field I saw a poor boy about sixteen years old, lying behind a briar patch shot through the

bowels he was as pale as a corpse gasping for breath, he would turn over, draw up his feet and gave us one of the most beseeching looks that I ever beheld, he could not speak, but I knew he wanted water and could not get it though a very large branch was [?] in ten feet of him. We could not stop to help him, and I went back next morning to see him but he was cold in death. The wounded suffer terribly, they go some times three or four days without having their wounds dressed. One fellow in my Company by way of Kitchens had a bullet to strike him on the chin, broke his jaw bone, got through the mouth, cut off the tongue and came out at his neck. In one day it was filled with maggots and in a week he died. I was looking at the poor man when the bullet struck. I could hear the balls hit as plainly as I ever heard anything, it sounded like throwing a piece of dough or mud against a wall or plank. When Henry was shot through the hand, he remarked to me that he was wounded, and I felt thankful that it was so slight and rather congratulated myself, that he was wounded for two reasons, one was, that he could stop fighting and get in a place of safety, and another was he would get a furlough in [?] and got home in the fruit season. I know that wound was rather slight only a buckshot had gone through his right hand and lodged in the skin on the back of it. The ball went between the two middle fingers [?] in the center of the hand. I do not think it broke a single bone in his hand. I remember the last sound he ever spoke to me. I had shot my gun so many times, that it became fowl[?] and I could not ram down the ball, so I had to put it down, I then asked Lt. Nelson to give me a gun that was near him and Henry raised up and said, "here Kit, take my gun." a little while after that he left the field and I never saw him anymore alive. He had a smile on his countenance the next morning when I went to the line. All that saw him, remarked the smile on his face. He was lying on his back, his feet stretched out, hands and arms extended full length nearly perpendicular to his body, hands nearly closed and head turned over to the right, so as to rest on the right cheek. His eyes were wide open, I think Henry was laughing just as he was shot down. I noticed closely to see if he had made any struggle but I did not see s single since I do not think he moved a limb, after he fell. The spot, where he was lying was the most dangerous one on the field. A great many of the wounded were killed right where he fell. I turned around and looked to see if any of the wounded would be hurt when they started off the field and I saw three of them shot down in fifteen or twenty feet of where Henry was lying. The crowd of wounded became so

mixed up that I could not see where Henry was. I told you in my first letter regarding his death, that he was robbed, but I was mistaken he had given all of his money to Fred to save for him, [?], in case that he was killed. The only thing I missed from his body was his blanket. I presume he threw that away before we got into the fight, as we were run nearly down, before we got into the battle. I came very near going out two or three times. but I would stick on until the affair was over I would be very willing, would gladly, swap places with any one of them negroes at home, during the war. My conditions would be a hundred percent better by the swap. I can't conceive how a man could have a worse punishment inflicted on him that to make him a soldier. The men in a great many instances are demonstrating their [?] to a soldiers life by getting substitutes and feigning sickness and getting discharges, I have known them to go so far as to shoot off their fingers and hands. I would very willingly get out of the army by some honorable means but not by disabling myself for life, there is a conjecture in camp that we will move away from Richmond in a short while, but I hope it is not so, unless we go to Georgia. Does every thing look like it used to there at home? Love to all.

Your Aff. Brother C. C. Anderson