Baton Rouge, Dec 23, 62

Dear Sarah,

In compliance with your request to write at all opportunities I send you a few lines if any period had told me that I should ever be a hard to write letter in a month from the time that I enlisted I would have doubted this good but no sooner had I left home than the fat came off and through scarcity the month has passed since we left Camp Miller. Since then the 10 letters from Company L have been a short one but I will make it up once more time. What a change it has made on me, before when I was from home I felt no inclination for writing and none to hear from
home now when the chance offers I must write and when a mail comes although I know there can be none for me I past until it is distributed and know that I have none but as I have given directions for letters I will not be without some answer. I am in the enjoyment of good health very good in fact as I never felt better than I do at present and it feels good to be so as almost every person about me is complaining Mr. Hooper and his brother are very well and I think stands it well. But all the rest of the Old Serofield Squad are more or less ailing and what a set of old grannies they are on board ship they were complaineing and if they knew that they were to be so badly used they would not have satisfied and when they got on shore they went to eating every thing they could get
hold of Bates and Geo Wells are in a bad way the 30th gives S. W. to understand that it will be from two weeks before he is fit for duty.

In my part I mean to keep well and eat as little beside my rations as possible in the few lines I sent you last I mention that I had allotted $10 per month of my pay to be paid to you either for pay about the middle of Jan. see if Wiliams got Warden to accept that order in ink I will an order to Warden to pay it to you other wise I shall begin a letter to you to day and give you some distinction of the voyage up this river to this place no more at present but believing me to be yours John Jackson
In the Picket lines about 10
Roost from the Rebel Battalion
at Port Hudson June 19th 1863

Dear Cousin Mary,

As you will see by the
Heading of this I am in the thick of the
fight. I wrote to your mother last week
and as you will see that you know
that the 52nd were here on Saturday we
were informed that Port Hudson was to be
assaulted on Sunday morning and we
were to be ready at midnight. At
that time we were in line coffee was
served out and we waited until one
o’clock when we started for the front
and until this time I never felt we
want of sight at night as I did that
March I could not distinguish my file
leader although at the distance of twenty
inches from me I stumbled over stumps
ran against trees fell over roots while
darkness lasted. and it with some other
reasons settled the question of my future
enlistment I can see anything at night, and were I to be on a post where good light is required I might be the means of some disaster to the men with me. To return to our Sunday work (and Sunday appears to be the day that Gen. Banks selects to do most of his work in) after marching until within a short distance of the Rebel works, the right of the left was deployed as skirmishers and the left as a reserve and ordered to advance on the left of our left were the 91 N.Y. 2 La and the 90 N.Y. They started with a yell when at a distance from the fort and the result was that they received a galling fire from the Rebels and they scattered leaving a great number of dead and wounded on the field. Our left got under cover and lost but few. More than killed and wounded our loss up to this time is about thirty and as we still in front town are surrounded every day and some days have one hell
in our Company only two have been wounded this far one rather badly and the other very slightly through the day Sunday we lay in a very uncomfortable position as we were exposed to the fire of the Rebels and had to lay flat on our backs or sides and take the full heat of the sun during the day if we stirred we were reminded when we were by the sharp crack of the Rebel Rifle at times the balls flew thick several of them passed close to my face as I lay on my back one of them wounded our orderly at a short distance from me another struck a log some five or six feet from me. We lay in that position until Monday morning when just before day break we scrambled to the place we now occupy and are now it is not an exposed position but we are somewhat exposed in going to the rear as the road we travel
to get water is exposed to a direct fire from the Rebels and we have to travel that road at least once a day and our Cooks have to bring our ration to us we hope to be relieved by Sunday and go the rear and some other Regt. take our place. Since we have been here the firing has almost been incessant and the whistling of Bullets very unpleasant about our ears on Monday we sent a flag of truce for permission to bury our dead but the Rebels would not let us do both dead and wounded had to lay until Wednesday when a flag was granted and the dead buried and the wounded who lay so close to their guns that we could not reach them brought in some three of them had lain from Sunday until Wednesday evening under the scorching sun with no shelter by day or cover at night.
the Rebels watching them and firing at any person who went to relieve them. One man from the 12th Maine was taken prisoner by the sent out to carry water to a wounded man. They allowed him to go, but when he sent out to return they notified him that if he attempted to return they would shoot him but he might come in to the fort as their prisoner, which he did. Our men did all they could to reach the wounded but could only do so at night. Gen. Prentice was wounded and lay until Sunday night when he was rescued. It was heartrending to see the poor fellows in the tents and hear their cries for water. May I have seen enough of war and when we think of the loss of life that is likely to be before Port Hudson is taken it makes our hearts sick. May the Lord grant that Peace soon come or we are in a quandary just now. They are going to
by volunteers a column of 1000
men I did think at first that I
should be one of them, but as part
of the movement is to be in the
dark I am apt for it and I
have no confidence in the Genis
under Banks the attack on Sund-
ay was made and Gen Metzger
had made no examination of
the ground had his men in and
was at a loss as to the point of
attack and although the men
are not allowed as much Whisky
as they ought to get for health
sake the Officers get enough to
get drunk on and that was
the state of many of the Officers
on Sunday and as government
have not done honorably by the
nine Months men but made stay
ten months instead of the nine we
enlisted for I do not feel called
of to volunteer but will go willing if
The regt is ordered in Mr. Hooson's field that it would be a shame if we do not volunteer and he may do so. Our Col is not for volunteering. As the matter stands at present if Port Hudson was taken we would likely leave here so as to reach home by the 11th of July but we will hardly get away before that date and then we shall have to lay a quarantine so we will not get home before the first of August. I feel feel as though I should like to be at home. Now for we have been pretty well looked for the last two weeks at least during the day marched until every stick we have on us is wet with perspiration and at night laying down with nothing but the clothing of Heaven over us. Sometimes going days without a chance of washing our face and hands unless in dirty water but such is a soldier's
life my health is as good as usual
for which I cannot be too thankful
for there are some of our men who
are really sick who are not at all
noticed by our Staff and not until
they are unable to go any further are
they released from duty nor is it
to be wondered at for in the
army there are a large number
of men whose sole aim is to get
rid of duty and if they feel a pain
in the great toe they see them
to the Dr he orders them to shew
their tongues and if clean they are
reported as fit for duty and that
makes the true man they of Refuse
But as this is all the paper I have
I must close you will see that
it is written in a slovenly state
but you will excuse it and if
we do not go home soon I will
write you a very near one soon
My love to all and Secreter
John Beardwell