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Near Dandridge Feb 7. 1864.

My Dear Father

As I have written very seldom of late to you or any one at home I have an explanation which is due you - as it has not been through indifference that I have not written. I am sorry that you have attributed it so. There is no pleasure to me like that of writing home, unless it be that of hearing from you all. I have no other correspondents - have declined correspondence with all except home.

Since leaving Chickamauga there have been so many small details reports &c to occupy my time that I have not had time to write as often as you suppose. I might scratch you off a line or two at any time and announce "all well" but as our health has always been so good and we have generally come out safe I suppose you regard us so until otherwise informed.

I presume I have not received all the letters written me. - I received one from Laura yesterday written in Aug. - but you and Lol have been kind enough in writing.

You desired me to give you the details of our fight at Beau Station. - Genl Longstreet characterized it a Skirmish; but

to me, the Regt, and in fact Brigade, it was a battle and severe one too.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> inst Dec. the Brigade left Rogersville & marched eight miles - arriving face to face with the Yankees about 3 miles East of Beans Station \* about 3 o'clock in the evening -

Graces Brigade was the advance - and our Regiment - though not in front was by Genl. Grace assigned to the important duty of first encountering the enemy - Col Mc Lennan deployed the old 4<sup>th</sup> Bat as skirmishers - holding the 2<sup>d</sup> as reserve - and immediately moved on the enemy who we struck very soon and drove easily for awhile. As we advanced the valley widening and the enemy growing stronger in numbers the 2<sup>d</sup> pushed forward to the line of skirmishers and the fight commenced. -

I had been ordered with his own and Capt. Gullidges company to the left of the Regiment - my own position I chose with Capt. Crumplers company advancing on the public road. We were fighting in the open valley and it was only occasionally the Yankees found a halting place. - but the few elevations and old houses which they occasionally occupied retarded our advance sometimes a few minutes. - At one hour particularly I remember we had hard work - and several men were wounded as we advanced on it. -

Their front line was stronger than our Reg, and numbers and movements were visible on both sides. - Still we kept attacking and it was amusing and really laughable to witness some of the maneuvers.

Though so many bayonet charges have been reported I think it is a pretty hard matter to bring men to such close quarters - the bravest hesitate. - I saw it - pretty fairly tested that day - The Yankees concealed themselves in the weeds and as our Reg advanced + engaged them pretty hotly - we would occasionally force them to retreat at the double quick. - Our whole Reg would open a volley on the blue backs, as they run and then we would raise the yell and forward double quick -

You should have witnessed the joy and delight of our men - but soon the Yankees would reach a good position and form their line of defense - then the Rebels countenances fall - how quick their spirits change as we see that the work aint over but is still ahead - but I our boys go steadily at it and soon have them up again - dusty down the old valley in the same style and with the same charging and yells and elevation + depression of our spirits. Our spirits however were certainly better than theirs as we moved them before us all the while -

Sometimes slow and sometimes at the double gait until we arrived in about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Station - The enemy's artillery was visible and their long lines of cavalry showed themselves hovering on their flanks - imagine I suppose they would charge us when an advantage showed - The Rebels did not however dread their pretty lines - during the fight the remark among the boys was - that they would get a fine horse out of that drove - so contemptible do they regard that branch of the service - they know that branch of our own army to be as harmless to an enemy. It was not then we feared! Their dismounted line now appeared stronger & the Artillery belched out shot and shell - shell were continually bursting over and around us and Rifle balls whistled about our ears - Upon the left when you was fighting the enemy pressed harder - at that point they charged and repulsed our line but in turn were driven back as Johnson's Brigade moved there to the front - Col Sanford's Reg to the left of the Road and direct toward the Station and McLaw's Division forwarded on our right to flank their left and obtain possession of the Road which led over Clinch Mountain to - Cumberland Gap - the only thing which rendered this point one of any importance -

We had now already sustained our loss - Capt. Reeves and Crumpler and Lt Ken and about 40 men had been

wounded and 6 or 8 men killed -  
 We were cheered soon by the presence of our own  
 Battery - taking position directly behind me -  
 my particular position I felt not a very desirable  
 one as the Artillery duel had to be fought over me  
 We were however unharmed and had rifle balls  
 harmed us as little the day would have been well  
 with us - The advance had now become general  
 I could witness the whole advance and our fire  
 behind us by some well directed shell emptied  
 the Brick dwellings at the Station of their defenders  
 - McGraws reached the Clinch Gap Road opened a volley  
 on them - and at dark we had them in full re-  
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 don't know how many - Our Reg. was scattered from  
 one side of the valley to the other and did not assem-  
 ble till morning - Screws & myself passed the night  
 in an old church not knowing Guss fate till next  
 morning - He marched up with his squad and  
 reported himself - He had fought the fight with  
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 down and slept with them being too worn out to turn  
 the Regiment. The Cavalry had threatened his detachment  
 and some Yankees had flanked him but like an old  
 General he manuevered out of the difficulty -  
 My Love of Johnsons Brigade spoke high in praise

of him and his men - and said he should report to  
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 Our and his Regiments were the chief sufferers but  
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 lost a few - The loss in killed + wounded I think  
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 of the coffee but nothing more -

Since the Bear Station affair we have had two  
 other meetings with the yankees - about the 15, Jan  
 we had a skirmish with them but lost only one  
 man - that was between Mornstown and the place  
 Again about the last of the month we crossed  
 the French Broad River - three rivers in fact for they  
 were all waist deep and 2 or 300 Hundred yards  
 wide - wading them in succession though swift and  
 cold. On arriving at the third branch of the River  
 we discovered the yankees on the opposite shore  
 we crossed the stream and marched about 4 1/2  
 miles and advanced Gno's company as skirmisher  
 covering the front of our Regiment - Presently they  
 found the yankees and began the skirmish -

7. Finally succeeded in driving them off with the aid  
of a few skirmishers from the other Regiment, and  
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It was only a small force watching our movements  
Since we have enjoyed peace - are now comfortably  
quartered in some yankee huts we found here about half  
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ernment, except what our Brigade Q. M. has man-  
ufactured - and but little clothing.

We are drilling every day disciplining while good weather  
continues and while in camp - I think by the 1<sup>st</sup> of  
April this Regiment will be full in number and  
well drilled and disciplined - Lt Col McClellan is  
still absent on leave. Maj Huguley promises to make  
a good officer and seems willing to cooperate with  
Bolling - Bolling is President of a General Court -  
Martial but as it has disposed of all its cases  
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yankees & captured by us at Chickamauga was  
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Company Brigade - An example of the same kind  
to those who desert and go home is needed also  
and grace not expected till March - M. Crenshaw Hall

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Gracie's Brigade was the advance - and our Regiment though not in front was by Genl Gracie assigned to the important duty of first encountering the enemy - Col McLennan deployed the old 4<sup>th</sup> Bat as skirmishers - holding the 2<sup>d</sup> as reserve - and immediately moved on the enemy who we struck very soon and drove easily for awhile: As we advanced the valley widening and the enemy growing stronger in numbers the 2<sup>d</sup> pushed forward to the line of skirmishers and the fight commenced. - Jno had been ordered with his own and Capt Culledges company to the left of the Regiment - my own position I chose with Capt Crumplers company advancing on the public road. We were fighting in the open valley and it was only occasionally the yankees found a halting place. - but the few elevations and old houses which they occasionally occupied retarded our advance

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