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Thomas L. Evans letter to his mother from battlefield near Vicksburg, June 16, 1863

Thomas L. Evans

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Battle Field near Vicksburg Miss

June 16th 1863

Dear Mother.

I am sitting here in my tent this afternoon with nothing to do but write & what is more I have nothing to write. But I was just thinking how anxious our friends at home are knowing that we are here on the field where we are liable to be exposed at any moment yet our friends know not who has fallen or who may fall next. I hope they will all console themselves as we do by knowing that if we do fall we fall in a just cause & into the hands of a just God. But is it thus I write to those who I now spend restless nights while I am sleeping soundly here (when my duties do not interfere then I make it up in the day time) I suppose it is better thus to look at things just as they are. We know the majority will come through safe & each one hopes that he may be one of that number. I with the rest hope and

feel so but our hopes & feelings
cannot be relied on as facts

However I can truly say I have
never yet seen the day in which I
regretted for a moment that I am
engaged in the cause I am in

I feel now that the only
circumstance that could cause such
regret would be an unholy compromise
with the rebels one that would be
dictated by traitors compromise our
liberties & disgrace armies & our Nation

Gas Peace, Peace, is the cry everywhere
at home & in the army. But when
a soldier draws a long breath & says
"I wish the war was over that I might
~~the~~ go home to my family or friends"
he dont mean what the Copperheads do
when they raise the cry of Peace & demand
such a peace as I have spoken of above
No never. Many a time I have heard
soldiers make the above remark & have
replied, Gas heartily do I wish so too,
Yet I would not wish for us all to
lay down our arms and go home
& let the Rebs have it all their
own way. No! No. I dont mean that
they say I only wish our work
was done that we might go home

and live as we use to live
Thus the very thing the Copperheads
ask is the very thing the soldiers
will never be content with. . . .

I wish I could tell you just how
we are situated here but I cannot
farther than McClernard's Corps (in
which we are) is on the left. The
left of this corps rests on the river
below Vicksburg while we being on
the extreme right of this corps are
thrown around in the rear of Vicksburg
which lies directly between us and the
river. On our right is McPherson's corps
Logan's division of that corps joining
us on the right. On the right of McPherson's
Corps is Sherman's ~~right~~ the right of which
rests on the river above. So the rebels
are right when their pickets hollow over
to ours that they are bounded all around
on the north by Yankees on the E. by
Yankees on the S. by Yankees & on the
west by the Gunboats. How this siege
will close we dont know. No one doubts
that we will be perfectly successful.
as we are progressing still. Moving up our
cannon pattering down their works & digging
rifle pits close to them for our protection
so we are bound to take them after

while. But the question is will they surrender soon or will they keep us working here for weeks. Will they try to cut out & thus give us a chance to meet them to an advantage. Or will there be a heavy fight in our rear back on Black River which will decide the whole affair. But we must be patient. Time will decide all these questions all right for us.

We have a great deal of ague among us still. & the duties are heavy on those who are well. The few boys from our neighborhood who are left with us are well.

We have been making out pay rolls to day & they say they will pay us in a few days perhaps we will get it in a few days & perhaps in a few weeks. But it matters not to me.

Tom Sterling says to tell my duck he is all right.

Love to all Good night
Thomas

Battle Field near Vicksburg, Miss.

June 16th, 1863.

Dear Mother:

I am sitting here in my tent this afternoon with nothing to do but write and what is more, I have nothing to write but I was just thinking how anxious our friends at home are knowing that we are here on the field where we are liable to be exposed at any moment, yet our friends know not who has fallen or who may fall next. I hope they will all console themselves as we do by knowing that if we do fall, we fall in a just cause and into the hands of a just God. But is it thus I write to those who I know spend restless nights while I am sleeping soundly here (when my duties do not interfere then I make it up in the day time) I suppose it is better thus to look at things just as they are. We know the majority will come through safe and each one hopes that he may be one of that number. I with the rest, hope and feel so but our hopes and feelings cannot be relied on as facts, however, I can truly say I have never yet seen the day in which I regretted for a moment that I am engaged in the cause I am in.

I feel now that the only circumstances that could cause such regret would be an unholy compromise with the rebels - one that would be dictated by traitor compromise our liberties and disgrace armies and our Nation.

Yes, Peace, Peace, is the cry everywhere at home and in the army but when a soldier draws a long breath and says "I wish the war was over that I might go home to my family or friends," he don't mean what the Copperheads do when they raise the cry of Peace and demand such a peace as I have spoken of above. No, never! Many a time I have heard soldiers make the above remarks and have replied, "Yes, heartily do I wish so too". Yet, I would not wish for us all to lay down our arms and go home and let the Rebs have it all their own way. No, No, I don't mean that. They say, I only wish our work was

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done that we might go home and live as we used to live.

Thus the very thing the Copperheads ask is the very thing the soldiers will never be content with.

I wish I could tell you just how we are situated here but I cannot farther than McClernards Corps (in which we are) is on the left. The left of this Corps rests on the river below Vicksburg while we being on the extreme right of this corps, are thrown around in the rear of Vicksburg which lies directly between us and the river. On our right is McPherson's corps, Logan's Division of that corps joining us on the right. On the right of McPherson's Corps is Sherman's, the right of which rests on the river above so the rebels are right when their pickets hollow over to ours that they are bounded all around on the North by Yankees, on the E. by Yankees, on the S. by Yankees and on the West by the Gunboats. How this siege will close, we don't know. No one doubts that we will be perfectly successful as we are progressing still. Moving up our cannon, battering down their works and digging rifle pits close to them for our protection so we are bound to take them after while but the question is will they surrender soon or will they keep us working here for weeks? Will they try to cut out and thus give us a chance to meet them to advantage or will there be a heavy fight in our rear, back on the Black River which will decide the whole affair? But we must be patient, time will decide all these questions all right for us.

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Thomas.