

Rolla, Mo. Dec 15th 1861

Dear Father

We are still laying here awaiting orders to move. I thought when I last wrote that we would have been in St. Louis before this but for some reason or other we have been left here exposed to everything that men could be except bullets. We are encamped in a hollow where the sun never shines except in the middle of the day. The ground is always wet and the consequence is that a great many of the men are in the hospital. We started from Jefferson City with four hundred and fifty men none have died however we now have one hundred and eighty fit for service. So you see that the march and hard living together with bad weather have cut us down considerably. I have just recovered from a severe attack of sickness I was taken with a diarrhea which ended in something like congestive chills. I had three chills one night in less than two hours time. They went very hard with me in fact I thought and so did the dr that my time was short for this world. But my careful nursing from Dr. McConegry the Asst. Dr. I am now entirely well but still very weak. I cannot get anything to eat but hard crackers and Tea: and am really so hungry sometimes that I cannot sleep.

I would go down to St. Louis on furlough as the Col said he would give me one: but am afraid to go, as the Regt. may be ordered back into the country and if it goes I want to go with it, as I have set my eye on a certain office in the Regt and have tolerably good assurances that I will get it. I may fail in getting it but it will certainly do no harm to try for it.

There has been five resignations amongst the officers in the regt since we came here, some on account of their health, others for other reasons. So we are short of officers. The Col has said that he was going to fill their places from the ranks at least so I understand, and I have been told by good authority that I have the inside track for one of them. I could not have an easier position than I have at the present, no fatigue duty to perform no guard duty, no drill, no nothing in fact but to appear on dress parade but it does not suit one to lie around idle when there is anything to do, and so I have been making myself generally useful in one way or another ever since I have been out, and probably have made a favorable impression on the Col.

I understand there is a strong effort being made in Ohio to have this Regt consolidated with some other Ohio Regt to fill it up. There are two Cos in this Reg from Sidney O who have become somewhat dissatisfied with Col Marshall. The Col is an old Army officer and a tolerably strict disciplinarian which does not suit volunteers and they have been writing home pretty severe letters about him. If they succeed, I suppose the Col will leave us which I should be sorry for. As I as well as a great many others here have unlimited confidence in his military ability which is more than we can say of a great many officers in this part of the Army. However there will have to be something done with us as it seems to be perfectly useless to keep this handful of men here and have a full Staff of Officers. I suppose that we will be put in to the 81st Regt which is in this State or into some one in Ohio. For we will never be able to recruit the Regt. from out-side sources.

Capt Young of us is going to Cincinnati tomorrow to try to do

something for us. He will go to Columbus after the Legislature meets. I have given him a letter of introduction to you if you can assist him in any way I wish you would do it, as he has been one of my best friends. He as far as I have seen, had been the most capable Company officer that we have had. He came here fromn the regular army. I do not know what he is going to try do and probably he does not know what he is going to do himself till he goes to Ohio.

Everything is quiet here, with regard to the Secesh none nearer than Springfield we hear that Price is raising an army on the Osage again. If it is true I do not see why we are standing here idle. For the roads are as good as they ever were the weather is very good and the men all anxious to be moving and why we cannot make a strike over in that direction is more than I can see into. If there is anything turns up soon I will let you know immediately. Capt Young can give you all the particulars concerning us. Remember me to all.

your affectionate son
Robt Patterson

Col Jefferson Patterson
Dayton Ohio

Capt Young is going to do something for me at Columbus what it is, I do not know, he just told me of it but did not say what it was and I did not like to ask him