

Head Quarters 3<sup>rd</sup> Brig.  
October 26<sup>th</sup> 1864.<sup>1</sup>

Dear Mother

We are once more on the move, and I merely write a line to assure you that I am well, and likely to enjoy all the little extra conveniences of a staff position. Yesterday morning, before day light we were brought from the front to this spot (some mile or more) where the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions of our Corps have massed, the first Division of the same holding the entire front line. At 2 P.M. to day we march, where no one knows, but doubtless to attack the enemy. All in good spirits and confident of success.

Love to all Your affect son, Sam.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> On the night of Oct. 25, 1864 Sam's brigade left the area around Fort Morton, East of Petersburg and moved SE to the vicinity of Fort Bross which explains the opening sentence of his letter. The scheduled movement at 2 pm was the beginning of Grant's last effort "to reach the Southside Railroad before winter" closed in on the armies (Walker, p. 613). At this point in time Grant had complete control of only two of the four railroads leading into and supplying Petersburg. He had partial control of the Weldon RR but Lee still was able to use it with a roundabout manner. On the afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> the Brigade moved SW of Fort Bross to the Halifax Road on the western side of the Weldon RR (*O.R.*42, 1, pp.325-27).

Although Sam does not mention it, he could not help but notice that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps was a ruined and exhausted combat unit. For example from May 5, 1864 to June 1864, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Corps sustained a loss of 5075 men, more than 45% of the division. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, while Sam was still in Rochester, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps suffered a humiliating defeat at Reams' Station on the Weldon RR (see *Rochester's Forgotten Regiment*, pp.264-272) and never really recovered from the blow. So the unit marching into combat on Oct.25, 1864 was no longer a formidable and confident weapon that it once was. Of course Sam must assure the folks at home so he claims high morale and confidence.