

Transcribed by Terry Crooks.
The original letter is in the Porter Family Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections,
University of Rochester Libraries.

Head Quarters
2nd Division, 2nd Corps
April 23rd 1865.

Dear Father

Since my letter of the 10th inst everything has gone quietly with the 2nd Corps and we begin to look upon this cruel war as a thing of the past. I am very much pressed with business, the dangers of the late campaign having made many disgrace themselves, and I have for the last week been trying officers, 9 men who were found wanting in the chief requisite of a soldier / courage. Parsons after serving on the 3rd Brig staff for nearly two years has left both it and the Div., I fear for good. His reputation as an Adjt Genl is first class although he was by no means the ranking Adjt Genl, he was on the departure of Maj Driver, A.A.G. 3rd Div, assigned to that Div. He found everything there ~~in that Div~~ in a woful (*sic*) state of disorder, but he is a great worker, and has, not a little ability, so I have no fear but that in a few weeks everything will be working like clockwork. I was very sorry on some accounts to have P[arsons] leave us ~~our Div~~ as he been my boon companion, and kept a nice cosy (*sic*) establishment, where it was a pleasure to spend an hour or two daily in social converse, however he of course gains by the change & I still see him occasionally. The day before Genl Smyth was killed Parsons had the offer of a very nice position at Corps Hdqrs, but he thought it his duty to remain with the Genl. The next day Smyth was shot through the head, he in his usual gallant manner leading the skirmish line. Parsons as always been his wont was with him & was I think the first to help him from his horse. (they were both mounted) Poor General he was the noblest specimen of a man I ever met, and although he made no profession of religion and had always led a free and jovial life, he died happy & without fear. I have often heard him say in perfect sincerity, that he was not afraid to die & that he believed himself perfectly prepared. He was not an educated man as an intellectual man, but he was a clear headed [*words overwritten*] intelligent man and had in an eminent degree the facility to command.¹

I have never attempted to give you any account of our particular share in the operations of the recent campaign & think I had better retain all the little time of interest until Aug 16th when I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you again & when I shall have the pleasure of narrating "Viva Voce" many things of Division commander & his staff which will I think be worth listening to. I am going over to see Seward this A.M. and will finish my letter when I return.

2 P.M. I have just left Seward on his way to the camp of the 108th N.Y. where services are held this afternoon. He is well and sends his respects. Col also is O.K. he will I think make a good soldier. Our Corps is nicely encamped about two miles from Burkeville junction. Our Div Hdqrs are at the Thomas House a very neat little house better furnished than any I have seen in Virginia. Genl Barlow occupies one room for a bed room the parlor for a sitting room and the staff use one for lounging.² We have had some very warm weather of late and the ice house is great source of comfort. The scrip I referred to in my last was nothing but confederate notes. I have lost the greater part of it now but I send you a little. I was offered \$30,000 of it yesterday for \$50 but I could not see it.

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Love to all
Affectionately
Sam Porter.

Notes:

¹ With the death of General Thomas Smyth, Theron Edwards Parsons was out of a job. However when Major William R. Driver, formerly of the 19th Mass., changed from Assistant Adjutant General of the 3rd Division to A.A.G. of the 1st Division, Parsons moved into the vacated post. The AAG post in the 2nd Division was held by Major John M. Norvell. Eventually, Major Driver would assume the AAG position in the 2nd Division (*O.R.46*, 3, p.1303).

²Viva Voce literally means 'by or with the living voice' (OED) or in other words *in person*.

Seward is Seward Gould of the 4th NYHA.

Balow is Maj. Gen. Francis Channing Barlow – see April 10 letter.

Burkeville Va. Is approx. half way between Farmville (to the NW) and Jeterville (to the NE) on the Danville Richmond RR. –see O.R. Atlas plate 16.

'Col' is an odd reference. He is probably speaking of Col. F.E. Pierce, the regimental commander. Since the war was over for almost two weeks, it is quite probable that Pierce announced his intention to remain in the army, hence the comment about becoming a 'good soldier'. Porter knew of Pierce's ability as a volunteer so he is perhaps predicting Pierce's success in the *Regular Army*. The comment seems to make little sense otherwise. If 'Col' refers to someone else then how can 'Col' become a good soldier if the war is over? Pierce was the only officer of the 108th NY to stay in the service after the war.