

Head Quarters 3rd Brigade
September 28th 64

Dear Mary

Since my last the 2nd Corps has made another move, and instead of writing from the rear where the noise of musketry and artillery seldom disturbed me, I can with truth say that we are in the extreme front. Last Saturday we took up our present position, which the one is formerly held by the 10th Corps. Our Camps are within easy artillery range, and every tent is protected by a slight breastwork. Head Quarters are very comfortably arranged and although a thirty two pounder would go through our defences (*sic*) like breaking sticks, I feel just as safe as I should at home. Our skirmish or picket line is but a short distance in our front, and the trees in and all about our camp, show the marks of many a wild shot.

The whole line as you are doubtless aware is little more than a succession of forts connected by rifle pits, and almost every day there is a brisk artillery duel between our gunners, and the rebels. Very pretty practice it makes and no very great danger, but sometimes casualties occur.

Yesterday Lieut. Ames an artillery officer and a very fine man was in the fort immediately in our front. He had just been tried before our Court Martial for tying a Chaplain to the fifth wheel of a caisson. I am still at Court Martial and very busy.¹ I expect some money from father very soon and then I shall buy a horse and the accompaniments (*sic*). I think that I am permanently fixed at these HdQrs and I shall make arrangements according[ly].

On receipt of this, I want Farley to go to [Stair's or Stace's – *not clear*] and order me a pair of pantaloons dark blue broadcloth or beaver whichever he can make the nicest pair of. He can also make me a vest out of the remains of my old dress coat which he has. My heavy sack coat I want refitted a little and sent to me.

Marching orders at 4 a.m. tomorrow nobody knows where. Please get those things ready & when we stop once more I will give further instructions.

I want also a pair of boots calfskin ordinary thickness single sole.

Sam Porter

Here is where a horse comes in play. I have two governments at my disposal ²
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Notes:

¹Lt. Ames is actually Captain Nelson Ames (April 5, 1863) of the First Regiment NY Light Artillery, Battery G. Captain Ames was tried because he ordered a guard to tie to the wheel of a gun carriage Chaplain Burdick of the 61st NY “who came into the battery under the influence of liquor”. When asked to leave the battery the spiritually augmented and mounted cleric attempted to ride over a guard and further berated the men with “language not commonly used in good society”. Ames was released from arrest and returned to duty. He served his three year enlistment and was mustered out on Oct. 15, 1864 (Ames, p.125). Chaplain Henry D. Burdick’s commitment to his work was somewhat questionable since he enrolled on April 7, 1864 and was discharged on Dec. 14, 1864 – a service of seven months (Phisterer, 3, p.2562).

² ‘Stace’s’ refers to William R. Stace, a clothier located in Rochester on East Main Street.

Beaver is felted cloth used for over coats (OED).

He probably means that he has two Government Issue horses – the Federal officers had mounts provided for them whereas the Confederates had to provide and pay for their own mounts.