

Camp of the 108th
Falmouth Va
April 16th '63

Dear Mother

I have only time to write a few lines this evening but will devote the little time at my disposal to writing to you. Tomorrow is my turn for picket again and after that will probably move, so that you must not expect to hear from me again in some time. For the past few days we have been under marching orders and expecting to move hourly, but no orders have been received and we are in a very unpleasant state of uncertainty. As near as I can make out Joe Hooker intends that every man and officer shall do his share of hard work.¹ Every body is to carry eight days rations besides a change of under clothes an overcoat & blanket. This in addition to his accoutrements will make a weight of nearly 50 pounds no pleasant matter on a hot day. Lieut Hutchinson joined us yesterday. He tells me that he saw Father, and that the folks were all well. Your letter of the 9th and F[arley] of the 10th were both received yesterday. I hope you invited Kavanaugh to dinner. Although an Irishman & uneducated he is a nice fellow and I like him very much.² My weight is still good, but I could not but smile to see the terms fat and corpulent applied to me in your letter. As things look now we shall have a severe battle before many days and I for one am glad to have it come. If we must fight the sooner we do so the better it will please me. I have read the report of the military committee with considerable attention, and consider that it is proof conclusive that our, that is the family's opinion of McClellan's ability was a pretty correct one³. Dr. Munson and Ely have been detailed as operating surgeons in the expected fight. I am very sorry that Farley could not come down, but hope he will find an opportunity at some future day.⁴

Love to all

Your affectionate son

Sam

Notes:

¹ Maj.Gen. Joseph Hooker commanded the army.

²Franklin B. Hutchinson was 1st Lt. Co H, 108th NY

Patrick C. Kavanaugh was 1st Lt. Co. K 108th NY. Unintentionally, perhaps, Porter displays the prevalent condescending attitude to the Irish, which ironically was typical of those that saw themselves as *Native* [?] white Americans and therefore of superior and more civilized stock.

³The reference to the report of the military committee was the Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War which was available in the daily papers as it investigated the conduct of the war while under the command of George Brinton McClellan. McClellan was far from faultless but the committee's investigation was in many ways a witch hunt.

⁴Dr. Owen Munson was mustered in as surgeon of the 108th NY on Feb 17, 1863 after the departure of Dr. Whitbeck.

Dr. William Smith Ely was the Assistant Surgeon of the 108th NY.
Farley was Porter's younger brother.