

Christopher J. Edenborough's Letter from Fort Schuyler



(Above) an undated photograph of Christopher Edenborough

On August 4, 1861 Christopher J. Edenborough, a corporal in Company C in the First Long Island Volunteers, penned a letter home to his mother and sister. At that time the regiment was still encamped outside of New York City at Fort Schuyler, which still exists to this day and is located in the Bronx, directly adjacent to the northern span of the Throgg's Neck Bridge. The letter describes Edenborough's experiences and his account provides a unique insight into what was occurring while the men of the First Long Island Volunteers were still being outfitted during that first summer of the American Civil War. This document includes a description of the original uniform and clothing issued to the regiment and how Edenborough (a tailor by trade) was helping to mend and adjust the new clothing for others. In addition, the letter also mentions 2-band Enfield rifles (as Edenborough describes as "*Enfield Rifles - sabre bayonet*"), which the regiment was apparently promised, but never received as all subsequent documentation records the First Long Island regiment being equipped with old smoothbore conversion muskets.

Below is the transcription of the original text, in its entirety, complete with the lack of punctuation and spelling errors. A copy of this document, along with several other articles of research, was donated to our organization by the "67th New York Company G" which is a Long Island based North South Skirmish Association (NSSA) group that has been in existence since the 1960's. The transcription here was made by Edward Amaducci in 1992. Christopher J. Edenborough's letter begins on the following page.

Dear Mother and Sister,

Your welcome letter was duly received. A few words in regard to our grub. We have enough - we have fresh meat twice a week. We have not had potatoes in two weeks. For breakfast boiled meat either fresh or salt. Bread and coffee for dinner. Either rice soup or bean soup for supper. Bread and coffee sometimes we are fortunate to get a little meat. The accommodations for cooking are very enefficient. One large cauldron kettle which is used for coffee and soup and one common size camp stove. I don't care how good the provision is, it can't be cooked in good shape with such accommodations for 92 men.

The Quarter Master promised us more stoves and that is all he has done. I sometimes beg a little butter at the Officer's Cook tent. There is one consolation we have good appetites anything tastes good to us. The coffee is poor stuff; it give the most of us Marching orders pretty often. We received part of our uniforms last Thursday, fatigues pants and jacket and regulation cap, two woolen undershirts and two prs drawers and two prs socks. The pants and jackets are poor things, machine work, Some of them are coming to pieces already. My apprentice and myself have been at work the last three days altering some of the uniform. There were none small enough for boys my size. I get 8c for altering each garment. Our overcoats are a sky blue our jackets and pants dark blue.

The Major has just returned from Washington, his object in going was to obtain Rifles for us, and he succeeded - we are to have Enfield Rifles - sabre bayonet. They are on the road now. The talk is that we shall get a month's pay the first of this week - When we leave here is more than I or any of the rest know. We may receive Marching order as soon as our arms come and we may stay here a month. We have a brass band. They arrived yesterday. They come from NY They go with us as far as Washington - Government allows them so much for their services. They do not consider it enough. They will stay with us through the war if the Regiment will allow so much more. I hope they will do it I am willing to give 25c a month.

I am well acquainted with Noah Smith he is a very nice young fellow. Lieutenant Macallester has my watch. He needs one more than I do. He will take care of it, and if he looses it will make it all right. Letters have undoubtedly been opened but it is stopped now. Several of our Company have had money's sent them and never received a cent. It is my opinion that a great many go into this operation not out of any Patriotic feelings but to make money out of it. They make a special of it. Our Co. were vaccinated about a week ago. Mine has worked pretty good.

One of our boys stationed as picket guard shot at a man who attempted to trap. It was a dark and foggy, they didn't know who the man was, it was not me. I cannot think how that story started or what the object could be in the story that I was shot. The Revenue Cutter stationed about a mile from the fort fired into a vessel last night. The story is that she was loaded with arms.

I am extremely obliged to you for that dollar. I was entirely out did not know where to get 3c to pay postage with. I do not know when we shall get any pay from government. Regiments that have been in the service 3 months have not received a cent. We all need money more here than when we were home. I wish I could be home for two or three days

but it is no use wishing. If I am gone two or three years it will be all the sweeter when I get back. Tell Eliza this is just a much her letter as yours. She must forgive me for not writing to her individually for it is a great job to write her in so much noise. I have not written to England yet. Give my love to Father and my brothers a accept of the same dear Mother and Sister

*Yours Afect,
C J Edinborough
Our Regiment is styled the 1st LI Volunteers
Brooklyn Phalanx
Fort Schuyler
August 4th, 1861*

I forgot to say that each man received a woolen blanket - they are large heavy blankets weigh 5 lb each we spread them on the floor. I would rather sleep on them than on a straw mattress.

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Camp near Middletown, Va.

Oct. 24, 1864

My Dear Mother

Thinking

you might feel a little jealous if you did not receive a few lines. I thought I would write. We are on the same ground we were driven from on the 19th and hold it with more confidence than ever of our ability to hold it _____ say once more all is quiet along the lines. The nights are quiet cool and cause us to think seriously of Winter quarters but we do not expect to go into Winter quarters until the Winter has well commenced. we all seem to understand that Grant will strike one gigantic blow at the Rebellion which we all hope will be the finale and that this Army will cooperate. I am very sorry to hear Sarah is so lame. I had an idea that she was but slightly inconvenienced in walking.

I was surprised to know that Charles is hopping around. he did not mention it in his letter. I have not heard from him since I wrote you last. Tell Luther I receive the Mercury all right and am much obliged to him and hope he will continue sending it as I am much interested in the story entitled "Life in the saddle". I shall try for a furlough this Winter although I have not much faith in getting one. I should very much like to see Sarah. I am enjoying excellent health I believe I am more robust than even before. I only wish you all were as tough as I am. Give my love to Sister and Brothers and accept of the same Dear Mother from

your affectionate son CJ Edinborough

A letter from Christopher Edinborough, Co. C 65th NYVI (formerly of Co. C of the 67th NYVI) to his mother, October 1864.

This transcription of the original text was made by Edward Amaducci and Jerry McLaughlin in 1992.