

Gustave Cook
Letter to Eliza Cook, October 27, 1862 (GLC02570.30)

My dear friend Bob Calder is in excellent health
send word to the Judge. Send word to all families
that the boys are well. Gus

Near Knoxville East Tenn.

Camp Rangers Oct 27th 1862

My darling Wifey,

For the first time in two months I write to you. We have but just returned from Kentucky with Gen^l Bragg's army and for two long months I have been unable to send you a line and have just rec^{ed} one letter from you of date July 27 1862. The anxiety and suspense I have endured have been quite equal to the fatigues and dangers of this hazardous and to some extent unsuccessful campaign. For more than thirty days our devoted little Regiment has not passed a day without more or less fighting with the enemy. Night and day we have been kept in their front contesting every single foot of ground over which they have passed. We have been in drum beat and cannon shot of then the whole time – Bragg passed by Buell going up and was pursued to Argantville (Camp Dick Robinson) and there begun the retreat to Cumberland Gap. During the entire time we were kept between the two armies as a rear guard. Day & night we fought them – We were cut off at Bardtown by 2500 cavalry and immediately upon learning it Col Wharton ordered our Reg^l to move at a gallop [*over?*] toward Bardstom and just at the Fair Ground we were met by a heavy volley of Sharp balls – We halted not but putting the spurs deep into the sides of the horses the gallant boys headed by Col Wharton raised the warwhoop and ran over them outright. They broke and fled in every direction we chased them over hills and fields hilling wounding [2] and capturing over one hundred. It was but the work of a minute. The first squadron of our Reg^l broke their whole body and the rest of us had but ^{to} pursue them. It has been called by Generals Polk and Hardee the most brilliant charge of the war. Gen Bragg says the Rangers are worth their weight in gold. We also opened the battle of Perryville by a charge up the sides of a precipitous hill three hundred yards high on which were a battery of artillery & a brigade of Yankee infantry. We were followed by a brigade of our infantry who came up under cover from us – It was a terrible charge and the Regiment was highly

complimented for it. The battle of Perryville was the hardest contested field of the war. We had about 1500 and the yankees about 3500 men. We drove them over two miles killed and wounded over five thousand and captured several hundred prisoners. Such slaughter I never dreamed of. any where on the field you could stand still and count from one to two hundred dead men in a hundred yards. Everywhere they lay in great heaps and whole lines lay dead side by side as they stood in line of battle. We slept on the field and no where could one lie down without almost touching the mangled corpses of the dead invaders. Our dead would not number Eight hundred Killed and wounded not 2000. It was a most glorious triumph, but during the next day we moved on toward Harrodsbury and left the crippled and cowed enemy to sneak up to the battlefield. Tell Dr. [3] Ferris I saw Gen Jim Jackson (Federal) dead on the field. He died game at his post trying to rally his flying & beaten troops. Hundreds of them though were dead by him. We captured a battery he was defending – As for myself. I have been in extremely bad health all the time and am today as poor as a ghost and weak as a child, but I am in improving health. I am well, free from disease except a dysentery which seems to have taken hold on me. I shall write you as I progress. I know from my feelings that I shall be entirely well before long. I have missed no duty on the campaign. I am at present temporarily in command of the Regiment on account of Maj Harrison^s being poorly. I have been second in command on the campaign. I have been away from the company for several weeks by being Major. If I am to be Major of the Reg^t I want to know it or else I wish to return to the command of my company. I dont like this temporary business. I am Major in rank but no appointments have been made. Think I would rather stay with my dear old company than command the Regiment. Sam, Jim, Fayette, Clarence, Tom, (W) Cayce, Achilles, Pembroke, and all the other boys are well. Stoh. [?] Case is sick and has been ever since he left home. I will try and have him discharged. I send you Five Hundred Dollars in this by M^r Lubbock. I hope it will be of some assistance to you. Shall send you more before long. Keep it to yourself and say nothing. Keep yourself and the darling babies well fed and clothed. Take nothing from the County. Find out how much [4] you have gotten from the County and return it. Now if you have plenty of money pay it all if it is not over one hundred dollars but if it is over a hundred pay the hundred now and I will send you the balance soon. Get Walter Andrews to attend to it for you. Pay for all you have received from them yourself. My wages will pay your expenses and I feel great pride in being under no obligation to any one for your support. You have done right in not taking any more

from them sweet one. You are always right, have no fear of offending me my own darling but do as you please in managing. Get Walter to see what amount has been paid out for you (not Susie) and then pay it back. Susie^s case is different from yours. She has no one to support her while you have. You darling understand the matter and to you I leave it. Where we shall go or what do I cannot now tell you. I will let you know as soon as I learn. Kiss yourself and our little ones Ida Polly Nettie and Nellie tell them all to be good girls and love papa better than everyone else but mama. God bless them and you dearest – I say my humble prayers to our dear father who art in Heaven for you all every night, I hope you never neglect your religious duties. They are the great duties of life. God is our best friend and in all times of peace war prosperity or adversity He is our reliance and comforter. Remember me darling as your sweetheart, your boy lover; Think of me by day and dream of me by night. I hold you ever present in my heart my sweet one. I have all the love of our youth justified by judgment and firmly established by time. I am wholly and souly thy own devoted lover-husband. I am constant and pure to thee my own beloved wife. My companion through time and I trust that when our Father calls us home we shall go together, loving forever and undivided. I am happy my darling in loving you and doing my duty. I do not know when I can come to see you but be constant and know that the first moment I can call my own I shall hil away for home and wifey dear – I hope to write often now and expect to hear from you regularly – til otherwise directed address me at Chattanooga. Love to all Kin & respects to my dear friends – shall write to them all soon. Have no time now I fear I shall be left in command of the Reg^t for some time – Kiss me X here – By By – Your own Gustave