

*"I am all right yet"*  
Letters from the Civil War



Sgt. James C. Beitel  
Company A, 153rd Regiment  
Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry  
1862 - 1863

# "I am all right yet"

## Letters from the Civil War

Camp Curtin Harrisburg Pa  
Friday Oct 17. 1862

Dear Parents

I just came to the conclusion, of writing to you a few lines. Tomorrow morning at 4 o'clock we have orders to start from here, we don't know what may we go to, but I suppose to Washington, for we will go to our new camp there. I don't care where we go, so that we come out of this hole. Last night it rained very hard, I had to move out of my tent, for there was over an inch of water in it, so were some of the other tents too, we slipped on the Lieutenant's tent. I was the other day in Harrisburg I always thought it was a nice town than it is, I would rather live in Maryland than in Harrisburg. Since our last move for Gettysburg, our ~~camp~~ camp was not of the best, the reason because our new quarters

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Company A, 153rd Regiment  
Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry  
1862 - 1863

*"Tam all right yet"* - Letters from the Civil War

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Judith Beitel Armstrong

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Cover Figure: photo of James C. Beitel (1862)  
Title Page Figure: picture of one of the many letters  
sent home from 1862 to 1863 by James C. Beitel.

## James C. Beitel

On September 22, 1862, James Christian Beitel left his home in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, to join the 153rd Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Union Army. The 153rd Regiment was recruited in Northampton County to serve for nine months. Company A was made up entirely of young men from Nazareth.

James entered the army as a Private, was assigned to the Regimental Band, and was promoted to Sergeant.

The Regiment wintered at Potomac Creek Bridge, commonly known as Brooks Station. In the spring of 1863, the men saw heavy duty at Chancellorsville (May 1, 2 and 3) and later at Gettysburg (July 1, 2 and 3). Their tour of duty was extended by several weeks when it became clear that they would be needed at Gettysburg. The Regimental history reports that the voluntary extension of their time of service was "the proudest act of their entire experience".

The 100 men of Company A were mustered in on October 7, 1862; 74 men were mustered out on July 24, 1863. One quarter of the men were lost to battle or disease.

James was twenty years old when he volunteered for duty. He left behind his parents, Josiah O. and Maria Sophia Kern Beitel, and four brothers: Edward, 28, married to Ebisina Babb, Richard, 18, Charles, 16, and Lewis, 11. His father was a watch and clock maker in Nazareth. He also had a lumber business. It is clear from his letters that James had learned the watch making trade and his expertise proved useful to his comrades during his time of military service and beneficial to the "shop accts".

In early December 1863, James established a watch and jewelry shop in Catasauqua, Pennsylvania, and later that month married Emma E. Koehler. He prospered in Catasauqua, served as a borough burgess, school director, director of the Catasauqua National Bank and later as a founder and president of the Lehigh National Bank. James and Emma had been married for 70 years when she died in 1933. Their eight children included seven daughters, Mary, Laura, Gwennie, Anna, Estella, Otilia, Mabel, and one son, Robert James Beitel.

James died at his home on Front Street in Catasauqua in April of 1942, at the age of 99 years, 10 months. He was the Lehigh County's last Civil War veteran and was buried with full military honors.

His son, Robert, optician and jeweler, carried on the store and watch repair business in Catasauqua. He married Clara Sieger with whom he had three sons, Robert, Jr., Harry and Thomas. Thomas was the father of two daughters, Carol and Judith.

## Notes on the Letters

Most men serving in the military during the years of the American Civil War were prodigious letter writers, and James C. Beitel, my great-grandfather, was no exception. Thirty of his letters have survived and I am the fortunate family member to have them in my possession. Most of these letters were sent to his father, or parents, with one or two written to his brothers, Charles and Richard. The first letter in the collection was one that was written to him, from his grandmother, as he prepared to leave home.

The letters dwindled in number as his months in the military wore on, but they clearly reflect the events and recollections of others as recorded in the Regimental history book which was printed some years later.

James usually wrote his letters using pen and ink, but sometimes switched to pencil, even in mid-letter. He often claimed to be writing in a hurry, but he was still able to write many pages and to include many details. The grammar and phrasing clearly show that he was Pennsylvania Dutch yet!

His handwriting was very nice, just the way he would have learned at school, including all the capital letters we don't use anymore and the odd shaped r's and double f's which are really s's. The letters appear here in as complete and unchanged a manner as I could manage. The spelling of names of people and places were sometimes altered for accuracy, when checked against the record in the Regimental history book. Beth Bisbano at the National Watch and Clock Museum in Columbia, PA was helpful with the watch-making terms. One or two words and phrases remain a mystery; sometimes I took my best guess about what he was writing, and once or twice I left out a word or two. He did tend to write long, long sentences and some I split up for easier reading. Any mistakes may be attributed to my misunderstanding of his penmanship.

The most dramatic letter, perhaps, was the one written from Gettysburg, near the end of his days in the army. It was written on a half sheet of paper. The lines written on July 3 and 4 were in unusually small handwriting. Then on July 5 he wrote two large, scrawling sentences, ending with "I am all right yet." This was the last letter he wrote home.

I have the original letters, in envelopes, although the stamps were removed during the intervening years. One final treasure in my possession - a lock of hair from James, clipped at age 17 months.

Judith Beitel Armstrong  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania



# The Letters





*Bethlehem*

*Sept 20th/62*

*Dear James*

*When last you were here to take leave before going to war, my feelings would not allow me to speak much to you on the subject.*

*Permit me therefore to address a few lines to you now. To part from friends is always painful, as life is uncertain, and we never know if we shall meet again, & now especially in your case. Our country calls for Soldiers, we ought to be thankful to those who voluntary offer their services now so much needed, and cheer them, & not make the parting harder by our grief & repinings, so I will only say yet, that I pray the Lord may protect you in all danger and be your support in the hour of trial, and let you return safely to your friends.*

*The Lord be with thee every where*

*And screen thee with paternal care*

*By his almighty arm.*

*No soldier needs to faint or fear*

*If he believes the Lord is near,*

*Who can protect him from all harm.*

*From your affectionate grandmother E. Kern*

*to*

*James C. Beitel at Nazareth*



*American Hotel*

*Easton*

*Sep 23rd/62*

*Dear Parents*

*I will just inform you that we leave on Thursday. I can't tell what time of the day yet. I will send word yet what time we start. We arrived here all safe, & I like it so far very well. We got our dinner at 3 o'clock, & supper at 7 o'clock, at 9 o'clock we went to roost in the Evangelical Church. It was rather a hard bed for the first time, but we will get harder ones yet.*

*Our Company is Comp A, so our boys had to stand guard the first night. We had three relieves, but I slept free from guard this time. At 5 o'clock this morning we were all up, but we had to stay there a half hour longer. At 6 o'clock, we had our breakfast. We have a good table. We stopped at the American Hotel (Connors old stand).*

*At half past 8 o'clock our Comp paraded through town. We were dismissed in a hour again. We will get mustered in at Philadelphia, so they say.*

*I bought myself a knife, fork & spoon all in one. I am going to buy myself a guttapercha blanket yet if I can get one yet.*

*News I don't know any. I will write again before I start.*

*I remain Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*P.S. If Charles reads this you can tell him I had no dictionary - (ahem).*



*Harrisburg*

*Sep 26*

*Dear Parents*

*Having a few leisure minutes this morning, I concluded to drop you a few lines. We had a slow train coming up here, we stopped over two hours in Allentown, we came to Reading at 5 o'clock, and at half past 7 o'clock we were in Lebanon, and quarter past 9 o'clock we came to Harrisburg.*

*Perhaps you have heard about the accident which happened at L. Easton. Somebody fell off, but I can't tell how much he is hurt.*

*Another accident happened in Capt. Myer's Comp. A man by the name of (Cole) put his head out of the window and had his head a little smashed up at a woodpile.*

*We slepped in the cars last night. We first got our supper at 12 o'clock and at 4 o'clock we were eating again, so you can think how much we slepped that night. This morning at 9 o'clock we got our breakfast.*

*I just heard a accident happened between here and Reading. Two trains of militia who were going to leave for home, smashed together, dead & wounded 50.*

*Camp Curtin*

*At 9 o'clock we marched to our camp. Then we got our blankets, knives, forks, spoons & cups. After that we went to building our tents. We sleep in our Camp this evening for the first time. I am going to send my blanket home to you & some other things. I can't write much this time for it is getting late. I will write again in a couple of days. Give my respects to all inquiring friends.*

*I remain Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*Address                      Camp Curtin, Col Glanz*

*in care of Capt. Rice*

*Harrisburg Pa*



*Camp Curtin  
Harrisburg, PA*

*Dear Father*

*I send you sixty five dollars with Thomas Hartzell, for County and Town, Naz. bounty & fifty dollars of the Borough bounty, total \$115.00 so you can put it to the monthly profits. I was on duty when Mr. Hartzell & Shaum came here, so I put them in. I read your letter & am glad to hear you are getting along so good. I am glad I took my w. tools along. I have nearly every day to fix something.*

*I am well at present & in good spirits, we got plenty to eat, we can buy nearly everything here, except whiskey.*

*I was not in town since I am here. We can't get any pass to go out, but I & Bill Kiefer were out over three hours. We took our sheet iron pass along (buckets) so we could go out. We have to fetch our water over a half of a mile from camp, so that way we passed out.*

*We went over to the Insane Asylum. We were taken all around the mens wards. The gentleman who took us around showed us where Uncle Herman was most of the time. I can tell you it was worth seeing, everything fixed up nice.*

*Our Company is quite full. We got fifteen of the Beth. company, their company is quite broken up.*

*Our Regiment is nearly full. We have 960 men, as soon as we get fifty more our regiment will be sworn in, then we'll be uniformed & get marching orders. Nearly all our men had the fever. I had it two days, but am over it now. I only wish we would get marching orders, for I am tired of this tent hole. Last night it rained very hard, some of our tents nearly swam in water, but I fixed mine up good. I made gutters all around the tent so that it was quite dry.*

*Tell Lewis that he should sell the rabbits for a quarter a pair. He should not keep more than the three old ones over winter. How does Charles come along with his teaching? Give my respects to Mother, Rich, Chas, Lewis, Edw, Ebesina, Uncle Gustav, Aunt Amelia & all inquiring friends.*

*So good by to you all. Don't let your spirits fall, if it is God's will I will be back again in 9 months. I can't write any more at present so I must close.*

*I remain your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*P.S. There is always robbing going on when so many fellows are together. Lucius Ricksecker had his revolver stolen already in baggage car, another had seventy dollars stolen out of his tent & one of Mr. Ritters boys, he is in our company, put fifty dollars in a letter to send it off. So he put it in his coat pocket where it was stolen. He does not seem to mind it much.*

*I remain*

*JCB*

*Uncle Calvin was up here paying the county bounty. Aunt sent me a good many cakes. My bedfellows relished them very much.*

*If we don't get our uniforms soon, my clothes will be worn out. I darned my stockings the other day. It took nearly all my yarn the holes were so big. I am glad to get some more.*



Oct 7 1862  
Camp Curtin  
Harrisburg

*Dear Father*

*I wish you would send me a hunting detached lever with Mr. Bachsmith. I sold my old one for \$15, it cost \$3. You can put \$12 to shop profits. I will send you the money as soon as I get a chance. Watches will sell here as hot cakes. If Mr. Bachsmith is gone all ready, send it to me with Chas Whitesell. I heard last night he was coming up, or send it up, the first chance you get.*

*Have you received my bounty, if so let me know it. I must hurry, for I must put it in the post yet this morning.*

*I remain Your Son*

*James C. Beitel*



*Camp Curtin  
Oct 14th 1862*

*Dear Father,*

*It is in a great hurry I write you a few lines, for Mr. Hagenbush leaves soon, so I can't write much.*

*You have already heard that we were in battle, it is not so bad yet, but we had marching orders. On Friday evening, the cavalry got marching orders, and at 10 o'clock they left. At fifteen afterwards we got orders to be ready to leave any minute, so we packed up our goods, & were ready to march, but we did not get any orders. Next day at 9 o'clock we got marching orders, so we took provisions along for two days & started for Harrisburg Armory to get our arms. We were there till five o'clock & then we started for camp again.*

*At 7 o'clock we got orders to pack up everything, tents, etc. to march at 10, but we did not start before 1 o'clock, so all sat around our camp fires, burning up our straw & benches. As soon as we started, we went down to the railroad & slept in the ore cars. I tell you we did not sleep much. In the morning we thought we would go off, but we layed around there the whole day, till half past three & then we got orders to be off. The cavalry went before us, but soon came back again, with the news that the rebels were out of cannon range so we did not get in battle.*

*So we went home again, to our old camp, & to build up our tents again.*

*Mr Hagenbush is off now, so I must close. I received your watches.*

JCB





*Camp Curtin  
Harrisburg Pa  
Friday. Oct 17th / 62*

*Dear Parents*

*I just came to the conclusion of writing to you a few lines. Tomorrow morning at 4 o'clock we have orders to start from here. We don't know which way we go yet, but I suppose to Washington, for we will get our new arms there. I don't care where we go, so that we come out of this hole. Last night it rained very hard. I had to move out of my tent for there was over an inch of water in it, so were some of the other tents, too. We slept in the Lieutenants tent. I was the other day in Harrisburg. I always thought it was a nicer town than it is. I would rather live in Nazareth than in Harrisburg.*

*Since our last move for Corrinth, our grub was not of the best, the reason because our new quarter master was not supplied yet. For dinner we had potatoes cooked with meat, it tasted again as at home. I lost seven pounds since I am here. I could spoon some more of my specks, for I got heavy enough to carry yet.*

*Yesterday I mended a mainspring in a watch. It had one ring in the center broken off, so I took my candle & made it soft first, then I rolled it up again. Tell Richard if he could mend one once without a blowpipe, he is fit to make anything in the watch line. I got \$1 to make it.*

*The watches I received. The one with the open face I traded away on a hunting case lever, brand new. It went at first about 5 hours too slow, so I took a couple of rings of the hair spring off. It goes now very good. I got \$4 to boot, it cost c xx so I made a little something on the watches for nothing.*

*If I had it only a couple of days sooner I could have sold it already but the boys nearly all send their money back, so I did not sell it yet. But I won't have it long any more. Philip Wertle got cheated out of his provision here. I believe he is going to stay at home now. We had a subsequent talk out, each member gave him something. I can't tell how much he got, but we were willing to give that for each member. He got the bounty, & I don't know if he is sworn in. If he is, he must go as a soldier. If he is not, he ought to give the money back again.*

*As soon as our Borough Boys come back again it will give a lawsuit about these men we lent to lower Naz. & Saucony. I can't see myself why we did not get that money.*

*It was promised us, so we will try to get it too. Now if it was West Naz Borough would get no credit for them, it would be another concern, but as I understand it, the Borough has its credit for making it. We did not come out to make money but if we get offered it, I guess anybody would take it.*

*Enclosed you find two likenesses. You can keep one & give one to Edw. Uncle Hinny was here today. He showed us the list of men who were drafted in Bethlehem. I believe they are drafting men all around. Next time you write to me, who were drafted in your neighborhood, for I would like to know it.*

*I can't write anymore at present for I have not much place yet. You will better wait till I write you another letter for if we start from here perhaps I would not get your letter, but I will write to you as soon as we are settled again.*

*I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*James C Beitel*



*Camp Seward, Va  
Oct 22nd 1862*

*Dear Parents*

*I will write to you a few lines this morning to inform you that we arrived here all safe, but we got tired marching here from Washington.*

*We left Harrisburg on Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock, & came to Baltimore at 9 o'clock. There we got our supper at the soldiers relieve, it is a society, no government concerns. We slept that night in the Depot. I slept right well. Next morning being Sunday, we got our breakfast at the same place, after that we went around the city. I was at the warf, but that was nothing new to me, but I can tell some of our boys opened their eyes, when they saw the ships and steamboats. I was up at Washington's Monument. I saw the Shot Tower, but was not quite there. I had not much time off going around but I saw enough there the first time.*

*At 2 o'clock we started for Washington, and arrived there at 9 o'clock. We got supper and then we went to roost in the barracks. Next morning after breakfast I went up to the Capitol. We all went around the house, but we had to hurry, for we had no orders to go away. We started from Washington after dinner & arrived at our place at about 4 o'clock.*

*We pitched our tents in a peach orchard. When you read this letter you will think that I did not wash my hands, for it is so sandy here you can't keep yourself clean, but perhaps you can make it out yet what I scribbled down here.*

*If you want to know how we are situated, ask Mr. Buss (Willie) for he was with us already in Harrisburg & came out here with us & Mr. Kunsman. Mr. Buss started for home this morning, but I was so busy, fixing up my tent, that I could not write to you, but guess you will receive my letter this time yet.*

*I did not see much yet but intend to go out yet this day. There are a good many forts around here and Camps every way you look. This morning, a cavalry company passed our Camp, Hen Hess was with them, he was the only one I knew.*

*I just wrote you a little this time for if I write too much, I have nothing to put in my next letter.*

*I remain Your Son*

*James C. Beitel*

*N.B. Give my best respects to my brothers and friends. My address at present is*

*Camp Seward Va*

*Co A 156th Reg. P.V.*

*Col Glanz, Washington*

*D.C.*

*That is the number of our Reg at present.*



*Camp near Fort Meigs Md*

*Oct 28th/62*

*Dear Parents*

*I will just write you a few lines this morning to inform you that I am well at present & hope it will find you all the same. Yesterday Rudolph Bass & Co. visited us, & we were glad to see old friends once again.*

*The boxes we received last night & I got my shirt & gloves & letters, & am very much obliged to you for sending them.*

*We still got our quarter master yet (Knowles) but if it does not soon get better, he will get discharged. We had no worms yet in hams since we left Harrisburg & there we did not get them off him.*

*Since we are here, we always get enough to eat, sometimes it comes irregular, but I had always enough yet. We get everyday each a loaf of bread & that is more than I can eat.*

*We travelled a good deal already since we left Harrisburg. We are now in Md again. We travel back again since a couple of days.*

*This travelling I hate. I could travel with the best, only for carrying the knapsack & that is so very heavy. I weighed myself the other day when we marched through Washington, gun & all I weight 246 lbs, so you can think that it is easy work, to carry that with you.*

*News, I know none of importance. I have always work to do. I have now 3 watches to fix yet, two to clean. I get 75 cts for cleaning them each. I sold one of my old steel keys, which I had a couple of years, for 20 cts & he was glad to get it at that. My watch I could have sold already for \$12, but he could only pay 5\$ on it, so I did not do it. As soon as they get paid off again I will sell it for sure. I will make something at it yet. The watch did not cost me anything so I can't lose anything.*

*There is great talk going on in Naz, so I heard yesterday, about our Capt. cheating the company out of 150\$ dollars. He sent the money to Thomas Hartzell with Mr. Hagenbush. If our men want to have the money they should look to the borough not to our Capt. for it. But I guess the people when they hear how it is, will think something*

*more of him. They can talk as much as they will about him. The more they talk of him, the more we like him.*

*Philip Wertle I guess speaks much against him. He should be ashamed to do it, a man that promised to go with us & did not. He should be still, and he got his bounty yet too, & the money he got off the members. I must close for we go out for Comp drill.*

*I remain with much love to you & friends, Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*Tell Lewis he should go up to Edw. for he has something for him.*

*Address*

*Co A 153 Reg. P.V.*

*Col Glanz near Fort Meigs, Md.*

*Washington, D.C.*



*Camp Near Fort Meigs Md  
Thursday Eve.  
Oct 30th/62*

*Dear Father*

*By Mr. Henry Leibfried, the bearer of these few lines, I wish that you would send me 1 doz pair lever hands, I could have used them many times if I had them.*

*We were out chopping wood the whole day (our Comp) for they are making a retreat road between the two forts which lie opposite our camp. I tell you we had a hard day's work. The trees were already chopped down & the stumps from all about 3 ft high, so we had to chop them down even with the ground. We made clear for a street 78 ft wide. We cleared it over a mile. Tomorrow another Comp has to go. That is I believe all the news that I can write this time. Give my love to Mother and Brothers,*

*I remain Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*My address at present is  
Co A 153rd Regt. P.V.  
Col Glanz Near Fort Meigs Md  
Washington, D.C.*



*Camp Near Aldie Landen Co Va*

*November 17th 1862*

*Dear Parents & Brothers*

*Feeling a little lonesome this afternoon, I came to the conclusion of writing to you about our travells. I would have written sooner, but I always waited for Hen Leibfried. I can't see where he stays, he is not here yet, so I thought you would look for a letter from me. It is now already over 3 weeks that I wrote to you, so you must excuse me for not writing sooner. Soldier life is a merry one, & a dirty one too, especially this afternoon for it is raining.*

*When Hen Leibfried left we got orders for marching. We drawed 3 days rations. We were all ready for starting in the morning, when the orders came only to get ready for inspection of arms. That was Nov 1st. Next day we got other rifles, the old Harpers Ferry guns they condemned. We got the Austrian Rifles now. We are satisfied now with them. We will pop the Rebels now as soon as they show themselves.*

*This morning being Sunday we were mustered in for pay. There is no news today in camp. Nearly all the boys went down to the creek for washing. We don't find much out here of Sunday. We had only 3 preachings since we left from home. Our Chaplain is quite english, he can't speak a word of German. He don't send us. I only wish that Bro Wunderling was along with us now. I just know what he is, he would be the man for us. We should have one that could preach in two languages.*

*3rd Today I got a sword. The sergeants all got them. I only wish I could send it home, for it won't help me much, they are only heavy to carry. If I come back again, God Grant it! I will bring it along, cost what it will.*

*At 3 pm we got orders to pack up everything. This evening, at 7 we got our shelter tents. We were ready for starting in 10 minutes time.*

*4th This morning at 9 am we left our Camp near Fort Meigs, & arrived at Washington at 15 minutes past 10. We marched to the warf & waited for the Steam Boat. We went up to the boat at 20 m. of 2 & left for Alexandria 20 m. past 2. Distance 6 miles. It was a splendid ride but it was soon over. We were altogether 4 Regiments that left from Washington. As we were laying in Alexandria Lieut Col Dachrodt gave me an introduction to Lieut Col Baldy of Easton. Some of the other boys asked me if I ever knew him that I shaked hands with him. I only told them it was the first time I ever knew him.*



*I & our Col. are great friends. If I want a pass I only go to him. He always gives me one yet. It makes some of the other boys so confounded mad that they can't get a pass when they want one. They always think because I am a Sgt. that I get it. I don't care what they think when I'm only satisfied. We marched that evening yet, 2 miles to a camp where we slept over the night.*

*5th At 8 this morning we left camp again and marched back to Alexandria again where we waited for the cars. 20 m. past 10 we left for Menasses Junction & arrived there at 15 m. of 1 where we waited for the rest of the Reg. We were in two trains. There we saw the cars which Jackson burned. Spades were laying around them in heaps, all burned up. At last we started. We came through Bull run battlefield. On the way we every now & then saw a dead horse, broken wagons, & good many graves. Can't tell if they who were buried there were of our soldiers, but it makes no matter, we will let them rest in peace.*

*It was already quite dark when we marched through there so we did not see much. We travelled that afternoon about 5 mls (so they said) but we thought it was nearly 10 mls. We slept in the woods that night. I had my shelter tent up. I was glad too that I had it for it rained very fast that night. Some did not put theirs up so they got wet. They had a load to carry next morning. Our shelter tent is a piece of muslin about 4 by 5 ft wide, so two go together, and button it together so you get a nice little tent. They are small but heavy enough to carry.*

*6th At 3 pm we left for Gains Ville & arrived there at 8 pm. We travelled another 5 mls. We were glad when we came there for we were nearly froze to death. We had no warm coffee since we left Md. We got our tents soon pitched & made fires. Then we felled a good deal better.*

*7th This morning we struck tents and stood in Regt Lines about a hour for marching when the orders came again to pitch tents. That did not suit us but we had to do it. The snow is falling, just, but it melts quick again. We had 2 inches of snow here. In the evening the Regt got each a gift of whiskey. I can tell you that warmed us a little (Ahem).*

*8th Some of our men went foraging. They brought in a beef, chickens, rabbits, & some of the Comps got pigs too, but we had not much good of it for that night we got marching orders. So they had to cook the beef. It was a real pity for those nice steaks. When*

cut it up our mouths watered already. We said we would have good dinner at Sunday, but that was only talk.

9th Being Sunday we were up early, took our breakfast, struck tents, packed up everything. After that we got one other talk & started for the rest of the Brigade. We stood in divisions. Then our (Brigadier General Gilisa) reviewed us. We gave him 3 cheers. After that the first two divisions came to a about face when General gave us a few remarks which all took to their hearts. After that we started for our present camp. On our march we came through Hay Market Town. It was a quite nice little town. Our men burned it. The reason, because the women of that place told the Rebels how our Army was advancing. They counted 28 chimneys which stood yet. The chimneys are all built of stone, they won't tumble down, but is a real pity when you see the ruins of such a nice little place, but it just served them right.

We travelled that day 15 mls. It was a hard day's work. We pitched our tents and slept better than at home.

10th We are stationed near a little Town called Aldie. It is a nice Town, but I guess they are all scared for nothing if their property is destroyed. I guess they found out that we were hungry, for the beef, pigs, & chickens were killed before their eyes.

11th Monday night we had to sleep on our arms. We slept in the Comp Hdr. but no rebels came so we went to our tents again in the morning. I did not sleep much that night for there was such a sharp wind going.

As there are a couple of days where nothing occurred, I will just let you know that I am well & trusting to God to stay so. Since we left our Camp in Md we fared a little poor, that is, in victuals. We get nothing but speck & crackers. For my part I got money enough yet. I got 16\$ yet. I sold my watch which I traded on that open face lever. I sold it before we left Md. I was afraid that it would get stolen, so I sold it for 8\$. I get as much as 12\$ for the watch cost c xx. I would have sended you the money already, but I thought that perhaps I would better keep it. I guess we won't get our monthly pay so soon. The soldiers in the other Regiments get paid off every 3 & 4 months. If we have to wait so long, I guess I will need my money. Most of the boys have no money so they get sutler tickets, but our sutler is so dear with his things, he won't get much off me.

Watch work, I don't do anything just now for I have no time to fix them. We drill nearly the whole day. I sent two away on Sunday because I did not feel for working. We are glad to rest a little. I will just tell you how much profit you have to write up. The

two watches I sold came to \$27.00. They cost \$6.50 so you can write \$20.50 to the shop acct. It is not much, but for all, every little helps. How is Richard getting along. Is he so anxious to learn yet. And did he get a crop yet too? But I guess he forgot that, because his teasing Bro is gone. You must excuse me but I always like to know how you are coming along. I always waited for Leibfried but it seems he got lost & taken up for a stragler, that is what I think.

We have two sick men in Washington of our Comp, John Frankenfield & Mr. Ritter's son. We can't tell if they are there yet, but I guess they are for they can't get it better. I was in a couple of Hospitals and it is real nice in them.

If any of you was here you could learn a great deal, especially in cooking. Nearly all the tents get a mess pan. There is a great deal saved in that pan alone. For instance, they fry their meat in it, if they have it. Next they cook their cracker in it. Every morning they wash themselves in it, and when washing day comes, that is always Sat morning, they wash their dirty clothes in it. When that is done, the feet get a scrubbing in it too. So you see we can do without any separate pans. So you see we are coming along real nice. I guess somebody should make out a book about our cooking, for they could save a great deal.

16th We had a knapsack inspection, looking how we keped our things. I cut mine up & made it smaller so they exchanged one with it, but no matter, I can carry my things much lighter now. 2 pm we got orders to pack up everything & to be ready for marching in a minutes notice. They were expecting an attack near us. The cavalries and artillarists are going past us in a gallop, but at 5 o'clock they came back again. The Rebel pickets were nearly 5 mls of us, but they went back again. The Rebels got batteries planted 19 mls from us. They are lying in a good place.

17th This morning I got my boots shod. I had to pay 1\$. I won't get any wet feet any more. This afternoon it was raining every now & then. At 11 tonight the orderly waked me to go for our rations. We got fresh beef. I got several stakes yet which the cooks fried for 6 men. I got about 2 lbs that comes good for on the way. We got orders for marching. We will start in the morning. I believe we are going back to Fairfax, that is 18 mls from here. That is a nice walk with a load. I am up the whole time. I just ate a cup of bean soup, we do not like to throw them away, so they made a soup, it tasted very good. It is now 4 o'clock this morning. I must close for I got my things to pack up yet. As soon as we are settled once while we can correspond more together. Hoping to hear from you all soon. I close with much love to you & friends.

*Yours*

*James C Beitel*

*Co A 153rd Regt. P.V. Col. Glanz*

*1st Brigade 1st Division*

*General Sigels Army Corps*

*Washington D.C.*



*Camp on Jackson's Farm  
Chantille  
Fairfax Co Va.  
Nov 24th / 62*

*Dear Father*

*I received your letter yesterday afternoon. I hardly know what to write to you about my travells since we left Md. I wrote to you in our Camp at Aldie. I guess by the time I write this letter you have received it. You can let me know when you write again.*

*Hen Liebfried, Chas Shireman & Dr. Walter were glad when they came here. Lucius Ricksecker left for Alexandria where there is a Camp for such soldiers who don't know where their Regt lies, and he will have to stay till we fetch him. He or the others had no money, so he left them.*

*The watch hands I received & I made one on a watch this afternoon. The sausages I received. They were all good yet, but I can't eat any just now for since our last travels I am not quite well, so I must take care what I eat. I guess in a day or so I am over it.*

*You wanted to know about that Wm Root. His sister was at Schaeffers & his fathers name is Isa Root. He lives in Stockertown. You can just drop him a few lines & I am sure he will pay it.*

*It seems the business is prospering that you fill up the shop so, but sure enough it was little far down.*

*I was quite astonished that you had already so much lumber. I hope you will find a ready sale for them.*

*The last travel from Aldie was a hard one for our Regt. It was raining every now & then, & that made it so hard to walk, but the Germans travelled over the ground nearly double quick so we had to walk awful fast only to keep up.*

*I must close now for I have hardly any ink more & my fingers are too stiff.*

*I remain with much love to you Mother & Bros Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*Charles I read your letter & some other time I will answer it. The same to Rich and Lewis.*

*J C Beitel*

*Co A. 153rd Regt. P.V. Col Glanz*

*1st Division 1st Brigade*

*Gen Sigels Army Corps*

*Washington D.C.*



*Camp Near Stafford Va  
Dec 12th 1862*

*Dear Parents*

*It is with great pleasure I write to you this morning, for I feel so comfortable in my shoes & my new cap which I just recd this morning. The two boxes I recd this morning which you sent to me, while I was preparing my breakfast, but I can tell you I jumped up when Albert Beitel brought them to me. Everything was just as you put it in, but perhaps if the box would have been a couple of weeks longer on the road the things which were in the large box were spoiled already & it was just time I recd mine, for the paper box was already quite wet, but it did not come in yet. I am much obliged for the things you sent me. My old neck tye is good yet, but after a while it will be wore out too, so I put it away for the present & the scarf I laid away too for it is not cold here at present. While I write I am sitting in my shirt sleeves, but it is too early in the year to stay so. The weather will soon change again and then it will come good.*

*The other things, stamps, .... , acid, tobacc cigars, all came in time yet, for my tobacc was nearly all & we can hardly buy it here for it is so scarce & they charge so much for it too. If you can tell Uncle William that I am much obliged for that cap he sent me. I would have written to him myself but it is impossible for me to do so for I seldom get time enough to write to you for the days are so short at present. The same to Uncle Gustav & Aunt Amelia. You can tell Uncle that the shoes are large but they won't fall off. I'm going to put another sole in them & to Aunt that the butter is excellent. It was just the thing to make a good cracker soup. I am going to make flannel cakes this evening. Butter & sugar on top of it will taste very good.*

*The letter of the 5th came to hand, money & the stamps were all in yet.*

*In my last letter I wrote to you about boots & to send them by mail, but that is played out now, but you can send anything here to us. You have to send it to Luckenbuch / Bethlehem for they have a committee who go along with the things that are sent here. They brought two loads here yesterday. They are going to send them every month.*

*If you send them, send a pair of extra soles along, for our shoe maker has no leather, blow pipe, watch oil & some com watch hands but not so clumsy as my pattern.*

*If you can send me newspapers, Bro ..... I like the best, for then we get nearly all the papers. I don't care anything about the New York Ledger just now, but don't spoil them. I would like to read them when I come back again.*

*No more at present. I remain with much love to you & all inquiring friends,  
Your Son*

*James C Beitel*





*Town of Dumfries*

*Dec 16th 1862*

*Prince William County*

*Dear Parents*

*As I have a couple minutes to spare I came to the conclusion of writing a couple of lines to you. We travelled now four days already. We left Chantille on Wednesday, we had hard marching to do in the morning. The roads were always rough & after 10 o'clock they were so slippery you could hardly get along. The dirt went nearly at all places, over the shoes, so you see we think we get along first rate. The roads are so bad that our teams can't get along, so we have not much to eat. We got for two days 6 crackers & a little speck. Today we did not get anything yet, but we expect our teams this morning. I don't save much when we are camped, then I go out foraging. Last night we had chicken for supper. We stewed it, & one of our men had a little flour, so we made a good gravy. I had my share of it. We had a little snow storm in Chantille, it snowed a bout 3 inches. It was awful cold in our tents, but we did not freeze up.*

*This morning the rest of the Brigades went ahead, our reg. has to stay here to guard the wagons, & as soon as another Regt comes in, we will leave, so we don't know when we start from here. The rest of the Brigades went ahead to Fredericksburg. There was heavy cannonading going on Saturday, but we did not hear where it was. We are camped near a nice little town, it is the county seat. There is the court house standing yet, but it is not so grand as ours in Easton. A couple of hours before we arrived here, the Rebels were here & captured 15 sutlers, teams and everything. If we would arrived a couple hours sooner, we would have had a little brush with them, but we came too late.*

*We got provisions now, they got all for two days, so we can make it again.*

*I must stop now, for we must play for dinner service. There was no longer meeting, the boys were too tired.*

*Monday 15th This morning we went again on our travells, we had a hard day's march. The roads were so bad, we are now 4 miles from Stafford. We were going to march so far, but we were too tired. We have a nice little tent. There were winter quarters here so we had no trouble of pitching our tents.*

*There was cannonading going on this afternoon, we expect it is at Fredericksburg.*

*I stop writing now, for I am too sleepy. Perhaps I can write a little more tomorrow. I did not receive a letter from you since Col Glanz brought me one. I can't see if they were lost, perhaps you had no time to write. I have hardly any time to write, too, for when there is no marching, we have to practice for the band, cooking and washing take time too.*

*I must close now, I will send this letter the first time I get a chance.*

*I remain with much love to you all, Your Son,*

*James C Beitel*

*Tuesday 16th We arrived here at Stanton at 9 o'clock, everything deserted. They are mostly the houses for Burns, Court House, and Jail. The jail is three stories high. I was all around. I played in the 3rd story, Gay & Happy, so you see I don't feel so bad as some. We are starting soon again & that is about all the news so far. Cannonading going on yet, I guess that Sigels army is fighting but we stay here in Stafford I suspect over the night. I must post this letter now for the post goes off soon.*

*I remain Your Son James C Beitel*

*Relicks I can't find here of any worth. The enclosed note I found in the Court House.*



*Camp near Brooks Station Va*

*Feb 10th 1863*

*Dear Parents*

*It is by this opportunity I write you a few lines. As Mr. Leibfried & Michael are going for home tomorrow morning, it is not worth while of writing much, for they can tell it better than I can write it to you, no doubt, they have a great deal to say.*

*On Tuesday Dec 20th we left camp near Stafford. The regiment started all ready at 5 a.m. but we were not ready, so they left without us. We had no time to make breakfast so we went without it. The Regt. had over half an hour start, but we caught up with them at Stafford when they took a rest of 15 minutes. We travelled 10 & 1/2 miles that day on the other side of Brooks Station where we took dinner. After that we travelled back again to the Station and camped there til Friday, when we went down the railroad toward Aqua Landing where we camped. On the way, the cars past us & ran over a nice dog. It cut him in two. He lived yet so I shot him dead with my revolver.*

*We were at that camp nearly 3 days when we had to march back again towards Brooks Station. I can tell you the whole Regt would have rather gone in battle than to travel back again. We had nearly all our block houses finished when we had to march up the R.R. again, on the other side of Brooks Station where we are camped at present. That was Monday when we came here.*

*On Tuesday night it began to snow & continued the next whole day. It snowed about one foot on Thursday afternoon. Leibfried and Michael came here. They came here just at the right time, so they found out a little of soldier life.*

*On Friday afternoon we were paid off, for 1 month & a half. I received \$25.50. The band members paid each \$5.00 for our instruments & expenses, we have now only a small debt yet to pay. We get monthly from the Officers \$11.50 so that helps us along. As soon as the debt is paid the money is divided amongst us.*

*I send you with Mr. Leibfried \$20.00. That is all at present what I can spare. As soon as I get the rest I will send it to you.*

*The things you sent me were all good. I only wished the bread was harder, for I must say it is already all, so you see I have a good appetite. The sausages were excellent &*

*so were the cakes & jelly. The boots are a good, I can't say excellent fit but it don't matter out here how large they are. The boots are not worth much on our travells.*

*Tell Grand Father that I am much obliged for the blowpipe. It came in handy already for me. Some of the instruments were broke, so I could mend them now. It worked Bully.*

*And tell Aunt Amelia that she gets the premiere for sending out the best butter. I can tell you if you were to see the ball now you would think that was good.*

*Return my compliments to Liza Resmiller & tell her that Charley Wunderling looks for a letter nearly everyday.*

*That is all at present so I must close. I remain with truest affection Your Son*

*James C Beitel*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge*

*Feb 13th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*It is by this opportunity that I drop you a few lines, by wishing that you would send me with the levers, a file, 3 or 4 inches long (flat), a couple of broaches, & a piece of steel wire to make drills & some pepper. We can't buy any here. I guess he can take so much along. If not, you can send it by the next opportunity.*

*I got a great deal to do at present, but I can't make all the watches that come here to fix, because I have no materials. I have hardly time to fix those which I have at present.*

*We are here at our old Camp yet, & I guess we will have to stay here yet awhile.*

*I am well at present & I must say was so nearly the whole time. Sometimes we live too good that we get the direa, but that is nothing in warm weather.*

*I hope these few lines will find you all in good health too. I must close for it is getting late. I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*NB Did you receive the money which I sent with Leibfried. It was \$20.00. You can let me know it.*



*Camp near Potomac Bridge*

*March 4th 1863*

*Dear Parents*

*I will just inform you that I recd the things you sent me, safe & sound, & I am much obliged to you for them. I will just state that we had to fetch our boxes down at Brooks Station, 2 1/2 mls from our Camp. I can tell you the box got heavy till I was in Camp, but I felt first rate again when I had cut us some of the good bread, butter & honey on top of it. I tell you it tasted first rate.*

*I can't write much this time for news there is none. So just give Grandfather my best thanks for the apples he sent me & by doing so you will oblige Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*P.S. As I am writing these couple of lines, Bro Wunderling sits by my side.*

*N.B. Send me some sec hands & a valize, the smallest you can get, & send it to me the first chance you get. JCB*

*P.S. & a plated vest chain, real fancy one, for my own use.*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge Va  
March 6th 1863*

*Dear Parents*

*As Mr. Wunderling goes home tomorrow morning, I will just drop you a few lines, stating that we were glad to see him, but by his getting sick here, we lost the opportunity of hearing a good preaching from him. So we must do without it, but I hope till after a while, when the weather is more mild, that he will pay us a visit again & perhaps then he can give us a good sermon, which we would like to hear very much. I only wish he was with us the whole time, then this would be a Sunday here. Our Chaplain perhaps means it good, but I believe I could preach as good as he. He is not the man for us. You will find it out when you ask some of the visitors who were here & I guess they will tell the same thing.*

*Well we are nearly three months more now, & then when we come home again we'll have a chance of hearing a good sermon every Sunday, God Grant it.*

*We are all in good health at present. In the Regt there are always some who are ailing, but in general we are well & hoping it will stay so, & I hope this will find you the same. That is all I know at present so I will close. I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*James*

*P.S. I sold one of the watches, the quantities of chain & key for x xxx cost x.b.r. Money is a little scarce at present with the men. I only wished I had the watch when we were paid off. I could have got more for it, but I thought it might do. I send you \$20 00/100 with him, or enclosed. About the valize I wrote you, you can send it with an opportunity, when we are moving the Coln will take it along. JCB*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge*

*March 12th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*I take this opportunity of writing a couple of lines (with Corp Kreitz). He is going home on a furlough, so I must trouble you again for some things that I am in need of. For instance, I wish you would send me writing paper & envelopes. I would like the kind Edward has, if you can get it, fancy vest chains 2 & a couple of leather guards, piece of cotton stem, mouse tail file, & a square one, 2 doz screws, if you can spare them, piece of buckskin, sec hands, & a little w.oil, the last you sent me, nearly all ran out in the box, & some steel pins. If you get that valize I wrote to you about it, you can just pack it in there & perhaps he has some notions which he is going to bring along, so that will come handy for him here.*

*I forgot to write to you that Will Kreitz paid me 50 cts on acct, so you can give him credit for it. He thinks he owes it to me. He said he would pay the rest when he had more money. His acct is pd, I think.*

*That is all I want at present & all I know, no news that I know of. Coln Glanz came back this afternoon. I am well & I hope this will find you the same. I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*James*

*P.S. They are sending up a good many rockets at present, down towards Fredericksburg, but for what they are is to be found out yet.*

*N.B. I weight myself yesterday. I weight the small amount of 202 lbs.*

*Enclosed you find a note of Edwin Siefried. He is at home I heard so perhaps you can get something for it.*

*JCB*





*Camp Near Potomac Bridge*

*March 20th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*Myers, a private in Co E, requested me to write to you & he wants to know if you have rented the brick house in Plainfield away. If not, he wants to rent it off you. He is a single man yet. He wants to go in the peddling business & he said that house would suit him first rate. He wants to know how much rent you want & let me know as soon as you can, if you have not rented it away yet.*

*He always worked for Sam & Rich Knecht & Isaac Huntzell & so he sent his bounty to Philip Lund (Stockertown) . So if you have not rented it away I will just get a order of him & send it to you.*

*He said he might just as well give you some of his money, for if he was shot, he would not care who had it & when he came back he had a home where to go. He is a good natured man . He always cuts our wood, & fetches water for us. I remain Your Son*

*James*

*N.B. I heard old Kreeder was going to move to Bath, is it so? Have you got security for T Herbsts rent.*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge Va  
March 28th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*I received the valize, letter & c per Kretz, all in good condition. I just give you a bill for what I sold for you*

<i>1 plated lever cost c xx</i>	<i>6.50</i>
<i>1 silver " " c xx</i>	<i>7.50</i>
<i>2 com plated vest chains</i>	<i>1.00</i>
<i>2 five guilt " "</i>	<i>6.00</i>

*but I sold the above bill on tick. It is all safe, providing we don't come in a battle & get shot, but we expect the paymaster this month yet. Then it will come in time yet. We will stay here yet till April & then I guess we will have to move. Our officers sent their trunks home, for they can't get them along any more, for we are getting pack mules instead of wagons, so they can't get their things hauled any more. So I don't know how it goes yet, if they must carry their things, then I must carry my valize too, but I heard we were going to have several teams, so I will do my best to get along somehow or other.*

*My business is dull at present. The men have hardly any money anymore, so I have not much to do at present. I must say, at Kreitz's statement, that I made a good deal of money already, but you don't know how much it costs me out here. A dollar out here is not more than a quarter at home. So as it comes it goes again. Well at least I can make so much as to pay my expenses & have a little something left. I gave up eating pies & it always took two to satisfy my appetite. So their 50 cts went in a crack, but I found out I could do without it, so the sutlers can let me go.*

*I have the french watch yet. I could have sold it for 3.50 but I asked 4.00 for it, so we did not agree. (french ware don't sell the best here) As soon as pay day comes I will sell it soon enough. You need not send me any watches at present, for the whole Army of the Potomac got these pack mules, so we'll have to march perhaps pretty soon. So if we have a chance of staying long here yet, I might sell some watches yet & some of these chains. If we stay here a week yet, then we'll stay a couple more. I will let you know it as*

*soon as I find it out & then perhaps you can have a chance of sending it with somebody. I will just inform that I want lever mainsprings. I might forget when I write to you next, so if I write to you about sending me these things you can send some along.*

*I have good times at present. I just wish for snow storms, about 7 of them, every week one, & the rest of the time it would rain like the dickens. Then we would have a fine chance of serving our time out at our present camp, then US can let me go.*

*On Thursday Gov Curtin was here on a visit. I would like to see the paper what he says about us. If he praises us perhaps you can send it to me in a letter. If the contrary, I don't want to see it. It was only a pity Doc Walton was not here, so he lost the chance of hearing good music out here in the wilds of old Virginia (ahem).*

*I just wish you could see our camp at present. The whole camp is one Christmas tree. It looks Bunkum Schnevy.*

*That is all at present. I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*J C Beitel*

*I recd your letter of Doc. He came yesterday afternoon.*

*N.B. Tell Charles that I could not tell how it was with L Ricksecker about his swearing, but it would not be a wonder if some escaped him, for sometime it is enough to make a preacher swear here.*

*JCB*

*Tell the rest of the Brothers that they should write me as often as they can. They should not wait always for an answer.*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge  
April 10th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*As Steckel goes home this morning, I will just drop you a few lines with him.*

*I recd the letters you sent with Steckel. He sent them by mail from Washington, but the goods we did not receive yet. We were down at the landing on Wednesday, but nothing was there for us, but on Friday we heard that the goods were there. I guess the teams will go down today to fetch them.*

*I sent my scarf with Hen & some stones. You can give them to Lewis. Perhaps he got a place for them yet.*

*I sold the french watch for 4.00 cost c xx & five of the guards for 1.00. I kept one for myself.*

*I will write as soon as we get the goods.*

*I remain Your Son*

*J.C.B.*



*Camp near Potomac Bridge Va.  
Sunday, April 12th 1863*

*Dear Parents*

*I will just inform you that I recd the things you sent me yesterday but two of the boxes were lost, or stolen. We only got 10 boxes. The other two came to the landing but I guess they were stolen. The box for the 12 G we could not get because it did not belong to us. They must get it themselves.*

*We would have recd the boxes sooner but we had several reviews so we could not go down to fetch them.*

*On Thursday our Camp was reviewed by Major Gen Howard commanding this Corps. Sigel you know resigned. We had to go to Stafford, about 4 mls from our Camp. There were present that day between 15 & 20,000 men.*

*On Friday we were reviewed by President Lincoln. That was a small Batalion, 30 thousand men present. You won't see me, if I get home, with tent Batalions. I got enough of them out here.*

*The weather is very pleasant outdoors. It is getting almost too warm for me, but I guess I can stand it.*

*Yesterday they put up a tent for a man. They say he will get the small pox.*

*That is all I know at present. I am well & I trust this will find you the same. I remain Your Son*

*J C Beitel*

*NB That house don't suit Myers, that is, the rent. It is too much for him.*

*JCB*



*TO Richard O Beitel Esq*

*Tobacconist*

*Camp Near Potomac Bridge Va*

*April 24th 1863*

*Dear Brother*

*I received your letter per Thos Weaver & was glad to hear from you again.*

*Well we had quite a stir up last week. We got orders for marching, so we had to get 8 days rations to take along. I had to march so I had to make another haversack to store my things in, for my other one would not hold so much. So you can imagine about how large the bulk was. "well". I had about one horse load, "I guess", if I had to carry those rations along it would have made me a good deal smaller, for I tried it & it pulled like the dickens.*

*The rest of my things I packed up & sent it with the rest, I believe, to Alexandria. Well, at least they are gone & I guess we won't see them any more.*

*Well the Officers did the same, so you can see that were not the only fools. "well", I got my watch tools yet & that is the chief thing I have. At least I can earn some money yet.*

*We were paid off yesterday so now the watches come in again like the devil.*

*I sold one hunting case lever for \$14 cost c xxx, so I have no watch at present. I would like to have another one, but I guess there will be no chance of sending one out any more.*

*I recd the shirt which Mother sent me & it is just the thing I want, for in the hurry I left my other one in the valize, so I can make out now. That was the only thing I wished I had yet, but now I can make out.*

*The mainsprings came in handy & they came too just in the nick of time for I just had the notion to go over to another w maker to buy one. So then I can make the profit myself.*

*I got \$100 I would like to send home but I don't know yet. I guess it won't be safe to send it by mail so I will keep it a while yet & perhaps I will get a chance of sending it with somebody.*

*That is all I know at present, so you must excuse my short letter, for news are getting mighty scarce.*

*I remain with fond regards*

*Your Bro*

*James C Beitel*

*NB Best respects to Father, Mother & Brothers*

*Tell Charles & Lewis that I would try to answer the letters as soon as possible. JCB*

*Write soon.*

*P.S. No marching orders at present. I guess we have to stay a while here yet for it rained so awful then a couple of days. How are the peach trees by you, have they blossomed already a week ago? JCB*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge*

*May 7th 1863*

*TO Mr Charles H. Beitel, Nazareth, Northampton Co, Penna.*

*Bro Charles*

*I now will inform you of our travells & fight. Perhaps you have heard of it already & I guess you were a little anxious to hear from me, for I guess there are awful reports in Naz at present. Well I'll begin with since we left camp.*

*Last Sunday a week ago we got 8 days rations. Well that scared us a little first to take so much along, but we were glad for them. Well at last we are here again in our old Camp once more & so you see I had to carry my grub along for 11 days. How would that suit you to carry so much & to march every day at least 15 mls. I guess it would pull you down as flat as a pancake.*

*Monday Apr 27th we got up at 2 a.m., struck tents, & at 5 we marched off towards Stafford to join the rest of the Corps. Well we did this & then we at last started a circuitous road towards Fredericksburg.*

*We marched that day 15 mls. It went a little hard for the first day but we soon got used to it again. We passed Hartwood Church, the inside works are quite demolished. 4 mls on the other side of the Church we camped for the night, pitched tents, & it was good we did too, for it rained like the duce.*

*Tuesday got up at 2 a.m., struck tents, took breakfast, started at 4, marched till 12, only 30 minutes rest. I can tell you there were a good many stragglers. We pitched our tents. I walked around a little yet to see the scenery & a little before 5 p.m. I laid myself down to take a nap. I laid perhaps 10 minutes when we got orders to fall in again & be ready for marching, but we had to wait a good while. It was past 12 o'clock when we started. We crossed Kelly's ford & crossed the Rapahannock on a pontoon bridge. We marched 3 mls further when we waited for daylight. It was so dark you could hardly see anything & especially the mud, we sometimes came in knee deep. It was 4 o'clock when we came there, slepped till 6 a.m., took breakfast & we were ready for starting again. We average 3 hours rest a day.*

*Started at 10 a.m., rained nearly the whole day, hard marching, it was so sloppy. Camped near Germana Mills. Before we came there, the troops who were ahead of*



*us captured 70 Rebels, who were engaged in building a bridge over the Rapidan. They said they knew we were coming, but they did not expect us in 10 days & we got the best of them this time.*

*We slept till 2 a.m. when we crossed over the river, went a mile further, and then we camped for the night. We got up again at 6 a.m., took breakfast, & got orders for marching at 8 a.m. Started at 10 a.m. We marched from 12 to 15 mls & camped for the night & got fresh meat yet that night. It was late when I got to roost.*

*Friday we had one of the finest mornings. 2 p.m. we got orders to march, started, but we were not out of the field yet when the first troops came back already with the news that Fredericksburg was taken and so they would need no forces at present. But got orders to hold ourselves ready. About an hour afterwards we started again. We got orders to flank the Rebels, so we marched up & down the roads. We sent skirmishers out but no Rebels to be seen. Cannonading going on the whole day. It was 8 p.m. when we at last got orders to lay down. I can tell you I slept first rate.*

*Saturday I got up early, packed up my things, took breakfast & was ready for starting again, but no orders came. We layed here till some time in the afternoon, when at last the rebels came. We band members & drummers just came back from Gen. Frey's headquarters. We had to take the cases there which our men used, & that was 6 mls which we travelled, so we were tired. But just as we came back the bullets came whistling around my head, shells exploded above me, so I just got my things & went through the woods double quick. I just came out of the woods where the Hospital stood when our troops came running already. Well the rebels fired on us the whole time, but I got safe through. Well we retreated perhaps 6 mls when we were stopped by the cavalry. Well their own Regt was formed again, but only the half of them were here. Well soon afterwards the firing commenced again. The Rebels were peppered this time. Well they soon retreated, it was after 10 p.m. when we layed down right in the open field.*

*Sunday 3 p.m. got up, took breakfast (coffee & crackers) & soon afterwards our Comp passed us. Well I hardly knew our Regt at first & after, it was so small. Well we went back about 2 mls behind the entrenchments where their own Regt was stationed. Well all the musicians went further back, for they could not use us in battle, so we were over on the other side of the Potomac. They have 3 pontoon bridges there at present. We layed there till next morning at 4 a.m. when the shells came booming over us. Well we had to clear out again. Just as I was gone 20 paces a shell exploded right where I stepped. I*

*can tell you that gave me a start again. We did not travel far for the firing soon ceased. Our cavalry soon captured them. There were two cannons.*

*We B members all got scattered. Well, I layed around there till Tuesday when I heard they were in Falmouth, so I went after them, but when I came there I could not find them. I heard they went along with the wagon train so I went along with the train. When at last they stopped our teams were not there so I went in an old tent & layed myself down to sleep. But I could not sleep for it was raining so awful, so I could not keep myself dry. So I was sitting around the fire till morning when I started back again to join the Regt. I went back 3 mls when I met some of the drummers who belonged to our Brigade and they told me it was no use for me to go back for I could not get over the river any more. So I went along with them. At noon we came to Stenmon's Station and there I saw our Quartermaster & he told me that our band was in Brooks Station Hospital. So I started off again and in an hour I was with them. They were engaged putting up tents for wounded, so I helped them.*

*Thursday morning we started for our old Camp again, for during the night our Regt came in. They are in low spirits at present. They nearly lost everything they had. I will give you a list of the missing and dead in our Comp.*

*Coln Glanz, Dr. Neff. I believe they were both captured*

*Capt Owen Rice wounded by a shell, fleshy part of his left arm. He is going to the Hospital, for Doctors say if he would not do it, it might cost him his arm yet. He was wounded on Saturday bringing in the skirmishers. He was the whole time with the Regt, cheering up the men.*

<i>Sergt Wm Rader</i>	<i>Naz (missing) Stockertown was seen near Falmouth, not heard yet</i>
<i>" Hen Weaver</i>	<i>" "</i>
<i>" Wm Shultz</i>	<i>" " formerly out of Stockertown, currently Easton</i>
<i>Comp Chas Nauman</i>	<i>Hecktown Missing</i>
<i>Harry Gross</i>	<i>Naz "</i>

<i>Sam Werkheiser</i>	“	“
<i>Sam Wartman</i>	“	“
<i>Daniel Smith</i>	<i>Hecktown</i>	“
<i>Joseph Smith son of Governor Smith</i>		
<i>Pet Herman</i>	<i>Naz</i>	<i>was seen in Falmouth</i>
<i>Francis Daniel</i>		<i>Missing</i>
<i>Frank Etchman</i>	<i>Naz</i>	<i>Missing</i>
<i>Jac Senseman</i>	“	“
<i>Aaron Johnson</i>	<i>Hecktown</i>	“
<i>Freeman Stocker</i>	<i>Stockertown</i>	“
<i>Frank Danner</i>	<i>Naz</i>	“
<i>John Frankenfield</i>	<i>Naz</i>	“

*Lieut Ben Shaum is missing, heard he was seen down at the Aquia Sunday*  
*Lieut Coln Dachbrodt is wounded in the arm.*

*Well it is just a wonder that our whole Regt was not captured, for we were laying at the extreme right & the rebels came in. They did not expect them there on the right or they would have put more men for certain there. Well ours stood it well. They did not run before they were ordered.*

*This is all for this time. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain your*

*Bro J C Beitel*

*NB Give my best wishes to Father, Mother & Brothers.*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge Va*  
*May 12th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*Enclosed you will find one hundred & twenty five dollars, thirteen dollars & thirty cents you will pay to Edward. I recd it of Hen Leibfried for the music books. The rest belongs to you. Write me as soon as you recd it. I remain Your Son*

*James C Beitel*



*Camp Near Potomac Creek Bridge Va  
May 17th 1863*

*Dear Father*

*Enclosed you will find an order for the sum of one hundred & twenty five dollars, which I suppose you can draw at Easton. Hen Liebfried went to Washington the other day & he put it in the express for me & they said they would forward it, but perhaps they pocketed it. Write to me as soon as you receive it.*

*I suppose Charles received that letter I wrote to him since the battle. There I stated the missing in our Comp. Well several came back, for instance Wm Rader, Dan Smith in the Hospital, Sam Wartman Hospital, Lt Shaum was captured with Dan Smith, but Lt was not wounded so they took him to Richmond too, but we heard nothing for shure yet.*

*That is all I can write at present, for the mail is going off soon.*

*I remain with much love to all Your Son*

*James C Beitel*



*Camp Near Potomac Bridge Va  
May 21st 1863*

*Dear Father*

*By these few lines I will let you know that I am busy working at my trade. I have hardly the time to take my meals, for the watches come in like the duce. I had to send the other morning over a dozen men away & one of them had a hand full. They nearly scared me. I would have willingly fixed them, but I have work always for a couple days in hand. So I told them they should call again in a couple days. I can tell you I could make money out here if I had my tools all here. I have a notion when my time us up to go down to Va again, that is if you have no work for me. Well our time is nearly up now & then we will speak about it.*

*Wm Kunsman went home the other day. Perhaps he would bring me some lever hands, cem hands, sec hands, & the slide file I wrote for & some w keys & if he can't take them along, send me the hands & file by mail.*

*Have you recd the money I sent you with Adams Express. Let me know it as soon as possible.*

*Yesterday afternoon Jacob Kinkinger died in the Division Hospital. We are going to get him embalmed & send him home. We collected in our Comp over \$50 & I guess that will bring him home.*

*Last night Capt Myers recd a letter of Lewis Clewell, stating the parrolled in our Regt. They are now in Anapolis Md in the parole Camp. The missing in our Comp are two yet, F. Daniel & Freeman Stocker. Coln Glanz & B. Shaum are prisoners yet in Richmond. Lewis Clewell saw them there. I will state the parrolled now.*

*Sergt Wm Shultz*

*“ Hen Weaver*

*Comp Harry Gross*

*Charles Nauman*

*Pet Herman*

*Frank Etchman*

*Frank Danner*

*Sam Werkheiser*

*John Frankenfield*

*Joseph Smith flesh wound*

*Lewis Gold*

*Jacob Sensener*

*I am well & I hope this will find you all the same. I remain Your son*

*James C Beitel*



Camp Near Potomac Creek Bridge Va

May 24 1863

Dear Father

Yours of the 17th came to hand & in reply I will give you a list of the articles recd & c. As you know we recd in Harrisburg 100\$ bounty & I guess 18.33 of these men which we gave to the township. That makes \$118.33. The first time we were pd off we got pd from the 15th of Sept to 31st Oct, got \$25.50 & the last time we were pd off for 2 months. November I was Sergt, recd for that month \$17.00, Dec, Jan, & Feb recd \$39.00. Total \$199.83.

1. hunting case lever which I took along	cost c xx	sold for	15.00
1. " " " new P Bachsmith brought	c xxx		14.00
		them along	
1. open face " old		c rx	12.00
1. " " lever (gilt)	recd these two in	c xx	6. 50
1. " " quarter	the box	xbr	5.00
2. plated vest chains (triple gilt)	cant tell what they cost		6.00
2. com plated " "	I guess we pd n x or n rfak		1.00
6 leather guards 2 which were at some of the widths			1.50
1 open face lever	recd these of	cxx	7.50
1. french watch	Kreitz	cxx	4.00
Rcd of Wm Kreitz on acct			.50
4 doz w keys			2.88



<i>1 doz mainsprings</i>	1.75
<i>2 bottles w oil</i>	.50
<i>1 hand ...</i>	.50
<i>1 old tweezers</i>	.25
<i>broaches, drills, couple of files, screws , hands</i>	3.00
	-----
	281.71

*I believe that is all that I recd. Perhaps you know something more. Well I will make it all right when I come back.*

*I will now state the money I sent you (the dates I don't know)*

<i>With</i>	<i>Thomas Hartzell</i>	115.00
"	<i>Philip Wertle</i>	18.00
"	<i>J C Leibfried</i>	20.00
"	<i>Rev Wunderling</i>	20.00
"	<i>Adams Express</i>	111.70
		-----
		\$284.70

*I did not hear anything yet, if you recd the money which I sent you by express. I hope it is not lost.*

*Well how much did you earn in the shop till the end of Feb. Let me know it. Well, you must make out the profits of the sales I made & perhaps you know the articles, what time you sent them, so that you can put the profits to the right month & the bounty & pay I recd. You would better put so much for months from Sept to the end of June, 10*

*months by the next letter you write me how much the profits are of each month. That is all I know at present. I remain with my best respects to the family*

*Your Son*

*James C Beitel*

*NB It is hot enough here to roast a turkey. How is it up by you?*

*PS Charles wondered what feelings I had when the shell exploded where I stepped. Well you can tell him that Kind Providence must have been on my side, for he gave me two good legs to make my escape & if it was not for them I guess I would have been a goner.*

*I heard Wm Kiefer wrote awful news home about the battle & that he had command of the Comp & stating all those that skedaddled, but he forgot to mention his own name. He was ahead of them all & he ran so awful fast the Provost Guard couldn't stop him till he levelled a pistol at him. But that brought him to a halt, so you can see where his bravery comes from. Well last night he recd 3 hardy cheers for his bravery, as commander of the Comp, but the cheers did not come out, only groans. He walks around today as if he had a headache. Well I guess he hears the groans yet.*

*JCB*



*Near Gettysburgh Pa  
July 3rd 1863*

*Dear Parents*

*I will just inform you that we are now in Pa, but in a heavy fire. We came here on the 1st of July & our Regt went right into battle. We band members were ordered back. Well we were in town till towards eve, when the Rebels drove our troops back so we had to leave town. All our wounded were in town in churches & they are now all in possession of the rebels*

*We lost a good many that day, Capt Young killed, Lt Sherman wounded, but in the hands of the Rebels. And so were a good many of the officers wounded that day. Our troops are on the South West of the town. Our Comp was stationed a little on the South East, on the left of the pike if you go to Baltimore.*

*Well they were laying there the whole day till toward evening, being the 2nd & then they were cut up awfully. Major Frank said that perhaps 20 of the whole Regt were left.*

*July 5th The Regt is strong a little over 200 h. I am all right yet.*

*I remain your Son*

*James C Beitel*



# "I am all right yet" - Letters from the Civil War

## *Sgt. James Beitel writing on life in camp*

"Nearly all the tents get a mess pan. \_ere is a great deal saved in that pan alone. For instance, they fry their meat in it, if they have it. Next day they cook their cracker in it. Every morning they wash themselves in it, and when washing day comes... they wash their dirty clothes in it. When that is done, the feet get a scrubbing in it too." November 17th, 1862, Camp Near Aldie Landon Co, Va.

## *on packages from home*

"... tell Uncle William that I am much obliged for that cap he sent me... \_e same to Uncle Gustav & Aunt Amelia. You can tell Uncle that the shoes are large but they won't fall off... & to Aunt that the butter is excellent. It was just the thing to make a good cracker soup. I am going to make flannel cakes this evening. December 12th, 1862, Camp Near Stafford, Vane

## *on marching*

"We traveled now four days already. We left Chantille on Wednesday, we had hard marching to do in the morning. \_e roads were always rough & after 10 o'clock they were so slippery you could hardly get along. \_e dirt went nearly at all places, over the shoes... \_e roads are so bad that our teams can't get along, so we have not much to eat. We got for two days 6 crackers and a little speck." December 16th, 1862, Town of Dumfriez.

## *on the weather*

"It is hot enough here to roast a turkey. How is it up by you?" May 24th, 1863, Camp Near Potomac Creek.

## *on his watch business*

"I always have work to do. I have now 3 watches to fix yet, two to clean. I get 75 cts for cleaning them each." October 28th, 1862, Camp Near fort Meigs, Md.

## *on Gettysburg*

"I will just inform you that we are now in PA, but in a heavy fire. We came here on the 1st of July and our Regt went right into battle...Well we were in town till towards eve, when the Rebels drove our troops back so we have to leave town. All our wounded were in town in churches & and they are now all in possession of the rebels... We lost a good many that day... I am all right yet." July 5th, 1863, Gettysburg, PA.