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Mumfordsville Ky. Dec. 22, 1862

Dear Father:

I am happy to write that I am writing this letter enjoying the best of health. Having been very busy and lack of opportunity have prevented me from writing before. The country is mountainous hereabouts and we are camped on a high mountain. We have two pieces of artillery here. Our camp is located about a quarter mile from Green River from which we get our drinking water. The water is green but it is good. At the foot of the mountain lies another regiment and two on the other side of the river where they have a fort of sorts. It is a strong position and we are awaiting an attack daily by Uncle Morgan. His purpose is to cut off communications between Nashville and Louisville. We sleep at night with our guns at our sides so we can be ready at a moments notice. Every morning at four or four-thirty we form a line of battle which is done to teach us how to fall in quickly and not be half asleep in case the old boy should come as he has the habit of attacking at daylight. The railroad bridge over the Green River is 130 feet above the water and is a beautiful bridge. We are on guard duty a great deal of the time as our pickets are two miles from camp. Picket duty is pleasant and I would rather do that than guard camp. We have two or three at a post and sometimes more according to circumstances. There are rabbits in abundance here but it doesn't help any because the guards are not allowed to shoot. I was in a cave here which had a narrow entrance four or five hundred feet long and then there are larger openings which resemble small rooms. It was very warm in the cave.

We had a nice march over here. It is a pleasant trip and we took seven days to get here. On Wednesday we left Louisville and the next Tuesday we arrived here. Monday it rained real hard and we were soaked but we had a lot of fun. The mud was so slippery that sometimes the boys went head over heels. It is almost impossible to imagine how slippery the mud can be here. Some of the officers had a difficult time because these store clerks aren't used to such things. The pictures of yourself, mother and Christine suffered and got wet because my knapsack was soaked. I dried them and now they look fairly good again. After we were here we were hauled out by a false alarm. In two minutes the battalion was formed and it was almost pitch dark. The colonel rode along the ranks in great haste just as if we were to be engaged in battle. He praised us for our speed and good order and said that this was the first and probably the last time that a false alarm would be given during the whole war and that we should always be as prompt as this time. Now we are busy digging rifle pits. Progress is slow because it is too rocky. The boys kept their health during the march - only a few indisposed - mumps etc. I am in good health and gained weight on the march. It was fun to see us that Monday when it rained so hard and we had to pitch our tents in a sea of mud. We slept well but the tent was full of damp and steam in the morning. I had kept my overcoat dry which I put on over my other clothes and so I lay down and slept better than in the bed in the wall in my old room. Christine wrote that if we needed gloves or mufflers we should write and ask for them. We need nothing and if we do I will write.

Your loving, B. Van Raal te.