



WHITESMOKE SUN / COURIER

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2nd Corporal Michael Bazzo

May 12, 1863

Dear Men of the 8th,

I write to inform you of my unfortunate whereabouts since proudly fighting alongside y'all and bearing witness to your unfailing valor during the battle of Prado. It is my wish, as always, that this correspondence finds y'all safe from the invaders' oppression and that, Lord willing, I can rejoin the ranks shortly.

The battle raged that warm Sunday afternoon at Prado, as we pressed on down the hill into the face of galling fire. Men dropped on all sides and I

heard the cries, nay, I heard the sound of death itself echo through the valley, yet there was naught I could do but my duty. Forward I went, following our brave captain into shot and shell when suddenly, what I believed to be a hot poker pierced my side like a bradin iron and I knew that I had succumbed to Yankee lead. I went down like a sack a taters and lay under the boiling sun. I could hear the surrounding violent noise pass forward away from me as I yelled out to the surgeon. By the grace of God, surgeon's assistant Joe Bazzo, attended to me with encouraging words, bandages, and much needed water. To my astonishment, he thereafter ran off, directly into the clouds of heavy smoke to attend to other of the fallen. A finer example of thoughtless self-sacrifice has not so much been demonstrated. My last vision of Doc Howard and his assistant accounts their prostrate position a'fore the Yankee Major and I quickly feared they had been kilt or worse. Sadly, it is with regret that I am unable to relate their current whereabouts and it is my sincere belief against hope that they have been taken prisoner. This is testament to the senseless Yankee brutality; to take a young surgeon's assistant prisoner is unthinkable and must not go un-avenged. I was thereafter taken to the hospital where I spent countless days under the influence of that harlot Laudenum and saw visions, which I cannot here relate. I do believe the whiskey used by our doctor to be a better and more comforting sedative. Needless to say, I underwent surgery to my abdomen at the hands of the blue devils to remove the ball lodged there. I formulated a plan after some days, contemplating a late night departure to

return to my duty. The hospital storehouse was virtually unguarded and free for the pickens. Beyond food and blankets, I procured that bottle of Laudenum, though you must believe that my singular intention in so doing was its sale and justifiable furtherance of the financial needs required to accomplish my return. I have recently learned that the unit is moving toward a location known as Long Beach. I am not well familiar with the Virginia Countryside but believe the hamlet of Long Beach to lie somewhere near the vicinity of the Shenandoah Valley. Be not dismayed for I have recovered from my affliction and will return to raise my hand in your company against those who wish us harm. Thank y'all for keeping me in your thoughts and prayers.

For the Cause;