

Monday, August 16, 1862

I just received this diary from my Pa. It has my initials P.L.O. They stand for Peter Luke O'Brian. Most men like me don't know how to read or write but mama taught me well. I can write whatever I want in here without having to worry about others stealin' it

and readin' it except for a few. I just
told my parents goodbye because I am
fighting for the Union and Abraham
Lincoln himself. He hung up little signs
everywhere sayin he needs men to fight
for the Union. I want to fight for
America. I am proud of this. I must
admit that I am also scared but I know

*I can do it. I was born tough right out
of Ireland. I am part the 69th New
York Infantry Regiment out of Bronx.
It is Company G. I chose the Union
because they want to free slaves. I want
no more slavery too. There wouldn't
have to be a war if it weren't for the
Confederate States. They want slavery*

and they want independence from the North. Now the Union is just trying to survive and I'm trying to help. I'll write more later.

Later

I met my captain Tom today. His name is Tom Stantfred. He's a rough ol'

bastard but I know he is smart and
knows what to do. I feel safer with him
as a leader.

Wednesday, August 18, 1862

My Captain Tom says it's a good thing
I'm writin' down my thoughts. He says
that now we'll have a good reference to
the war coming out of my own words.

He told me not to write my feelins
though and write about all the details
of this place. He says no one is gonna
care about my thoughts and cares and
they will only want to know what
happened here and it'll be good for the
history records. Well I'll start by
describing our camp. We are gonna be

movin' lots. We've always gotta be ready for whatever so we can't get too comfortable. There are three canvas wagons storin' supplies and food and stuff and there are a bunch of cannons that we will have to pull. Another wagon holds ammo and weapons while each man has to carry a gun. Captain

Tom and a few others ride horses while
the rest of us will walk.

Monday, August 23, 1862

We started walking today. I don't
know to where. I haven't asked
Captain Tom yet. But as we walked I
met another young man about my age
named John McNally. He's from a

small farm west of Fredericksburg,
Virginia. He says that when he goes
home he's gonna marry a young girl that
he loves so much and can't stop thinkin'
about.

Later

Captain Tom read my diary today and
said that the stuff I was writin was

good but I don't need so much girl stuff.

I don't know what he means by that but

I think it means the stuff about John

and me bein scared and stuff. He also

took away my dinner for the night for

callin him an ol' bastard. I meant it

as a compliment. I could have said that

he's a sweet old guy. I would have
rather been called a bastard.

Wednesday, August 25, 1862

We made it here at two in the hot
afternoon heat. I still don't know
where here is. I don't want to ask
Captain Tom because he's a little
cranky today. I was so tired and hot I

thought I would collapse but I finally
got cooled down and some rest. I would
love to be home with Da and mama and
the pigs doing chores. I want to be
attending the evening dancing and find a
lovely lady to dance with. Now, I will
have to put those memories behind me
and concentrate on my job. I must

remember why I am doing this. I cannot
let memories get in the way.

Thursday, August 26, 1862

It is very late. I don't have much
candle left to write so I'll write
quickly. We are near Sharpsburg,
Maryland. We've heard news of
attackers and we've been hearin' lots of

noises soundin like guns and stuff. We have been preparin' to fight for the last day and a half and we aint allowed to sleep.

Tuesday, September 1, 1862

False Alarm. We have set up camp again. Most men are bored and the place reeks of sweat and urine. It's

hot and dusty and no one is pleased to be here. I believe that everyone will be very relieved if we can leave. Instead of being scared to fight in battle I feel most men will be happy to just leave this terrible place. I spend my free time with Private McNally. We go ride or swim or work together. He told me

his father passed away two months ago
and he wanted to get away. So he joined
the Union. His sweetheart's name is
Caitlin McLoughlin. He says she is
prettier than a starry, bright night sky.
Sometimes I wish that I had a
sweetheart at home that I could dream

about while I'm away and rush home to
as soon as I got the chance.)

P.S.

I think I'll be hiding this diary from
Captain Tom now because I feel like I
might get in trouble again for what I
wrote. I can't help myself. Writin
down my thoughts makes me feel better.

Saturday, September 12, 1862

This wretched bloody place! I do not believe I can stand the smell and the dust any longer. Every day we have to break up numerous fights that take place amongst the men. We have to deal with dying animals and sick men. Soon I fear

men will start killing each other and
some may die of sickness. At this rate I
am praying for a battle to start. The
start of a battle will make the men
trust each other again and fight for each
other instead of against each other.

Wednesday, September 16, 1862

We've heard news of attackers. The Confederacy is attacking us and meeting us along Antietam Creek. This is the first battle on the Northern soil. I am very ready to leave and fight. We leave as soon as we are completely ready.

Thursday, September 17, 1862

I shouldn't be writin right now. There are numerous loud booms of cannons and pops of rifles and screams of horror from men. I'm just writin this down now cause I fear I might die soon. It's a bloody massacre. Next to me Private McNally lays bleeding to death. He got shot in the gut by a rifle and a

cannon blew his leg off. I have tied 1
piece of cloth around his knee to try and
cut off circulation. I am shaking and
crying and I don't feel like a man. I
fear I will die and soon. If anyone
finds this diary then tell my family I
love them for me. God is Great.

Friday, September 18, 1862

My good friend Private McNally is gone. This is such a bloody mess. He died soon after I wrote yesterday. It is early morning now. The sun has not yet come up. We won this battle but many of our men have died. Captain Tom is nowhere to be seen. There are many men with no arms or legs and there is the

smell of death and burning everywhere.)

I can't get away from this place.)

Everywhere I look I can see blood or
fire or smoke.)

Later

We found Captain Tom. Or at least
we think. We found a body almost
completely destroyed. The reason we

think it's him is because of a metal that we found on his chest. No one else is high enough rank to have a metal. The body was spread out across a span of 10 ft and bits of bone and body parts lay everywhere dismantled. The face is bloody and dirty and black and you can see the bone of his cheek. I feel so sick

right now. The smell of this place isn't helping and now with no leader we have no idea what to do.

Saturday, September 19, 1862

We are still here. Some men rode out yesterday to receive help. Besides locating bodies and burying them we aint got nothin to do. I pass the time by

writin in this diary. It's almost like a
life saver. I was walking to get away
this morning and I ran into Private
Stephen Meagher and he was actin
crazy. He sat under a tree crying and
frantically mumbling. When I asked
him what was wrong he started yellin
about how he shot his own brother dead.

His brother had been fightin for the
Confederacy and he shot him and killed
him. Private Meagher is also now dead
because we had to kill him. After he
started yellin after me he started gettin
violent and tried hurtin me. Private
James McLaughlin declared him an
insane man due to war so we had to kill

him. I'm still in shock from my good friend Mc Nally and Captain Tom to even care about Stephen. I was thinkin about Mc Nally earlier and I was thinkin about his sweetheart Caitlin. I suppose when she finds out she gonna be very sad. I can't bear thinkin about the screaming and tears that she's gonna

shed when she finds out. I was also
rememberin that she has the last name
McLaughlin too along with Private
James and I wonder if they're related. I
have to ask em if I remember.

Tuesday, September 22, 1862

We received help a couple days ago.

Now we are in Sharpsburg, Maryland

waiting for new orders. We will all be assigned to new companies under the orders of new captains. I'm just going to try and forget about that battle. But it's just so hard. I fear those memories of blood and horror will stick with me forever.

Wednesday, September 23, 1862

I woke up this morning in a new camp
and a huge bloody bump on my head. I
don't know where I am or what group
I'm with. The only thing I know is
that the captain's name is Lawrence
Smith. And he's uglier than a pig's ass
and he smells bad and he's the biggest
bloody jerk I've ever met. I don't know

how I got this bump on my head but
something tells me it was him.

Later

Everyone in this camp makes fun of me
for bein Irish. I beat a young soldier
named John Haag. His face used to be
handsome but I definitely ruined that for
him. He deserved it.

Wednesday, September 30, 1862

I haven't written in a while. I've been drunk for the last week. Alcohol is my only happy place.

Monday, October 5, 1862

We just got attacked. I can barely write this now for I just got shot. I'm dying. I just wanted to write one last

thing before I die. (Though I don't
have anything really to say. I haven't
been away from home that long and I'm
already going to die.) I guess I just
want to say goodbye to the world. Now
I'll be with Private McNally and
Captain Tom. The only two friends
I've really had. I feel like I owe this

beautiful place a thank you for lettin'
me and my family come here. America
is a wonderful place and I fought just
to thank the land for giving me and my
family a place to be. I'm hoping also
that since I did die for this country, they
will respect the Irish more because
Private Mc Nally, Captain Tom, and

*many others as well as myself fought for
America with true Irish grit.*

[http://www.history.com/topics/
american-civil-war/battle-of-antietam](http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/battle-of-antietam)

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