

A SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR LETTER

*Submitted by Clara B. Martin
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The following letter was written by George Smith and mailed to Drew Smith of La Follette, Campbell Co., TN. George Smith was a brother of Ms. Martin's father.

Trinidad, Cuba
Jan 29-99
4th Tennessee Vol Infty. Co. M.

Dear Father and Mother and all.

This is Saturday night and I will date this letter one day ahead as I guess I wont have juice to write all I want to tonight. We got your letter to day and was certainly glad to hear from you all. But was sorry to hear that you all was not very well but hope that you all will be well and doing well soon. We are both well and doing well. You seem to be a little bit oneasy about us. Dont be oneasy about us for we are doing as well as any one could do. I am about as fat as ever and now we get a plenty to eat. It was for a while we did not have very much, but now we get lots. I get as much as I want 3 times a day. We have such to eat as Sweet potatoes, Irish pottatoes, Beef 3 times a day, pretty good gravy once and twice a day, Breakfast bacon, Rice, Tomatoes, Sal___, Brans, Bean soup, Good coffee and L Bran, Beef soup, and so we dont suffer for anything to eat. Still we dont have any thing that is real fine or nice to eat but you know that an army cant have such as that it break up the Government. And so dont worry about us starving as long as have half what we do. For I dont

know that Uncle Sam would let us starve unless some thing comes up that they could not get groub to us. And as far as having a hard time I never had an easier time in my life. I have to go on Duty at Headquarters about once week as bugler of the Gaurd. Dont have a thing to do but sound a few calls as you can see in the paper I sent you it is Headed as order of the Day, begins at Reville and goes to Taps. As I dont have no other duty to do no drilling at all. But they have to drill 1 hour in the morning, thats just good exercise ... Then the balance of my work is to sweep or help sweep out my tent and my work is a bout completed for the day. Dont have any dress parade but 3 times a week. I have a little barber shop. I make enough spare ___ to buy my Tobacco and writing paper. I made enough to day to buy a Tablet and some envelopes and had some left. I think my Trade accouted to about 60 cents. So I am getting along fine so far. And my health is very good ... It was for two or three days after we landed here I felt awful funny for every thing smelled so funny to me and seemed like my head was swimming all the time but the Doctor gave me my favorite prescription a good dose of saltz and soon I was all right ... We started two letters to you

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last week. Tom wrote and I wrote one, he sent a one dollar bill in the one he sent and I sent a 2 Dollar bill in the other one. And we intend to send some of our money home on the next mail as now they say we can get a post office money order and can send the money safe. So you can watch the post office as we may send it in a few days. Tom said he would wait until we heard from you before he sent it and so to day we got your letter. But I have not heard him say what or where he was going to send it. Be sure to let us know whether you got the one dollar and the Two dollars we sent you in the letter. If you will and want to you can write to us every week whether you get a letter from us or not as the mail only comes here once a week some times twice a week. A letter from home is always a welcome visitor.

Mit Hollingsworth got a letter from Hon Huey R. Gibson to day and he said that he thought that we would get back by warm weather. I dont care much about coming back until it begins to get warm for a fellow would freeze to death up there now after being here where it is so warm. And if I can keep any thing like health I dont mind staying here until the last of March or in April. But I dont want to stay here through the Rainy season. I am getting better satisfied every day. Still most any one would rather be in America than to be here almost in a land of Heathans.

The health of the men is a bout as usual, lots of them are sick with Malaria fever and Measles. There has not been any more died lately. I sent you two more papers last _____. Does the people want to read them

much. Tom had a letter from Lula Myers and the Alexander girls at Jacksboro to day. They say in the letter that Miss Anni Sharp and Jack Stanford run away and married that was a griat surprise to me I never would have thought it. I want you when you write if you dont feel like writing to get Joe to write for you and give all the little news and tell us how you are getting along and tell us how the times are and how you are getting along at home how you are faring, whether or not you are freezing or starving, and how you have been getting along through the cold winter. Dont let Papa over do himself in the cold. Tell me how cold it is and what every body is doing. Give me all the news in general. It is now about half past eight. I will not write much more to night for it wont be very long until bed time. I have a wire cot and can sleep pretty good on it. Good floors in our tents and every thing is very comfortable. So I will close for to night (guess I will write some more tomorrow by saying Good Night.)

This evening I will try to finish my letter it is bad and rainy this afternoon. We intended to go to the River and go in bathing this evening but it rained and we did not get to go. I have written two or three letters to day as it is Sunday and we have nothing to do and I have been reading and writing most all evening. I write a while then smoke a good cigar. Cigars is about all that I care any thing about that these people has. They have fine cigars very cheap.

Well to day I am feeling very good still it is very lonesome, but I am getting used to being lone some. Well I dont know much else to write

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this time. I would like to be at home very well but I am doing about as well here as at home. So Dont be so oneasy about us for we are doing well. We may send the post office money order in a few days. Whose ever name it comes in will have to take it to the office and get it cashed and of course if you need to use some of the money if we send it which I think we will you go ahead and use what you need of it. Joe do all Mother's work you can and help her and write for her if she wants you to.

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George Smith Discharge Papers

Know ye, That George A. Smith, a musician of Company M, of the Fourth Regiment of Tennessee Inf. Volunteers, who was enrolled on the twenty-sixth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, to serve two years, or during the war, is hereby DISCHARGED from the service of the UNITED STATES, by reason of Muster Out ... The said George A. Smith was born in Whitman, in the State of Tennessee, and when enrolled was 18 years of age, 5 feet 6 1/2 inches high, dark complexion, gray eyes, light hair, and by occupation a painter. Given at Savannah, Ga. this sixth day of May, 1899. William Taylor, Capt., 4th Regt. Tenn. Vol. Inf., Commanding the Company.

Tell Roland to be a good boy and Minnie to be a good girl and of course Dewey is a good boy.

So I will close for this time. Will Cooper is well and is getting fatter every day.

Write soon and often. Give all the news. From your loving son

George Smith
4th Tenn Vol Infty Co M
Trinidad
Cuba

Bye Bye.

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Thomas Smith Discharge Papers

Know ye, That Thomas Smith, a Corporal of Company M, of the Fourth Regiment of Tennessee Inf. Volunteers, who was enrolled on the thirteenth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, to serve two years, or during the war, is hereby DISCHARGED from the service of the UNITED STATES, by reason of Muster Out. [Physical disability] The said Thomas Smith was born in Campbell County, in the State of Tennessee and when enrolled was 22 years of age, 5 feet 8 1/2 inches high, light complexion, gray eyes, light hair, and by occupation a carpenter. GIVEN at Savannah, Ga. this sixth day of May, 1899. William Taylor, Capt., 4th Regt. Tenn. Vol. Inf., Commanding the Company.