

My friend John,

You will be surprised to hear that I have spent eleven days with the British fleet. I was endeavoring to deliver an American flag. I was successful but was captured.

They detained us until after their attack on Baltimore and you may imagine what state of anxiety I endured.

I was saddened when I remembered that it was in Baltimore that the patriots with public rejoicing received the declaration of war. I could not find any hope that they would escape and I feared the many faithful who were attempting to lessen this wickedness could not survive.

To make my feelings even more overwhelming, the Admiral told us that he feared the town would be burned and plundered.

Between two and three o'clock in the morning, under cover of darkness, the British attempted to use several bomb and rocket vessels to slip 1,200 men up the river and past the garrison so that they could launch an attack from the rear.

Succeeding in evading the guns of the fort, but unmindful of Fort Covington, under whose batteries they were next to come, the British enthusiasm over the supposed success of their venture erupted in a cheer that was borne by the damp night air to the small band of Americans. The sound pierced our patriotic hearts like a dagger.

Soon, Fort Covington and the barges in the river simultaneously poured an overwhelming fire upon the unprotected British enemy raking them fore and aft, in a horrible slaughter. The fierce battle continued for over an hour and pandemonium reigned.

Suddenly it ceased. All was quiet and not a shot was fired or sound heard. A deathlike silence prevailed throughout the darkness of the night. The awful stillness and suspense were unbearable.

With the approach of dawn, weary and bloodshot eyes turned in the direction of the fort and its flag. The darkness that had enveloped the harbor gradually gave way to a heavy fog of smoke and mist.

After some time, a bright streak of golden sunlight mingled with crimson shot across the eastern sky followed by another and another. As the morning sun rose to the fullness of its glory lifting the mists of the deep and crowning a Heaven blest land with a new victory and grandeur.

Through a window in the smoke and vapor could now be dimly seen the flag of our country. The gleam of the morning's first beam in full glory was reflected in my proud and patriotic heart that knew no bounds. The emotional wounds inflicted by the pain of the battle were healed instantly as if by magic and a feeling of new life sprang into my every fiber.

Tis the Star Spangled banner, oh long may it wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.