

Letter 1

Empire Brigade Suffolk Va. Nov. 3 1862

Dear Cousin

You will pardon my neglect for not answering your welcome letter before which I rec'd last week I rec'd the same time three letters from home. I began to think they had forgotten me it being two weeks since I had heard from home. They were all well at home. Micha was getting along finely with the farm, which gives me much (---) care about home matters, which I hardly have time to think of at best. Lib spoke of your loss by fire in her letter which I was very sorry to hear. You have my sympathy. We are having beautiful weather at present, quite warm and dry. I went out with our Company last night to Garrison Fort [illegible] is about one mile from camp and returned this morning to Camp. After making preparations for the night I spread my blanket on the ground and tried to get some rest. After sleeping some two or three hours I woke up and found my blanket nearly wet through with dew which is very heavy here owing to the swamp being so near. Saturday night I was on Picket with nine of our men holding a R Road bridge. I slept some during the night but let the Boys take turns in sleeping during the night. I heard the Pickets firing on both sides of me and didn't know it would be our turn next but the night passed quietly and slowly. The hours seem long when a person gets weary after long watching and listening. Last Thursday there were two of Co A's men buried, poor fellows, they died in the hospital without the kind care of a dear Mother or Sister for comfort or care for them. They were buried near our encampment. I count not help dropping a tear as I thought of them, many miles from home and friends. Thursday we rec'd orders too march with three days rations in our haversacks. Well we were soon ready and on Battalion line our Company another right. And left our camp at three PM. I didn't know where or how far we were to go before we were to halt. on, on we marched stopping but for a few moments at a time till we had passed our Camp twenty two miles on the road to Blackwater where we bivouaced for the remainder of the night. It was half past three when I spread my blanket to get a little sleep or rest. it being so frosty I couldn't sleep. I was quite tired after marching twelve hours and working hard to keep the Boys along and carrying of their Scin's (?) besides my own baggage. There were a great many of the Soldiers gave out before we got through. None of our Boys told me toonight that he couldn't have gone through if I hadn't encouraged him that it was but a short ways farther and we would stop for the night. It is pretty hard work when men are worn out by marching to keep them up and in line. We rested till five in the morning when our Artillery began shelling the town. Then I thought the ball had opened. The Rebs did not reply and our Artillery withdrew. We were expecting to march right on to the river which was but two miles in advance with the hopes of having a brush with them. The order was given too counter-march by file left which changed the order of things considerable. We marched eleven miles before we got brakfast where we stopped for four hours to take our breakfast and dinner combined. After resting we again took our line of march for Camp which we reached at half past twelve tired and worn out having but about six hours rest in all and marching forty four miles and carrying one gun all the way and some of the time two. Upon the whole we had a pretty hard march. Our force was about ten thousand strong, that of the enemy about fifteen. It was more of a reconoiterring expedition than a fighting one. So much for my poor description of our march. I have but very little leasure when I am not on duty. I

am busy in Camp so much that I am behind in answering my letters home. We are busy fixing for winter quarters which consist of log huts built up four feet from the ground with the tent for a roof. Our camp will soon look like a small town. We have a nice fire place in our tent which adds much to our comfort. I wish you might be here to take tea with us some evening. We have Oysters when we wish with warm bread, Butter (Livingston Co) with other fixens.. I expect a box from home soon. If you will come and see me I will have the best establishment affords. I hope your Father has returned to you again. I think he is worthy of much credit for the interest he has taken in behalf of our Soldiers and will be long remembered by many as a kind friend. Give him my best wishes. I have not passed a Sabbath in camp that seemed like a set apart for rest. So much different from the quiet at home. I shall try to visit you at the end of the war if my life is spared to me. Then I can tell you more than I can write. I must close as it is past eleven o'clock. With much love to you I remain your affectionate Cousin . Sam
PS. Please write often. Sam