

Camp Griffin Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 1861

Dear Harriet

It is with pleasure that I seize my pen to acknowledge the reception of your worthy letter. I had been anxiously looking for one for a number of days. I feared that my letter had been lost or miscarried, but I was happily disappointed on receiving an answer. I was sorry to learn of your ill health you must be careful of yourself & get well as soon as possible. obey your Mother and be a good girl. If she says take medicine you must take it. remember Mother knows best.

I am well & enjoying myself first rate at the present time I have enjoyed very good health most of the time since I enlisted I have gained 11 lbs in flesh since I enlisted I think the climate is going to agree with me I like Virginia much better than when

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I wrote you last. Since that I have been out in to the surrounding country & I like it much I think it a fine country for farming. the surface is smooth & the soil appears productive. There is considerable sickness in our regt at the present time. The prevailing disease is measles. quite a number of the Glover boys are sick with them. viz. Edward Ufford Hobart Bliss Zebina Y Bickford & Alec Davis. Davis & Bickford are just coming down. Ed & Hobart have been in the Hospital about a week they have been quite sick they are now able to walk out if they dont take cold they will soon be able to perform duty. I am glad that I had them when I did in fathers house. it is bad enough to be sick under the best of care surrounded by kind friends The boys complain some of their treatment in the H but I think they were treated as well as could be expected in camp life. We are having some cold bleak weather now. we have had veery beautiful weather most of the time since I came here the ground froze slightly night before last for the first time. I was out on Picket Guard duty the air though not very freezing was very

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chilly. I was stationed on what is called a reserve. A reserve is a body of men stationed back in some well selected position for the outside Pickets to flee to if they should be attacked Alec Davis & I were Corporals of the reserve. there has to be a guard around the reserve Corporals have to change this guard once in so often each Corporal has his relief to tend to when one relief is on the other rests. A Corporal does not have to stand on a post or beat picket guards are placed on posts 3 on each post Guards around encampments or around reserves are placed on beats 1 on a beat with orders to keep moving the pickets do not move 1 of them is allowed to sleep in the day time while 2 keep watch. in the night no one is allowed to sleep. We were stationed about 3 miles from our encampment. our reserve was within 30 rods of the outside pickets. There are reserves once in so often between the outside Pickets & the encampment so that if one reserve is outnumbered it retreats to the next & so on until they reach the main army. I have not seen a rebel since I came here our Pickets have not been troubled

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for a long while I felt perfectly safe. Lieut Dwinell was a commander of our reserve & during the day we on the reserver were where we pleased part at a time Orange Williams Lewis Clark & myself went to a house to carry an axe that some of the boys had borrowed we found some soldiers there eating bread & milk 2 or three negro women were milking in the year [sqatting] around in the mud. I counted 24 cows in the yard I went in to buy some milk they charged 10 cts a quart I thought that rather high so I tried to buy some eggs they axed 28 cts per doz this I thought rather high so I did not trade We went from there to the woods to hunt chestnuts we found any quantity of trees & burs & some nice chestnuts it was rather late in the season the chestnut groves had been visited by boys & hogs to many times to have them very plenty. We went to some

rebel wheat stacks to get some straw to put in our cabins to sleep on. Pickets build cabins of rails & bushes & then line them with straw if they can get it. We found 4 large stacks of good nice wheat 1 of them was nearly half gone we helped ourselves to what we wanted Pickets start from camp at 3 in the morn & return about 7 the next morn we carry our provision with us in our haversacks something similar to a leather satchel made of oil cloth. In regard to the sufferings of the 3d reg I think they have been greatly enlarged upon I have been to their encampment & I cant see why they are not as well provided for as we are except their uniform was somewhat

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soiled Since we came here they have been furnished with new uniforms throughout they have each 2 wool blankets & we have but one I cant see how they suffered ery much for clothing. They came here in the heat of summer & the change of climate caused considerable sickness in the Regt & judging from the amount of labor done in chopping trees & building forts &c which they claim to have done the greater part of them must have been worked quite hard. their ranks have been reduced by disease to quite an extent & I doubt not but what they have seen hard times but I think you in Vt have had the dark side of the picture presented to you Here in camp life we hear a great many false rumors such as that the rebels are marching on to attack us in great numbers or that we are going to fortress Monroe to stop through the winter or going on some sailing expedition down the coast. when we first heard these rumors

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we were inclined to believe them but we soon learned to let such rumors go into one ear & out of the other. You must not believe all that you hear from this way until it has been thoroughly confirmed. One of our Co received a letter stating that

we had been attacked by an overwhelming number of rebels and forced to retreat to the banks of the Potomac & its waters were so swollen by recent rains that we could not cross & we were nearly all killed or taken prisoners This letter was from his parents in Vt Another received a letter asking him what they should send him to eat they had received the heart rending news that we were starving to death. In answer to the first I would say it is so absurd that it needs no explanation. In regard to the second report we had to eat some hard pilot crackers & tough beef the first week that we stopped here. Since that we have bought us a large sheet iron baker & we now have a plenty of nice bread & good beef & pork as a general think to go with it we have boiled rizer & mollasses twice a week we have beans & pork 2 a week or rather 2 meals in a week we have had a number of

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messes of doughnuts since we came here we miss the butter & cheese pies & cakes & such dainties but we manage to grow fleshy on what Uncle Sam furnishes. I should like to call at your house some of these frosty mornings & get a piece of your warm punkin pie or warm potatos & meat would not go bad with fried eggs for trimmings In regard to our beding we have ticks filled with husks from rebels cornfields we use our blankets & coats for covering & our knapsacks for pillows we have under ground trenches or arches covered with flat stones to warm our tents with. In this manner we sleep very well I commenced this Sunday & today is Tuesday Sun night one of Co F died in the Hospital of the measles this is the first death in the Regt he has not been burried yet There has been 16 deaths in the Vt 5<sup>th</sup> Regt they came here in the month of Septwhen the days were very warm & the nights cold & foggy this caused a good deal of fever I am now seated on my knapsack in a pine grove about 3 miles from camp with a reserve our whole

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Regt is on Picket guard today I will now  
draw this dirty scroll to a close by asking  
you to excuse all mistakes & remember me  
to all the friends  
& receive this from your true lover  
Dan

P S I am now going out scouting  
to see what I can find some  
of the boys bring in milk  
their canteens that they milk from  
rebels cows I don't think they always  
ascertain whether she is owned by a  
rebel or not. of course I would not  
do any such thing Of course I would  
not. though a little warm milk would  
go well with our cold bread. of course  
it would.

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Write soon &  
oblige Dan  
Direct as before

Topics include: measles, reserve duty, foraging, rumors, food served in camp, bedding

Transcribed by Gemma Philcox