

Near Fairfax Station Va.

July 4 1861

My dear father

I have been lately very busy else I should have written to you long ago. I was mistaken in saying that this Battalion was independent. It is still under Seibels tho' we are some distance from him. Our duties here have been quite wearisome since we got here. I have been on camp or picket guard every other night & day since I come here & while not on guard have been throwing up dirt batteries. The latter didn't agree with me quite so well I come to the conclusion that I would prefer giving the Yankees a fair open fight & indeed imagine that it would have been easy to have persuaded Beauregard the same had he been made to share our labors. We had about thirty five men down sick at one time so that deducting the sick & picketed camp guards & scouting parties we were only able to bring out about twenty men to work. We have now finished the batteries & have a better time.

You must know that the remainder of the Regiment in which is the Independent Rifles have been doing nothing all the time.

The object in putting us here is simply as a decoy to the enemy - every one knows this to be so. We are on the extreme outpost & in fact but for the cowardice of Lincoln's mercenaries we would have been surprised & cut to pieces long ago. Through

went of men we are totally unable to picket guard
one side of our camp consequently are exposed
on that side & an enemy could get right
on our camp guard before we had notice of
them. And indeed such a feat would not re-
quire one half the daring of the exploit
which our own scouts performed the other
day within one half or three quarters of a
mile from Alexandria of which I'll give
you an account. First presuming that I
was on Picket Guard at the time the
party was made up a thus to my mor-
tification missed a glorious opportunity of
being present at an engagement. Capt. News
was leader of the party - our first Lieutenant
Bill Denis was second in command under
him. They were gone three nights during
which time it was constantly drizzling rain
& quite cold. They had no blankets nor
overalls along but were completely ex-
posed. The night of their attack on the Fed-
eral Picket the moon rose something over
an hour before day. They waited for the
moon before making the attack. Their plan
was to get up on the Third picket &
take it by surprise —

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above to be sent out on a picket guard & now
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sleazy from sitting up & watching all night. I will fin-
ish. I enclose a sort of plan of the fight
so that you may better understand it
thinking it may interest you. Our men
numbered about thirty. They crawled through the
woods along the line d. f. till they got to the
road at f. Here not knowing how far off the
picket was they pulled off their shoes & divi-

did one part going on one side of the fence - the other part on the other side the Antigua Rifleman belonged to the party on the road side (the most dangerous post). Captain Mearns & his men took the other side. It is half a mile from f to e. They took it barefoot along this route until suddenly at e a Sentinel sprang up in the road & halted them. Lieutenant Davis jumped up & ordered him to ground his arms or he would blow his brains out & all our men immediately repeated the command. The sentinel however replied by firing on them & at the same time they were fired on by a good many others in the corner of the fence. By this fire Sergeant Haynes of the 110. Troop-ers (who are under Maj. Gordon) was killed. Our men returned the fire instantly & killed several of them. They soon routed this party about fifty or eighty shots being exchanged. They then cut across to g where they expected the second & first picket would be down to aid the third - promptly along they came & another fight ensued which resulted in no loss to us & some killed on their side. This was the last fight our boys immediately commenced to retreat through the woods for the Yankees were kicking up a terrible noise in Alexandria they seemed to think that our whole army was down on them & it was dangerous for our men to remain on the battle ground longer. They retreated about two miles & then laid down & went to sleep. This whole fight was between two of Lincoln's batteries & in spite of that of one of them, but it being night they couldn't see them. We were very uneasy about our scouts for some time being almost convinced that they were captured. Remembered some near court martially Mearns for carrying his men into such a place. Deibel said "well boys it was glorious but very imprudent". There was certainly eight if not more of the Northern men killed on the spot. We had not a man wounded.

Loft Dundey I learned that Crook had been sick two or three days & tho it was raining I got a pass & went over to see him. I went again yesterday & found him

much better - his fever entirely gone but he was
still weak - He thinks he will be up in two
or three days. Johnny got sick of the stom-
ach while I was there & was vomiting a good
deal but I hope he will not have the spell
of it. I shall take every chance in my
power to go to see them if they are unfor-
tunate enough to get sick but I don't an-
ticipate such a misfortune. I suspect
you were heard that Billy Dejournalle is dead.
I got ~~the~~ protocol you sent me yesterday
while at Seibels' camp & thank you a thou-
sand times for it. I hope you will not
be disappointed in trusting the "honor
of the family" to our keeping.

I have got my name down on the next recruit-
ing party list so that it won't be easy to cheat
me out of a chance to go next time.

You asked about the chance there was
to get murrains up here. There is no chance at
all until we take Washington. I should like
to have a pair of shoes on hand for fear these will
give out which they certainly will do soon.

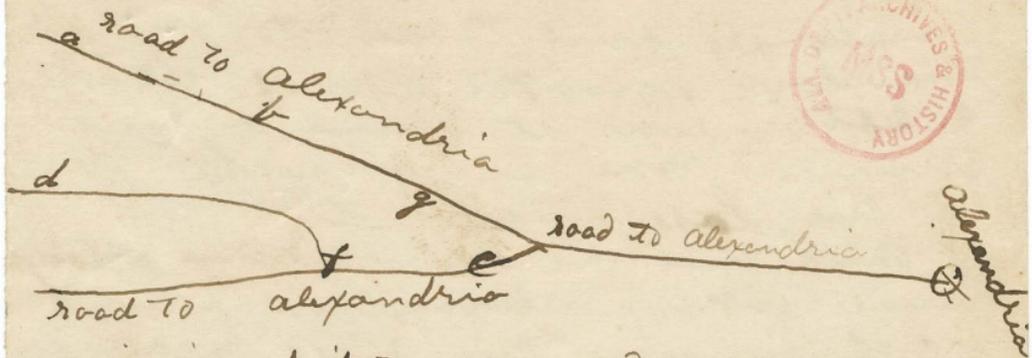
All the reports you hear of the enemy's having
outflanked us are ridiculous for we have
made them constantly draw in their pickets
until as you see in this fight their pickets
were scarcely a mile from town. I forgot to
mention that in the fight the enemy all fired
at an angle of about 45°. ours would fire
& immediately fall down knowing that the ene-
my would always fire towards the flash
of a gun if being sighted. There is scarcely
a doubt but that in ten days we shall
attack Alexandria.

You must write
often & send letters & spruce up the boys
also. Be sure to direct to "Fairfax Station"
Col. Seibels' Regiment & Capt. Davis's company.
Let me know whether my letters have been
put to the Court House for me. We
all thank you very much for the exer-
tions you are making in our behalf.

Give love to all the children. Be sure
to write soon. Good bye
yours etc etc
Ballin, Hall & Co.

P.S. I will finish with a little postscript
on this. Tell Sam B. that if any
bundles are sent to us to put up
the large smocked caps of which
I left a few at home & send
them. We are furnished here
if we lose a cap.

I think that we shall have a tough
time taking Alexandria from the
no. of cannon they fired yesterday
in honor of July 2nd they kept
up a continual cannonading all
day. I suppose they must
have had quite a jumble.
Sunday while on my visit to Grenshaw an
alarm was given. Tho' he had a high fever
he jumped up seized his gun & I could only
stop him by taking his gun by force &
his place in the ranks. This seemed to
relieve him a little better. I told
it was all in the family and now so
he might not content himself & don't
he would have been able to have
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a is first picket; b is second, & c the third all on roads to Alexandria which meet close by c. The space between the two forks is all thickly wooded. On the right of the road of c as you go to Alexandria is a field separate from the road by a fence. d f is the route our scouts took in getting to the road of f, the point at which they struck the road.

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eral Picket the moon rose something over an hour before day. They waited for the moon before making the attack. Their plan was to get up on the Third picket & take it by surprise -----

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it was glorious but very imprudent.”
There was certainly eight if not more of the
Northern men killed on the spot. We had
not a man wounded.

Last Sunday I learned that Crenshaw had been
sick two or three days & tho it was raining
I got a pass & went over to see him.

I went again yesterday & found him

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of the family” to our keeping.

I have got my name down on the next scout
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You asked about what chance there was
to buy necessaries up here. There is no chance at
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give out which they certainly will do soon.

All the reports you hear of the enemy's having
outflanked us are ridiculous for we have
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Give love to all the children. Be sure
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Yr obt son

Bolling Hall Jr.

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P.S. I will finish with a little post script on this. Tell Tom B. That if a any bundles are sent to us to put up the large musket caps of which I left a few at home & send them. We are punished here if we lose a cap.

I think that we shall have a tough time taking Alexandria from the no. of cannon they fired yesterday in honor of July 4th They kept up a continual cannonading all day. I suppose they must have had quite a jubilee.

Sunday while on my visit to Crenshaw an alarm was given. Tho' he had a high fever he jumped up seized his gun & I could only stop him by taking his gun by force & his place in the ranks. This seemed to satisfy him a little better. I told it was all in the family any how so he might just content himself. I dout he would have been able to have stood up five minutes

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Top of page: Map showing roads leading to Alexandria; letters on the drawing indicate the points described below.

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