

Camp at Sperryville Va July 16th 1862

Dear Father

We arrived here on last Saturday evening after a very fatiguing march from Middletown through Front Royal & Luray. We were four days coming fifty-two miles. The weather was and is still extremely hot. The men suffered intensely from the want of water, and the heat; two having died by sunstroke on the march.

This town is situated on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It is of no importance at all, but the count[r]y around it is comparatively good. The crops of wheat which are still standing are very heavy and would have been quite a rich boon for the Secesh could they have got a chance to have gathered them.

There is about fifteen thousand Infantry here besides some are artillery and cavalry under the command of Maj Gen Seigel. The 75th 25th 73rd 82nd & 61st O.V.I Regts are all of the Ohio troops that are here. The others being Penn. & New York men.

Genl Schenck is here with his staff. I spent part of the 4th at his head Quarters at Middletown with Caps Crane and Piatt and had a very pleasant afternoon. Capt Lowry is attached to Genl Milroy's Brigade. Who with Jo Clements is in Dayton on a visit. Genl Carl Schurz is our Division Commander. He seems to be very attentive to his men, going around visiting the Regiments every day: but as he has never been in an engagement people hardly know whether he is a good General or not yet.

It is the camp talk here that we will move towards Culpepper very soon and if possible from there to Gordonsville to cut off the R.R. communication with Richmond. It is said that there is a large Rebel force at both towns and that they are making preparations to give us a warm welcome when we do advance. If that is true and I see no room to doubt it as the Rebels can send any number of troops from Richmond by rail and then send them back without our being able to hinder them; we may expect pretty warm times very soon.

I went over to see Capt Johnston yesterday evening. He has got entirely well except his foot pains him a little yet.

The 75th is growing smaller every day almost. He has only about thirty men reported for duty. I hardly wonder at it however. They have never received any soap from the Quartermaster since they were at Franklin about three months ago. They have not drawn any salt meat or vegetables for nearly the same length of time but live on coffee and crackers with beef that is killed one hour and in the pot the next, long before the animal heat has time to leave it. and to cap the climax they were without tents during all of the wet weather in the spring. It would take a cast iron man to stand such treatment. I have been told that all the other regiments are in the same condition. Uncle James is pretty well cured of Soldiering and I believe if it was not for the shame of the thing would soon go home. He did not say so but I gathered as much from his conversation.

Our Regt is comparatively or at least has been tolerably well off, but we have eat up all the rations now that we brought with us and we will have to [do] as the rest have done. This is a good fighting regiment and is able to hard service and now numbers more men than any Regt here but it will soon be cut down if the Governement insists upon starving us.

I received a paper from John last night called the Buccinator[?]. Tell him I should like to have a defination of that word for it has puzzled have [half] the men in camp. Please send me three of four P stamp as it is impossible to get them here. I have been all over our camp this afternoon trying to get one for this letter but failed to do so and I don't like to have them signed as they are apt to get lost. We are in Genl Cluseret's Brigade First Army Corps Virginia

Please remember me to all

Your affectionate Son
Robt Patterson