Camp of 11th N.H. Vols.
Near London Oct 4/63

Dear Brother:

I guess you have been wondering why I have not written you for so long a time. All the excuse I can give is that I have been negligent and did not set myself about writing. In fact I have not felt so much like letterwriting since we came back into By as when we were here before. Since our arrival here we have been very busy doing guard, picket and fatigue duty.

This is a military post where large quantities of forage and rations are stored for supplying troops and trains going north. The Quartermaster commanding this post intends to keep on hand 100,000 rations that is 20000 mens rations for 5 days
Dear Brother:

I guess you have been wondering why I have not written you for so long a time. All the excuse I can give is that I have been negligent and did not set myself about writing. In fact I have not felt so much like letterwriting since we come back into Ky as when we were here before. Since our arrival here we have been very busy doing guard, picket and fatigue duty.

This is a military post where large quantities of forage and rations are stored for supplying troops and trains going south. The Quarter Master commanding this post intends to keep on hand 100000 rations that is 20000 mens rations for 5 days.
So you see we are holding quite an important position. We are now expecting to have to leave for Cumberland Gap or Knoxville in a few days. We all hoped and expected to remain here a few months perhaps all winter but the "fowlers that be" will give no more rest. Probably we have 200 or 300 miles to march and God only knows how many battles to fight before the storm of winter puts a stop to military movements. This is a sort of "out of the way place" being 36 miles from Fort Dickard and our supplies, mail, rations all comes over the miserable road from that place. Ours is the only Reg. stationed here the remainder of the Brigade being at Fort Dickard, Stanford &c but soon Sunderland they are ordered on to Knoxville or the Gap. There is a bare possibility that we may be detailed to stop here this winter.
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Probably we have 200 or 300 miles to march and God only knows how many battles to fight before the storms of winter put a stop to military movements. This is a sort of “out of the way place” being 35 miles from Crab Orchard and our supplies, mail, news, all comes over the miserable road from that place. Ours is the only Reg. stationed here the remainder of the Brigade being at Crab Orchard, Stanford &c but now I understand they are ordered on to Knoxville or the Gap. There is a bare possibility that we may be detailed to stop here this winter
Such an order would be received by me as enthusiastically as the arrival of our old Col. Walter Harrison who we are expecting every day.

We are all growing fat on the good living we now have. This is a farming country and the farmers bring in potatoes, vegetables of all kinds which they exchange for coffee, pork and bacon, so you see we live something after home fashion. This is a great cool country, cool as plenty here as rocks in N.C. The whole country is embedded with excellent coal. It is more oily and not so hard as that used in N.C. Consequently it burns easier and is said to be as good as any coal. Our fatigue duty consists in loading teams with coal after it is thrown out the mines by laborers employed by Congress. They detail 30 men to load what teams work. any 6 men could load and do a fair day.
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The coal bed is about 4 feet from the surface embedded between two ledges of slate colored rock. The coal is piled up at the station and all empty teams going for anthracite are loaded with it and it is used on Governmentfoundries and blacksmithshops at Garth Nelson Post with a brigade of Ind. 1st 116th 117th 118th and 119th Ind. Nels and a month men forced through here on their way to Brownsville they had never marched any distance before they made hard work of it most of them thought this going to war was a rather tough business they came into our ranks most starved having left all their rations on the teams being too long to carry them. We told them they would soon find out it payed to carry rations. I was surprised to see so many little boys in the Regt 14 and 15 years of age some were pretty fellows and lagged along their heavy loads without complaining but others thought they could not match and as the Co-B was hurrying them up they declared they could not keep up and the big fellows were rolling down his chills.
The coal bed is about 4 feet from the surface embedded between two ledges of slate colored rock. The coal is piled up at the station and all empty teams going for supplies are loaded with it and it is used on Government foundris and blacksmithshops at Camp Nelson. Last week a brigade of Ind. Troops the 115th, 116th, 117th, & 118th Ind. Vols 6 month mens passed through here on their way to Knoxville they had never marched any distance before they made hard work of it, most of them thought this going to war was rather tough business. They came into our Camp most starved having left all their rations on the teams being to lazy to carry them. We told them they would soon find out it payed to carry rations. I was surprised to see so many little boys in the Reg’s 14 and 15 years of age. Some were gritty fellows and lugged along their heavy loads without complaining but others thought they could not march and as the Capt. was hurrying them up they declared they could not keep up and the big tears were rolling down his cheeks.

I really pitied the poor fellows such small boys never to enlist.