

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 letter writing 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 Quartermaster commanding this post intends to keep on hand 100000 rations that is 20000 mens rations for 5 days.

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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 "powers that be" will give us no rest.

Probably we have 200 or 300 miles to march and God only knows how many battles to fight before the storm 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.

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Such an order would be received by us as enthusiastically as the arrival of our old Col Walter Harriman 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 coal country coal is as plenty here as rocks in N.E.

The whole country is embedded with excellent coal it is more oily and not so hard as that used in N.E. 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 ~~Government~~^{the} Government. They detail 30 men to load what teams ^{work} any 6 men could load and do a fair days

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The coal bed is about 4 feet from the surface imbedded 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 foundries and blacksmith shops at Camp Nelson. Last week a brigade of Ind. troops the 116th 116th 117th & 118th Ind. Vols a month men 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 too 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 4 and 15 years of age. Some were gritty fellows and lagged 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 bears were rolling down his cheeks.

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