

Knoxville Tenn. Dec 6th 1863

Dear Brother & Sister:

I sent you a letter yesterday to inform you that I am get well and tough as before the siege, except the protracted night work has tired me out and reduced me in ^{my} flesh. I believe I was never so poor at this season of the ^{year} as at the present time.

I went to sleep last night for the first time since Nov. 16th and slept all night. Every night for the last 18 I have been called up to go on guard, on picket or some other duty. It seemed a relief to lay down without being bothered with cartridge box and gun.

I have been washing all the forenoon and feel as though I had lost a good deal. I suppose you in N.C. have heard all sorts of rumors concerning us. The papers have doubtless had us all cut up, taken prisoners in a state of starvation &c. The rebels supposed they were going to starve us out, but did not do it. However they came much nearer to it than was agreeable to us. We have had enough meat (beef & pork) for that everything else, minus or the next thing to it.

Our bread we have drawn about ^{the same as a} one third of a Gt. graham loaf of bakers bread, but if it had been as good as bakers it would have been a luxury. It was made of corn meal and wheat meal sour and hard enough for the soldier. We kept it carefully for we thought if we got short of ammunition it would do for cartridges. Bread played out some weeks ago and we are now drawing 1 lb. of corn meal which makes us about enough. It is nice made in mush and tastes some like homony it is not sifted for the less would be too great.

Officers ~~and~~ were as short as we for they could only buy of commissary ^{and} get black hard for two oz. of coffee & two

PAGE 1

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Dear Brother and Sister,

I sent you a letter yesterday to inform you that I am yet well and tough as before the siege except the protracted night work has tired me out and reduced me in flesh. I believe I was never so poor at this season of the year as at the present time.

I went to sleep last night for the first time since Nov. 16th and slept all night. Evry night for the last 18 I have been called up to go on guard, on picket or some other duty. It seemed a relief to lay down without being combered with cartridge box and gun.

I have been washing all the forenoon and feel as though I had lost a good deal. I suppose you in New England have heard all sorts of rumors concerning us the papers have doubtless had us all cut up, taken prisoners in a state of starvation &c. The rebs supposed they were going to starve us out, but did not do it. however they came much nearer to it than was agreeable to us. We have had enough meat (beef & pork, [?]) but everything else, minus or the next thing to it. For bread we have drawn about the same as one third of a 5 ct. graham loaf of bakers bread, but if it had been as good as bakers it would have been a luxury. It was made of corn meal and wheat-[?] sour and hard enough for a soldier. We kept it carefully for we thought if we got short of ammunition it would do for cartridges. Bread played out a week ago and we are now drawing 1 lb. of corn meal which makes us about enough. It is nice made in mush and tastes some like homony it is not sifted for the loss would be too great.

Officers were as short as we for they could only buy of comissary and get black hard tact, two oz. of coffee & two

Privates Understudy ^{as often as} stood on guard all night
Our Chaplain stood on guard one night to relieve the
boys a little. By the way our Chaplain is the first and
only conscript we ~~have~~ have had in our Regiment
He is a glorious good fellow no stick up about him
By the way how did Thanksgiving pass off in Boston?
I suppose the turkeys and mince pies and puddings
were in request in days gone by. When the boys
were talking of the Thanksgiving dinners they had had
and the good times of the past. It was not much
satisfaction to us to talk of such matters on our present
fare. However good times are coming an immense
supply train is on its way ^{from} to the Gap and sport returns
will only be of the things that were. We hear that
Grant has whipped Bragg if so we shall soon be in
the communication with the north via Chattanooga
and Nashville. It ^{will} seem good to get papers and mail
direct. We all wish a God speed to the railroad.
Burnside has had his five engines and cars all
huddled up at the depot. Yesterday forenoon the
cubs had hardly got out of sight before the iron horse
was a puffing and the locomotive whistle greeted
our ears again. We used to talk with the rebel pickets
most ^{long} all day. We would shoot at each other ^{all day} and
towards night as we grew tired and the firing would
slacken some rebels would make the proposition that if
we would stop shooting they would, we would reply again
they would begin the conversation at first the talk would
be very civil and we would joke and talk very friendly
soon one side or the other would begin to bait then
grow more angry till they would shooting end each other
little by little. Every day some rebel would ask us where
Burnside was. We would reply by asking where
John Morgan was. Three times a day the bands in
the city played Bonhee Doodle Rally round the
Flag Days. Red White and Blue.

of sugar for 5 days. Officers were on duty as often as privates Orderly Sergeants stood on guard evry night. Our Chaplain stood on guard one night to relive the boys a little. By the way our Chaplain is the first and only conscript we have had join our Regiment. He is a glorious good fellow no stick up about him. By the way how did Thanksgiving pass off in Boston?

I suppose the turkeys and mince pies and puddings were in vogue as in days gone by. Alday the boys were talking of the Thanksgiving diners they had had and the good times of the past. It was not much satisfaction to us to talk of such matters on our present fare. However good times are coming on [?] supply train is on its way from the Gap and short rations will only be of things that were. We hear that Grant has whipped Bragg if so we shall soon be in RR communication with the north via Chattanooga and Nashville. It will seem good to get papers and mail direct We all wish a God speed to the railroad. Burnside has had his five engines and cars all huddled up at the depot. Yesterday forenoon the rebs had hardly got out of night before the iron horse was a puffing and the locomotive whistle greeted our ears again. We used to talk with the rebel pickets most evry day. We would shoot at each other all day and towards night as we grew tired and the firing would slackon, some rebs would make the proposition that if we would stop shooting they would, we would reply agreed then would begin the conversation at first the talk would be very civil and we would joke and talk very friendly. Soon one side or the other would begin to twit then grow more sassy till shooting ended our truce. Every day some rebel would ask us where Brownlow was. We would reply by asking where John Morgan was. Three times a day the bands in the city played Yankee Doodle Rally round the Flag Days. Red White and Blue.