



Transcription

North gives a detailed description of marching, crossing a river, fighting a skirmish, and sleeping in wet conditions. He also refers to the invasion of Chambersburg and the theft of horses there.

Camp near Sharpsburg

Oct 14th 1862

Dear Brother

I received a letter from you some time ago but as pap was here I did not think it necessary to answer immediately. I am well. We have been most crazy on account of the rebel raid into Franklin Co. the idea of 2500 Cavalry passing through one end of our lines capturing Horses & clothing, passing around the whole army and then unmolested going back into virginia at the other end of our lines is the most ridiculous Slur on our Generals and army ever heard of. We heard that Stewarts Cav to the no. of 2500 crossed over at McCoys ferry or some place between clearspring and Hancock then coming in through the valley road into the corner made a clean sweep of the horses, passed through Mercersburg and got all the good Horses there that they could get hold of. We heard that they took 20 head of horses from Adam Hoke four from Wiler and two from McMurdy two from Seth Dickey and all the good Horses about they did not get any of ours. It would be hard to describe the effect it has had on the

126 the chambersburg boys were wild they say they dont blame the rebels but give them credit for the way the thing was accomplished and for the way they treated our people. but they curse our officers and the way the army is commanded. It has had a most unfavorable effect on the men of the 126

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They all are out of humor and are discouraged that we have to lie here and let the rebels plunder our homes. We thought they would certainly be captured by our infantry before they could cross the river. we did not expect anything of the cavalry there are but two or three companies that are worth anything Russels, Fierys and a few others but the most of them are perfect nuisances. The way they were skedaddling from every place were they thought they would be of any use satisfied me that they are fit for nothing but despatchers and to tramp over our lines during an engagement the old troops hate them about as bad as they do the rebels Wash Crilly says they run right over them at bull run fight (second) and that they gave them a volley in return. We hear that they the rebs have got any quantity of clothes in chambersburg it is a shame and I don't know how it will look in foreign papers. They have supplied themselves with good artillery and cavalry horses and are ready for anything at all. I was out on guard and it rained on me for two hours as hard as it generally rains in these parts my over coat was wet through still a slight head-ache was all the evil effects I felt from it. I have been up three or four times last night attending Cook he has been very sick with a fever of some kind he still has a very high fever but is better since his medicine operated. The weather has been very rough and chilly for the last few days but the sun came out this morning and it is exceedingly hot I think it must rain soon again. The company is out on

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picket but I am off duty to day. There is to be thirty men and a lieutenant detailed from our regt as a balloon guard and operators that is they are to do the rough work hold the ropes fill the sand bags and so on the detail from Co C will be Bowers, Geo McDonald & Theo Brandt we can spare them they slunk every duty they could any how except Brandt he was well enough but Geo McDonald wanted his discharge bowers thought he had as much authority as Capt Brownson but Brandt we are sorry to lose they will still be connected with the brigade. The lieutenant will be Lien Fletcher from Juniata Co: they get 40 cts extra per day. I have just been writing democratic tickets as to day has been election day the other party was doing all they could. The wild geese have been flying over our heads to day I don't know what sign it is. We do not get our mails from Washington I got three the other day and there are still some back. Direct your letters to Sharpsburg. We are getting our mails regularly that way we have sent in a requisition for gum blankets. Our lieutenant Col thinks

there is a prospect of us getting into Pennsylvania "When the horse is stolen then they will lock the stable" If they had done their duty there Franklin Co would have been protected. There is something wrong somewhere Gen Tyler said we were needed in western penna and tried to have our brigade ordered there. We begin to feel his loss in ore ways than one – he is sick & has gone to a hospital or has gone home – Col Gregory is in command and he seems to care only for his regt. If there is any

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thing to be done his regt will have the first chance. Some say that the brigade will be separated. Gen. Tyler was very strict but he took good care of his men and we have lost I say lost for his spine is affected and he is not likely to get well. he was one of the finest looking men I ever saw. I want you to Send me the good intent that has an account of the raid in it be sure and send by Sharpsburg. give me all the particulars when you write give my love to all the friends write soon

Your Brother S.W. North.
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Oct. 18th. Since I wrote this letter we have made a grand reconaissance into Virginia on Wensday night. were ordered out, to prepare two days rations and to be on the line at daylight We went to bed and slept until daylight. Then [*unclear: cornered*] and moved off we were about to take nothing but our guns 60 rounds, our canteens & haversacks & over coats left every thing else behind. we thought it was but a strong picket but were moved to the river and were soon in the cold potomac some of our artillery had crossed before and were making some noise ahead. we moved on and when we got to the other side marched to Shepherdstown. the Ladies there gave us a very cold reception some of them held their noses, some made faces & ugly mouths at us. one I saw waving her hand at us but she stood back in the entry. there were a great many rebel wounded there. We moved on about three miles when our batteries commenced shelling the rebels and the firing was gettin brisk only from the artillery though. we were then thrown into the line of battle in a woods we lay there while our batteries were driving the rebs from the woods in front of us we were then ordered forward and then we went it at a fast walk through the woods through fields over fences and rocks through some of the thickest woods I ever saw. at last we pushed them pretty close and their batteries commenced returning the fire very briskly the shells burst within fifty or sixty yds of us some burst in the air above us and some burst in front of us but we got on a little further and got under cover of a hill. then the

musketry firing commenced pretty briskly it sounded very strange I cannot describe it. it was on Thursday evening & we thought every minute we would get a chance at them when the cavalry made a dash and then it was reported that we had taken two pieces of canon though I saw none of them and dont believe it. we were then about seven or eight miles into Virginia only our division about eight thousand including a regt of cavalry and two or three batteries perhaps but one of these fell back a little and camped for the night. we lay down with our overcoats only and had hardly laid down till it commenced raining.

Oct. 19 I do not make a practice of writing on sunday but as I have a chance to send & you are no doubt anxious to hear from me, as you no doubt heard that our divission (Humphries) had a skirmish with the rebs in virginia I will finish the one I had begun twice before. I left off when we lay down to sleep. we had nothing but our overcoats to sleep in. we had hardly laid down until it commenced raining or rather pouring down but I was so tired I soon went to sleep slept a couple hours and got awoke wet and cold got up and went to a fire the boys had made dried my clothes and laid down again and slept a while again so on till morning. in the morning we went on again and soon passed the place we were the night before. it was the Bal. & Ohio R.R. it was torn up in several places. we pushed on were double quicked up to some cannons which were about being charged by some rebel cav. we moved on about 5 miles farther

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and came near to a large force. they were evidently drawing us on we lay down near an old seceshs house the home of Wilmot he was away but there were some darkeys there who said the rebs were in strong force near there, said they had them baking for them all night we found some of our government overcoats in the house probably some of those taken at Chambersburg we got half doz or more of them a couple of horses very nice ones Our advance said the rebels lay as far as the eye could see their force was estimated at forty thousand we then commenced returning and moved on till dark when our rear guard and artillery were firing very briskly we about faced and marched back again our boys did not relish that as we were very tired our provissions [added: all] done and it was getting dark, but we soon turned again and came on to the river and such a time as we had crossing you would have been scared to see

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long lines of men plunging and wading the river it was dark and every now and then one of the tired fellows would fall down in the water I did not get anything wet but my boots stockings and drawers and I put on dry ones when I got to camp but going over before I just walked in as I was and had no chance along but did not catch cold or feel

bad. when we were climbing the bank of the canal our capt. called "Co. C" "Co. C" and we were soon in order again we had kept pretty well together when we got to camp our fellows who we left behind us were glad to see us safe as they had heard the firing and thought our regt had been fighting we cannot call it a fight but just a reconaissance in force. in the whole affair our divission lost but four or five killed and some twelve or fifteen wounded. we passed several of their killed lying in the field took seven or eight prisoners. and got

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back safely across the river and slept at home When we were moving in line of battle we drove rabbits and every thing up there were some times two or three rabbits running about the lines at once and some of the men caught some partridges that were so scared at the firing that they did not move. we did not (our regt) get firing at all, but some of our companies which were out skirmishing on the right and left saw their cav, and Co. A was within a few hundred yds of a battery it shelled them and they had to skedaddle back to us tell mother she may send my old blue vest if she gets a chance we were out near to leetown about twelve miles into virginia. I got a letter from pap to day & will answer it in a few days. give my best respects to all the friends.

Your Bro

Sam