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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letters from Thomas Chamberlin to Eli Slifer

**Date:** 1862-1863

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Camp Pierpont, Va., Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Col,

You will excuse me for not writing to you sooner, but really in these parts there is nothing to write about except mud, of which we have an inexhaustible supply, making all drills and parades to say nothing of advance movements - utterly out of the question. The weather continues bad, alternating between snow, hail, and rain, so that Camp life is now anything but a pleasure. Surely soldiers earn their money at such a time as this, when every tour of duty is productive of wet feet and the greatest bodily discomforts. The suggestion that their pay be reduced will, I hope, never be entertained for a moment by Congress; let the wages of officers be cut down to the lowest figure, but spare the enlisted men. Congressmen should remember that this war, unlike most others, has called out men from every grade of society, and with every degree of talent, and that there are thousands in the ranks who have left positions of honor and profit from a sense of duty to their Country - men whose

incomes are not sufficient to support their families, and who need every dollar of their present pay.

If the other modes of retrenchment proposed are put into operation, such as discharging regimental bands, lessening officers' pay, &c, the expenses of the war will be reduced to a sufficiently moderate figure.

Despite the unpleasantness of the weather the health of the army appears to be remarkably good. Our regiment has lost but one man in the last six or seven weeks, and there are but four men in the regimental hospital, all of them convalescent. Neighboring regiments also speak of a wonderful decrease of sickness in their camps.

In regard to George, there is now a serjeantcy vacant which he shall have immediately. All the regimental non-commissioned officers are filled.

I am glad to hear that Col. Simmons has a favorable opinion of me, as I have certainly tried to merit his esteem. A very unexpected compliment reached me a few days ago from Gen. McCalls headquarters, the nature and cause of which I need not explain.

I trust I feel sufficiently gratefully to you for the interest you have taken in

me and my company thus far. Satisfied as I am with my present position, I would not be unwilling to accept a higher, hoping to be able to bring to it a sufficient amount of industry and energy to insure my success. A position on some staff would be most in accordance with my wishes, and next to that a place in the regular army.

Could you by your influence help me to either of these positions, you would confer on me the greatest of favors. Thus far in life I have tried to get along in everything with as little dependence on others as possible, and have not been altogether unsuccessful. But in matters of this kind it is utterly impossible to do anything without the strongest backing, and to you therefore I look, as a tried benefactor, for assistance.

In the event of an appointment in the regular army, I would want to remain, if practicable, with my present Company until the close of the war.

Profess Mertz, Hooper, and Walter were here last week on a visit, but it was so muddy during their stay that they could see but little. As bad luck would have it I had little or no time to give to them, being on duty on

the picket line, or away, nearly the whole of the two days they were here.

Nothing would please me more than to have you visit us, but at present the roads are in such shocking condition that you would be able to see little of the "pomp and circumstance of war". Still the weather may clear up shortly, when a trip to Camp Pierpont, and through the line of the army from here to Alexandria, would amply repay you for your time and troubles.

Very respectfully yours  
Thos Chamberlin

I enclose you a photograph of Col. Simmons - a very good likeness.

Thos Chamberlin,  
Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 1862,

Camp Pierpont, Va, Feb 5th, 1862.

Dear Col.

You will excuse me for not writing to you sooner, but really in these parts there is nothing to write about except mud, of which we have an inexhaustible supply, making all drills and parades- to say nothing of advance movements- utterly out of the question. The weather Continues bad, alternating between snow, hail, and rain, so that Camp life is now anything but a pleasure. Verily soldiers earn their money at such a time as this, when every tour of duty is productive of wet feet and the greatest bodily discomforts. The suggestion that their pay be reduced will, I hope, never be entertained for a moment by Congress; let the wages of officers be cut down to the lowest figure, but spare the enlisted men. Congressmen should remember that this war, unlike most others, has called our men from every grade of society, and with every degree of talent, and that there are thousands in the ranks who have left positions of honor and profit from a sense of duty to their Country- men whose

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Very respectfully yours  
T. Chamberlin

I enclose you a photograph of Col. Simmons- a very good likeness.

Camp opposite Fredericksburg,  
May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Sir-

You must excuse me  
for not writing sooner as I  
have had nothing of interest  
to communicate - nothing but  
details of guard duty on the  
Orange & Alexandria railroad,  
the dullest and most dispiriting  
of all occupations. No one ever  
rejoiced more heartily over any  
event than I did over the order  
relieving us from this odious  
duty and connecting us again  
with our brigade. It was worth  
more than a leave of absence  
to visit home.

We came by easy marches from  
Cottletts station to this place, over  
swampy and bridgeless roads,

arriving here on the morning of  
the third day (May 11<sup>th</sup>.) Our camp  
is situated a little over a mile  
from Palmyra, in a grove of young  
pines, and is one of the prettiest  
we have yet had. Drills go on  
as usual, notwithstanding the warm  
weather, and the regiment is in  
an unusually fine state of disci-  
pline, but at the same time dis-  
couraged at the poor prospect of  
getting into a fight. We have now  
been out nearly a year, have made  
long and fatiguing marches, en-  
dured all grades of exposure, and  
yet have never had a chance  
of firing a volley at an enemy.  
Who is to blame for this we can-  
not tell exactly, but I think we  
would not be going far astray  
if we considered Gen. McCull as  
the author of our grievance (this  
"inter nos.") To go back home

without the name of a single  
battle on our flag, is something  
that I never would have pre-  
dicted of the "Fifth" when we set  
out from Harrisburg under such  
auspicious circumstances at the  
beginning of the war.

I have not yet visited  
Fredericksburg, but looking down  
the river from Falmouth its  
suburbs appear quite attractive,  
and I feel quite a curiosity to  
see the place. It is perhaps one of  
the strongest secessh holes in all  
Virginia. The railroad bridge over  
the Rappahannock, opposite the  
town, will soon be completed, when  
we will probably be moved to the  
other side. Orders received to-day  
would indicate a speedy movement  
in some direction. I do not think  
that there is any considerable  
force of the enemy in the neighbor-

have P. nothing but a few scattered detachments left to watch our movements and harry our flanks in case of an onward march.

Living is rather an expensive operation in these parts, and <sup>for</sup> everything in the shape of luxuries we pay at least triple its ordinary value. Butter is 40 cts per pound, cheese 22 to 25 cts, eggs 40 cts, and so on.

George left us a couple days before we were relieved from railroad duty, to accept a place under Capt. Murrell, but promised to rejoin the Company when the regiment moved. This he has not done, and I feel a good deal dissatisfied with him. A sergeantcy in a company is a more honorable position than a Clerkship in a Commissary department, and the difference in the wages is not such as to make the latter an object. Unless he returns shortly I will be in duty bound to fill his place in the Company by a new appointment.

The health of the regiment continues good - only three or four hospital cases, and none of them dangerous; but with the warmer weather we may expect more sickness.

I am much obliged to you for several packages of papers received lately. If you could get a copy of Harpers Weekly of April 19<sup>th</sup> and send it to me, you would do me quite a favor. It contains an excellent little map of this region and the Orange Alexandria R.R. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am  
Yours most respectfully  
J. Chamberlin

Camp opposite Fredericksburg,  
May 19th, 1862.

Dear Sir-

You must excuse me for not writing sooner as I have had nothing of interest to communicate- nothing but details of guard duty on the Orange & Alexandria railroad, the dryest and most dispiriting of all occupations. No one ever rejoiced more heartily over any event than I did over the order relieving us from this odious duty and connecting us again with our brigade. It was worth more than a leave of absence to visit home.

We came by easy marches from Catletts station to this place, over swampy and bridgeless roads,

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arriving here on the morning of the third day (May 11th.) Our camp is situated a little over a mile from Falmouth, in a grove of young pines, and is one of the prettiest we have yet had. Drills go on as usual, notwithstanding the warm weather, and the regiment is in an unusually fine state of discipline, but at the same time discouraged at the poor prospect of getting into a fight. We have now been out nearly a year, have made long and fatiguing marches, endured all grades of exposure, and yet have never had a chance of firing a volley at an enemy. Who is to blame for this we cannot tell exactly, but I think we would not be going far astray if we considered Gen. McCall as the author of our grievance (this "inter nos".) To go back home

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Hoping to hear from you soon, I am

Yours most respectfully

T. Chamberlin

Union Protestant Infirmary,  
Baltimore, Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Sir

Yesterday I reached this city, and with the approval of the Medical Director reentered the Infirmary. My wound is doing finely and a few days of quiet will heal up the openings entirely, although I may still be lame for some time.

While on my way to report to Gen. Wool this morning, I very unexpectedly met Col. McCoy, who told me that he was about to take Command of the 107<sup>th</sup> Pa., in Pope's army. I was glad to meet him, and glad to learn that he was on such an errand, as I believe that

his natural courage and his former experience will make him an able Commander.

From a recent order of the War Dept. requiring paroled officers to send in to the Adj. Gen. their names, rank, &c, I am in high hopes of being exchanged soon, so as to be able to return again to service. Quite a number have already been exchanged principally officers of the Regular Army.

My address for the next week or ten days will be "Union Protestant Infirmary," Baltimore, where I will be happy to receive any communication from you; and if at the end of that time, the address should be changed, I will advise you of it.

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Union Protestant Infirmary,  
Baltimore, Aug. 12th, 1862.

Dear Sir—

Yesterday I reached this city, and with the approval of the Medical Director, reentered the Infirmary. My wound is doing finely and a few days of quiet will heal up the openings entirely although I may still be lame for some time.

While on my way to report to Gen. Wool this morning, I very unexpectedly met Col. M'Coy, who told me that he was about to take Command of the 107th Pa., in Pope's army. I was glad to meet him and glad to learn that he was on such an errand, as I believe that

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My address for the next week or ten days will be "Union Protestant Infirmary", Baltimore, where I will be happy to receive any communication from you: and if at the end of that time the address should be changed, I will advise you of it.

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Union Protestant Infirmary  
Baltimore, Aug. 25<sup>th</sup>/62.

Dear Sir -

At the War Dept.,  
on Saturday, whether Judge Casey  
accompanied me, I was told  
that I was most probably on  
the exchanged list, but that list  
not being at the time in the  
Adj't General's office, we could  
get no certain answer. The Adj't  
General promised to notify  
Judge Casey by evening of my  
exchange or non-exchange, and  
I returned to Baltimore to  
await news from the Judge.

In the office of the Secy. of War  
Assistant Sec. Watson said that  
a Commission from Gov. Cur-  
tin in one of the new regiments  
would entitle me to a discharge

in order to accept the new position. By presenting such I could immediately be mustered out of the Fifth.

All this information I give you without expecting you to act upon it, as, on account of my parole, the "days of grace" have probably gone by. It is sufficient to know, however, that you meant to do me a kindness, ~~but~~ that your intentions were thwarted by circumstances over which neither of us had any control.

I have never asked for promotion in the army, and never shall, being perfectly satisfied if I can do the Country any service in my position as Captain of a company. But if in due time I can carve out a Colonelcy with my sword

the state shall certainly have  
no reason to complain of back-  
wardness on my part to accept  
it.

I will inform you if the  
surmises of the Capt General  
should prove correct. - Mean-  
while I remain

Gratefully Yours  
Thomas Chamberlin

P.S. My leg is nearly healed.

Union Protestant Infirmary,  
Baltimore, Aug. 25th/62.

Dear Sir-

At the War Dept. on Saturday, whither Judge Casey accompanied me, I was told that I was most probably on the exchanged list, but that list not being at the time in the Adj't General's office, we could get no certain answer. The Adj. General promised to notify Judge Casey by evening of my exchange or non-exchange, and I returned to Baltimore to await news from the Judge. In the office of the Secy. of War Assistant Sec. Watson said that a Commission from Gov. Curtin in one of the new regiments would entitle me to a discharge

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All this information I give you without expecting you to act upon it, as, on account of my parole, the "days of grace" have probably gone by. It is sufficient to know, however, that you meant to do me a kindness, [~~one word illegible~~] and that your intentions were thwarted by circumstances over which neither of us had any control. I have never asked for promotion in the army, and never shall, being perfectly satisfied if I can do the Country any service in my position as Captain of a company. But if in due time I can carve out a Colonelcy with my sword

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I will inform you if the surmises of the Adj. General should prove correct. – mear.- while I remain

Gratefully Yours  
Thomas Chamberlin

P.S. My leg is nearly healed.

Union Protestant Infirmary,  
Balt<sup>o</sup>., Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Col.

By the New York Herald of yesterday I learn that I am on the exchanged list. Thank Heaven I am free at last, and can go back to service as soon as my papers reach me.

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Union Protestant Infirmary,  
Balto., Aug. 26th, 1862.

Dear Col.

By the New York Herald of yesterday I learn that I am on the exchanged list. Thank Heaven I am free at last, and Can go back to service as soon as my papers reach me.

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Union Prot. Infirmary,  
Balto., Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1862,

Dear Sir -

This morning Capt. Lays (102<sup>nd</sup> Pa.) and myself, although still unfit for active duty, visited the Medical Director, and by urgent solicitation obtained our discharge from the Hospital, and permission to join our regiments. On returning to the Infirmary I found your welcome letter and my new commission awaiting me. It was an agreeable surprise, for after seeing the order of the War Dept. in regard to officering the new regiments, I at once gave up all thought of promotion, and determi-

ned to do my best in my  
old capacity, as Captain.

You have my warmest thanks  
for your kindness, which I  
feel the more when I consid-  
er the difficulties in the way  
of appointing an outsider to  
a new regiment - especially  
such a regiment as Col.  
Wistar's is represented to be.  
With the Col. I am well ac-  
quainted, and if there is no  
difficulty in effecting my  
transfer, and no jealousy  
on the part of the line offi-  
cers of the regiment, my po-  
sition will be a desirable  
one. I will leave for Wash-  
ington on Monday, and at once  
try to make all the necessa-  
ry arrangements for joining  
my new regiment. Of course  
I shall leave my company

with regret. The boys have done nobly under my charge, and I feel proud of them. But the circumstances with which I made you acquainted at home and at Harrisburg, have determined me to assume the new position so generously tendered me. An additional reason for so doing is the fact that I will be unfit for marching (i.e. on foot) for perhaps two months to come - my leg being still very stiff and a horse will therefore be a great comfort.

There is a good deal of alarm here on account of the movements of the enemy on the upper Potomac, but I trust it is groundless. With McClellan again

at the head of our army  
I hope a brighter state of  
affairs will soon dawn  
upon us. God strengthen  
our leaders, and nerve the  
hearts of our men in this  
hour of peril!

I will write  
you from Washington in  
a day or two. - In haste

Yours truly  
Thomas Chamberlain

Thomas Chamberlain  
Sept 6/63.

Union Prot. Infirmary,  
Balto. Sept. 6th, 1862,

Dear Sir-

This morning Capt. Laye (102d Pa.) and myself, although still unfit for active duty, visited the Medical Director, and by urgent solicitation obtained our discharge from the Hospital, and permission to join our regiments. On returning to the Infirmary I found your welcome letter and my new commission awaiting me. It was an agreeable surprise, for after seeing the order of the War Dept. in regard to officering the new regiments, I at once gave up all thought of promotion, and dertermi-

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ned to do my best in my old Capacity, as Captain. You have my warmest thanks for your kindness, which I feel the more when I consider the difficulties in the way of appointing an outsider to a new regiment- especially such a regiment as Col. Wistar's is represented to be. With the Col. I am well acquainted, and if there is no difficulty in effecting my transfer, and no jealousy on the part of the line officers of the regiment, my position will be a desirable one. I will leave for Washington on Monday, and at once try to make all the necessary arrangements for joining my new regiment. Of course I shall leave my company

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I will write you from Washington in a day or two. In haste

Yours truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Washington, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Sir—

Yesterday I entered upon my duties as Major of the 150<sup>th</sup>, having succeeded in getting mustered out of the 5<sup>th</sup> without any difficulty, owing to your letter and its endorsement by Col. Puleston. The regiment pleases me very much, being composed of fine hearty fellows—a better stamp of men in fact than the majority of my former regiment. It is only unfortunate that the regiment is so much broken up by guard details, daily and permanent, as it interferes greatly with the drilling of the men, particularly as regards the battalion movements. There are five Companies thus detailed,

leaving but five in camp for regi-  
mental drill. The company officers  
are generally pretty green in military  
matters, but Col. Vistar and Lieut. Col.  
Hvidekoper have adopted measures  
which must soon qualify them for their  
positions. - If we can remain here  
a couple weeks longer, and change the  
Companies now absent on guard, the  
regiment will be fully prepared to go  
into action. Longer than this I would  
not care to stay here, as the field  
with its privations and dangers is  
all that has any attraction for me.

Should anything "turn up" I  
will write you. - The President's  
Proclamation does not meet  
with much favor among the cit-  
izens of Washington, but appears  
to give general satisfaction in the  
army.

Hoping to hear from you occa-  
sionally, I remain

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Washington, Sept. 25th, 1862.

Dear Sir-

Yesterday I entered upon my duties as Major of the 150th, having succeeded in getting mustered out of the 5th without any difficulty, owing to your letter and its endorsement by Col. Puleston. The regiment pleases me very much, being composed of fine hearty fellows- a better stamp of men in fact than the majority of my former regiment. It is only unfortunate that the regiment is so much broken up by guard details, daily and permanent, as it interferes greatly with the drilling of the men, particularly as regards the battalion movements. There are five Companies thus detailed,

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Should anything "turn up", I will write you.- The President's proclamation does not meet with much favor among the citizens of Washington, but appears to give general satisfaction in the army.

[page break]

Hoping to hear from you occasionally, I remain

Yours very truly  
Thomas Chamberlin

Washington, Nov<sup>r</sup> 16<sup>th</sup>, 1862.

Dear Sir,

Quite a long time has elapsed since I last wrote you, and thinking that perhaps a few lines in regard to our whereabouts and expectations might not be uninteresting I will spend a portion of this evening in writing to you.

Finding that our location on Meridian Hill was a very unhealthy one on account of its close proximity to several hospitals, a large pond, and an extensive Common used as a receptacle for all the dead animals and

filth of the city, we asked  
permission to change our  
camp, and with Gen. Wadsw.  
worth's consent settled on  
14<sup>th</sup> St. between "K" and "L",  
where our sick list is rapid-  
ly diminishing. Most of the  
Companies are still on pro-  
vost duty in different parts  
of the city, and are much ad-  
mired for their uniform good  
conduct and attention to duty.  
One is guarding the White House,  
having been brought there  
from the Soldier's Home at  
the President's request, when  
he moved into town. I never  
saw a better set of men than  
those of our regiment, and  
it is my earnest hope that  
they will prove equally good  
when called to perform the

sterner duties of field service.

The prospect is now favorable for our being brigaded with the 143<sup>d</sup> Pa., and moved over the river where we can have an opportunity to drill and fit ourselves for marching and fighting. Col. Stone informs me that Gen. Casey will favor the formation of our brigade and put him in Command. I wish that he (Stone) might be made a brigadier, as he has fairly won the title, and is perhaps better fitted to command than a large fraction of the brigadiers already in the field. He has intelligence, courage, prudence, and experience, and is equal to anything in the military line. From the commanding of a brigade

ade to the constructing of a  
bridge, or the throwing up of a  
line of fortifications. Whether  
he can bring the requisite in-  
fluence to bear to secure his  
promotion remains to be seen.

The removal of Mr.  
Clellan continues to be talked  
of here, but there is little ex-  
citement. I was glad when  
the President at last recog-  
nized the necessity of removing  
him. Ardent admirer of him  
as I was, the backwardness  
& move which he displayed  
after the battle of Antietam  
and the urgent necessity for  
immediate action on the part  
of our army, made me willing  
to see him set aside. I am  
not one of those however who  
believe that all the reverses  
which have befallen our  
arms on the Peninsula and

elsewhere are to be attributed to Mr. Clellan. Even yet we do not know whether we can do without him. It is a fearful responsibility to have such an army in charge. I hope that Burnside, backed by Hooker, may be successful in carrying our flag victorious into Richmond before the New Year opens. In that case Mr. Clellan will sink into comparative obscurity. But if our army is defeated - then Mr. Clellan will be a demi-god, and our party is hopelessly ruined.

For some weeks I have heard nothing of our old division except what I could glean from the pa-

pers. I wish it could be filled up; but that seems impossible. Occasionally I meet one of my old boys on the street, either still suffering from a wound, or recovering from a long spell of sickness. I have not been able to learn anything of George, except that he has been sick, and is expecting a discharge.

For several days I have been suffering from a severe cold which has settled on my breast and causes a good deal of coughing. I caught it during the snow-storm.

Hoping to hear from you occasionally I remain  
As ever

Yours sincerely  
J. Chamberlain

Washington, Nov. 16th, 1862.

Dear Sir-

Quite a long time has elapsed since I last wrote you, and thinking that perhaps a few lines in regard to our whereabouts and expectations might not be uninteresting I will spend a portion of this evening writing to you.

Finding that our location on Meridian Hill was a very unhealthy one on account of its close proximity to several hospitals, a large pond, and an extensive Common used as a receptacle for all the dead animals and

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filth of the city, we asked permission to change our Camp, and with Gen. Wadsworth's consent settled on 14th St. between "K" and "L", where our sick list is rapidly diminishing. Most of the Companies are still on Provost duty in different parts of the city, and are much admired for their uniform good Conduct and attention to duty. One is guarding the White House, having been brought there from the Soldier's Home at the President's request, when he moved into town. I never saw a better set of men than those of our regiment, and it is my earnest hope that they will prove equally good when called to perform the

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sterner duties of field services.

The prospect is now favorable for our being brigaded with the 143d Pa., and moved over the river where we can have an opportunity to drill and fit ourselves for marching and fighting. Col. Stone informs me that Gen Casey will favor the formation of our brigade and put him in Command. I wish that he (Stone) might be made a brigadier, as he has fairly won the title, and is perhaps better fitted to command than a large fraction of the brigadiers already in the field. He has intelligence, Courage, prudence, and experience, and is equal to Anything in the military line from the commanding of a brig-

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ade to the Constructing of a bridge, or the throwing up of a line of fortifications. Whether he can bring the requisite influence to bear to secure his promotion remains to be seen.

The removal of McClellan continues to be talked of here, but there is little excitement. I was glad when the President at last recognized the necessity of removing him. Ardent admirer of him as I was, the backwardness to move which he displayed after the battle of Antietam and the urgent necessity for immediate action on the part of our army, made me willing to see him set aside. I am not one of those however who believe that all the reverses which have befallen our arms on the Peninsula and

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elsewhere are the be attributed to McClellan. Even yet we do not know whether we Can do without him. It is a fearful responsibility to have such an army in charge. I hope that Burnside, backed by Hooker, may be successful in Carrying our flag victorious into Richmond before the New Year opens. In that Case McClellan will sink into comparative obscurity. But if our army is defeated- then McClellan will be a demi-god, and our party is hopelessly ruined.

For some weeks I have heard nothing of our old division except what I could glean from the pa-

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Hoping to hear from you occasionally I remain

As Ever  
Yours sincerely  
T. Chamberlin

Nd. Tro., 150<sup>th</sup> Regt.

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1863.

Dear Colonel -

From the preparations that have been making for the last few days I judge that we are on the eve of an important movement. Yesterday the entire Cavalry force of the army moved up the river, but whether to make a raid or merely a reconnoissance has not yet transpired; more likely the latter. Co. might we are cocked and primed for an eight days march - the men carrying three days rations in their haversacks and five in their knapsacks in addition to their clothing and twenty extra rounds of cartridges.

I am not in favor of making pack-horses of men, and fear

that this plan of weighing them down with food will prove more unsatisfactory than the old system of transportation, with long wagon-trains. Still, the hearts of the men beat high with hopes of success, and their discipline is such that they will do and bear more without murmuring than they ever did before.

Our brigade (143<sup>rd</sup>, 149<sup>th</sup>, & 150<sup>th</sup>) is now admirably drilled and stands high in the estimation of the Corps Commander, Gen. Reynolds. The 150<sup>th</sup> holds the third place for discipline and drill among the forty regiments constituting Reynolds' command, as reported by some of his staff officers. This is certainly very satisfactory.

Of course it is impossible to say with certainty in what direction we will move, but the general opinion is that a strong demonstra-

tion will be made above Fred-  
Ericksburg, while the real crossing  
will be effected below. It would  
be utter folly to attack again in  
front, as from the number of rifle-  
pits and fortifications on the rebel  
side our discomfiture would be sure.

Capt. Crotzer is still with  
us, but is on the sick list, and  
will scarcely be able to march  
with us. He has bespoken a seat  
in an ambulance, but that is con-  
trary to standing orders, and he will  
probably fall out of ranks at the  
most convenient hospital. He has  
scarcely commanded his Company  
twenty days since he came into the  
service, and in fact is totally ig-  
norant of tactics. The Col. has re-  
quested him to hand in his resig-  
nation, but he evades it, and talks  
much of what he has "lost" by en-  
tering the army, and what the pros

Wm. O'Hara has gone home, his resignation having been ac-

cepted. He would say if he were to go home  
now, and he "doesn't like the notion  
of being kicked out of the regiment, &c."  
Col. is determined however, that  
this shall not go on long - he must  
do one of two things, resign or be  
discharged for disability. He feels very  
sore over the resolutions adopted by  
his company at a recent meeting, and  
which you have no doubt seen in  
the "Chronicle".

I understand that the  
order from the War Department, requir-  
ing the Consolidation of regiments, and  
the mustering out of the Colonels and  
majors of those under five hundred  
men has been suspended for the pres-  
ent. It would have a very bad effect  
to put it in force just now. Don't  
think that it would be far bet-  
ter to fill these reduced regiments  
up to the minimum at least (500 and  
up) with drafted men. Under that  
order scores of the best officers in the  
service would be laid on <sup>the</sup> shelf after  
two years of patriotic toil and sacrifice.

Hd. Qrs. 150th P. V.  
April 14th, 1863.

Dear Colonel-

From the preparations that have been making for the last few days I judge that we are on the eve of an important movement. Yesterday the entire Cavalry force of the army moved up the river, but whether to make a raid or merely a reconnaissance has not yet transpired; more likely the latter. To-night we are cocked and primed for an eight days march- the men Carrying three days rations in their haversacks and give in their knapsacks in addition to their clothing and twenty extra rounds of Cartridges. I am not in favor of making pack-horses of men, and fear

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that this plan of weighing them down with food will prove more unsatisfactory than the old system of transportation, with long wagon-trains. Still, the hearts of the men beat high with hopes of success, and their discipline is such that they will do and bear more without murmuring than they ever did before.

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tion will be made above Fredericksburg, while the real crossing will be effected below. It would be utter folly to attack again in front, as from the number of rifle-pits and fortifications on the rebel side our discomfiture would be sure.

Capt. Crotzer is still with us, but is on the sick list, and will scarcely be able to march with us. He has bespoken a seat in an ambulance, but that is contrary to standing orders, and he will probably fall out of ranks at the most Convenient hospital. He has scarcely commanded his Company twenty days since he came into the service, and in fact is totally ignorant of tactics. The Col. has requested him to hand in his resignation, but he evades it, and talks much of what he has "lost" by entering the army, and what the peo-

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has been suspended for the present. It would have a very bad effect to put it in force just now. Don't you think that it would be far better to fill these reduced regiments up to the minimum at least (800 and odd) with drafted men. Under that order scores of the best officers in the service would be laid on the shelf after two years of patriotic toil and sacrifice.

Surgeon O'Hara has gone home, his resignation having been accepted, and we are now looking for another to take his place. I hope Dr King will send us a good one, as we have not the greatest Confidence in our assistant surgeons.

Hoping that you may hear of a success on the part of this army soon, I remain

Very truly yours  
Thos Chamberlin

Camp near Pollock's Mill  
May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1863.

Dear Col.

Will you please inform me whether it is likely that any new regiments will be raised this summer in our state. As you are aware a great many nine months volunteer and militia regiments shortly go out, from whose ranks it would perhaps not be very difficult to get up several new volunteer regiments. Major Yerkes of the 179<sup>th</sup> P.M. writes me from Yorktown that a great many of their men will reenlist, and proposes that I shall make an effort to raise a regiment, assuring me that he can bring to it at least three full companies. Many of the 135<sup>th</sup> P.V. will undoubtedly reenlist, after a short stay at

home, and would prefer a new to  
an old organization.

Please let me know at your earliest  
convenience what the prospect is  
in this matter.

Our brigade was not regularly  
engaged in the late battles, and the  
150<sup>th</sup> had but two wounded. We were  
however on the front most of the time,  
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Near Chancellorville our own skin-  
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Very truly yours  
Thos Chamberlin

Hed. Drs. 150<sup>th</sup> P.V. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1863.

Dear Colonel-

During the late movement of the Army of the Potomac across the Rapidan our Division (3<sup>rd</sup> Div. 1<sup>st</sup> Corps) guarded the Orange & Alexandria Railroad from Bull Run to the Rappahannock, and we were not sorry to miss the long marches and exposures of that movement. Day before yesterday we were relieved by the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, and started once more for the front, arriving at Paoli Mills, our present location, about three O'clock in the afternoon. Here we are trying to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, but the nights are very cold, and, most of our baggage being at Rappahannock Station, we have rather a hard time of it. - It is hardly probable that any new movement against the enemy will be undertaken this winter, as a single day's rain would make the roads impassable. Indeed they are so bad now - although there has been no rain for over a week - that wagons cannot run with full loads.

A short time since I received notice from the Chief of Ordnance that the Ordnance Returns of my old Company for the year 1861 had not been sent in and must be forthcoming. At that time we did not know that Ordnance Returns had to be made, and I never kept any account of

Thomas Chatham Swain  
Dec 7/63

guns, &c, issued to my company. In order to make up the required returns I will have to have Invoices of all muskets + accoutrements issued to me at Harrisburg, on or about the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June 1861 - also Invoices of all muskets, accoutrements, & ammunition issued to me after our return from Western Virginia - say about the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>d</sup> day of August, 1861. Will you be kind enough to have one of your clerks ascertain at the Arsenal or Ordnance office at Harrisburg exactly what Ordnance and Ordnance Stores were issued to me, and send me an account of the same. No Invoices were ever given us at P Harrisburg for what stores were drawn there and hence our difficulty.

My general health continues good, but I suffer a good deal from my leg and shoulder - especially in wet weather. Should this trouble continue after we get housed in winter quarters, I shall be compelled to leave the service, and return to some civil pursuit - must as I shall regret to quit before the final blow to the Rebellion is struck.

Hoping that you will grant my request concerning the Ordnance, I remain,

Very truly yours  
Thos Chamberlain

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