

Camp Stevens
Dec. 23rd/61

Dear Sister-

Well here I am again at our old camp near Winchester, broken down, halt, lame, blind crippled and whatever else you can think of but still kicking.

I will give a detailed account of my trip to Maryland. In the first place firstly, on Sunday night the 15th. we were wakened up by the drum at two o'clock and ordered to strike tents, pack baggage, eat as much beef and bread as you could stuff in you and be prepared to march by four, to what place it was a mystery to us all but we thought we were bound for Romney, so at four when we started in the opposite direction we were all puzzled to know where we were going. After a while we got on the road to that abolition hole of Martinsburg, which, by the way, ought to be burnt as close to the ground as fire

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could get it)

and encamped about two miles from it, staid all night Monday and until two o'clock Tuesday when the order came to take your blankets leave your tents, baggage &c. these to be taken care of by the sick (and by the way Watson made it convenient to have sore feet and was consequently left behind and did not share in the glory of the expedition if there was any glory in it) ? for him I will strike out on the main subject again. We left at three, took the road to Williams Port, went about five or six miles on it, struck to the left got into the woods and got lost completely; after a while we got on to the road again and took a bee line for the Potomac, got in sight of Morgantown by daybreak and with in sound of the Potomac, took about an hours sleep and struck for the river when a bombshell bid us good morning and told us to right about.

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Having found out where

the Yankees were we went a little more cautiously, stumbled on until night when Jack. detailed men from each company, did not happen to get your humble servant, the detachment to the river towards dam number 5, which by the way is the main dam on the river, getting opposite the dam they were told to lie close and dodge Yankee bullets. After a while crowbars, axes, picks and shovels without number were piled up on the bank and a barrel of whiskey. Old Jack gave each man a tin full and took some himself and told them to pitch in the dam and tare down.

So for the first time we found what the expedition meant. For fear you dont know what all this means I will tell you in plain English what it meant. We were to tare down the dam above Harpers Ferry which is the main dam on the canal and [which] furnishes Washington City with coal wood

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&c. and by which they get nearly all their supplies. The detachment worked all night, the Yankees shooting at them all the time. About day in the morning they went out and staid until the next night when they went back again coming out by day the next day.

Getting right hungry by this time we went out of the range of the guns and cooked enough provisions to last for two more days, went back that night to finish the dam when the Yankees had set fire to a mill near there and could not work at it that night because it was too light and they could shoot at us.

Headquarters Valley District

When I had written this far an order came for us to report to headquarters of Jackson. As I am orderly today I will have to close. I will write soon, Ted P.S. My box has just

[Written sideways in a corner of Page 1]
gotten here. Am very much pleased with the contents, enough to last a week, three others of my mess got boxes today.

Good bye
A.T.B.