

THE SERGEANT JEROME PEIRCE COLLECTION

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ENVELOPE



LETTER TRANSCRIPTION

Bristoes Station, VA 27 Apr /64

My very dear Wife,

Have just heard that a mail will leave for home tomorrow morning so I begin something.

My last was from our camp near Alexandria. We've marched two days, passing thru Fairfax Court House, Centreville, Bull Run and over all the famous Battle Grounds of former and ill-fated times. All along are to be seen marks of the same. Arrived here before dark yesterday in excellent condition and last Eve. a mail came bringing yours and Abbie's letters of 22^d and 24th inst. Am sorry to hear of your terrible headaches and trust this will find you well as possible. It did me as much good to receive the letters for we fear we should not hear from home again soon as it was talked that the movements would prevent it but we cannot see it. Our movement is very grand, for miles the long dark columns fill the fields and roads as I have before tried to describe and the 9th Corps is in the most perfect condition. As far as we can know we are moving down to form the left wing of Meade's Army or Reserve to watch his flank. It is said that when we reach our destination the Army will be more than a hundred thousand larger than ever before and it is believed that short work will be made of the enemy this time.

And so we talk for I've little else to write. If you have one of Harpers Weekly maybe you can watch our march. Expect to bring up at Culpepper. I'm sitting back to the pleasant morning down on my

knapsack. George E. had a letter from Ben. At home [??] sent me Mr. Bristol's sermon on the death of Mr. King. The unspotted life is a beautiful thing, read it before I went to bed.

To give you a more vivid idea of our march, I will say that we move easy than when in Tenn., halting about a quarter of an hour out of each hour. I am reading Dicken's "Bleak House". Found it in the camp at A. [probably Alexandria]. You will see officers and men reading on the march every spare moment while others run after water, nibble "Hard Tack" while some stretch out and can hardly speak or move from fatigue.

Had a letter from Ed Haynes, from his father in answer to my Recommendations. Saw Gov. [Governor] A. [Almost certainly referring to John Albion Andrew, governor of Massachusetts from 1861 until 1866] and all is being done that can be. The Gov. was much pleased and would have given me appointment in one of the old Returned Regt's [Regiments] had I been a little sooner but I have not neglected it. Others are ahead, and I must be patient. Have given the letter (Ed's) to the Major this morning.

But you will think of the future now as we move towards the enemy. It is natural, but we can only rely on the same good Power who has thus far led me on. I feel no sad resentments but on the contrary hopeful, so thankful that my health is so much better.

Have reduced baggage and carry as little as possible and as the weather is coming warm it is favorable. Am glad so much of the needful had reached you safely and trust the whole \$75.00 is at hand by this time. We should be mustered again soon and I hope to send you more before long. It looks a little as tho we should remain here today and I will finish by and by – Eve. and by candle light!

This morning after falling in soon after I wrote and expecting to march all day, the order came to halt. Waited and waited, made coffee but soon, forward again and the result so far is that we are nicely in camp laid out in streets etc. some more than a mile from the old spot and the troops that were here have gone on and we almost feel that our dream is about to be realized and we are to have what the boys of the Army call "a soft thing". We're right on the R. Road [Railroad] and our Corps are said to be scattered all along as the 'Reserve Corps' to the Army of the Potomac – as the Washington folks said we were to be on.

But we've seen too much hardship to flatter ourselves very much. Have been very busy of course in pitching tent. Am with another of the boys "Billy Gurrell" who came to the Co [Company] yesterday on the march. Was left in Memphis Miss. sick for some time etc. Five of us in a shelter tent is the most comfortable way we are allowed to live in the field.

The country here is a vast level or valley, covered at intervals with pine woods. Here was a good deal of fighting not long since. I said level, there is a circular ridge but not high, where the rebel artillery done so much mischief and finally was captured some eight pieces by our forces. Remains of limited quarters of logs and fortifications with graves are scattered all around.

It has been a delightful day and I have thought so much about you and how anxious you were probably feeling if the papers had got our movements. If mail arrangements are perfected I hope we shall chat often. And so the day closes. So different from what I expected but I expect we shall be busy with picket duty drill etc. but we can well afford to do that. 'Billy' is writing for he is a lover of letters and writes them often and remembers home. Co "B" boys are singing and a distant bugle is sounding the 'Tattoo' and I close with my last thought of you from my quiet tent and for once not tired out marching.

A kiss for Lulu. Tell her the violets are springing beautifully and look like those at home. Also the "innocents" and everything tells of Spring.

Love to all and ever from your own
Jerome

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE (Josef Rokus)

Per the Unit History: April 27, 1864 – May 2, 1864. Although they had expected to go on a coastal expedition, possibly to North Carolina, the men of the Ninth Corps were instead assigned to guard the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. They, therefore, started their march toward the Rappahannock River on April 27, passing through Fairfax Court House, Centerville, Bristow Station, and Manassas, Virginia. The 36th was assigned to a camp at Catlett's Station.