

# Letter From Christie, Alexander S. written Thursday, February 16th, 1865

Generated on November 15th, 2018 1:17 AM from SoldierStudies.org

Soldier: Christie, Alexander S.

Allegiance: Union

Unit/Service Branch: th Infantry

Date Written: Thursday, February 16th, 1865

Location: Draft Rendezvous Minn.

Correspondence Type: Letter

Link Source: <http://www.mnhs.org/library/Christie/letters/transcripts/as650216.html>

Subjects: Camp Life, Commanders, Comrades, Daily Life, Family, Home, Suffering, Western Theater

My Dear Dave:

Your letter of "this day weed" was received this forenoon and read with great pleasure, for it was not only excellent but timely in a great degree. Along with it came an Independent and Tribune, which next to a letter, are the best presents you could make me; and you would think so if you had seen me reading the last ones for the fourth time yesterday afternoon.

Bully for Uncle Tom; I am glad to hear that he is getting along so well and talks in that manner. You will welcome a good Union man when he comes home.

I am sorry Father did not send me one of Willie's letters, for it is now so long since I have seen a live from him that I have almost forgotten his handwriting.

Send me his next one if practicable. As to that lost letter of Tom's, I may say that it was probably a large, heavy one, and was opened by some thief along the route, on that account and so we are deprived of some choice reading.

Glad to hear that Cousin Tom is with his Regt. as well. He is a tough nut.

Oh, how I wish I could get onto Derwin's marsh with you for an hour, wouldn't I stretch myself for once! you do not tell me whether Mr. Derwin has got over the effects of that accident or not; do so next time. The Padre has succeeded has he? he is only putting into effect the last Manifesto of the pope on a small scale to see how the people take it.

Later:

The Orderly had just handed me a short letter from Uncle Thomas, dated the 9th at Fort Ellsworth, Va. He gives me some advice that is timely and pertinent, as I well know by experience. He is pretty correct when he says that I now know how my rough life in the Barracks is. He has heard of Uncle Roberts' release and kindred matters.

Now let me give you some idea of how we pass a day here, which is equivalent to giving a sketch of a man's life who is born, lives and dies in the barracks.

We are summoned from our bunks in the morning at early day light and after being allowed barely time to throw on our clothes are ordered to "fall-out" to "Roll-call." I always manage to be on hand, but not so all. There are some men here who rather than spring promptly out of the blankets at the first notes of the bugle, would rather perform chores extra duty after they do get up. Others are so slow in dressing that they often appear in the line to answer to their names in their shirts & pants—minus even their boots.

The other morning, the Orderly who has charge of a squad of the Heavy Artillery, now raising, thought he would punish some of these dilatory chaps. And so after the roll was called instead of the usual order "Break ranks; march" he gave them "Left-face" "[ ? ] -right; march" and led them round the quarters and onto the Parade-ground, where he [ ? ] them until they promised to come on time in the future. Since that you may see the same chaps coming out in their overcoats, prepared for any emergency.

After "Reveille" we make a rush for the cook houses, distant about one hundred yds. where after much "harmonious confusion" and swearing on the parts of these so disposed, we at last are all seated and there get our day's rations of Baker's bread; a cup of coffee and a small piece of half-cured salt beef or [ ? ] pork. [note: The rest of the paragraph is illegible.]

On this diet and nothing to do it is no wonder that we don't thrive, but many of the boys make it still worse by buying the unhealthy pies of the [ ? ].

We then return to our quarters and do just what we are a mind to, until "dinner call" when the roll is again called and we go to the cook house to get a cup of coffee and a piece of meat. Dress-parade comes off at four in the afternoon.

when we all fall-out, form into line on the parade-ground and go through a few maneuvers. Then comes what is called supper,—a cup of coffee, sometimes a little meat, and the remnant of our ration of bread. At half-past eight we have roll-call again, and at 9 o'clock "Taps" or lights-out.

Although the ration is not large as we are entitled to, yet in quantity it is sufficient for us in our idle conditions. What I object to is the little variety. As I do not drink the coffee my Bill of Fare consists wholly of Bread and meat. I have to eat very temperately, or I would soon get out of order; as there is no other exercise afforded here but that of walking about without an object, which is very little good to a fellow.

There are now four for my regt. and we might go south any time between "now and the Day of Judgment" which is all I could ascertain by a personal application to Captain Sperry, who commands the recruits for old organizations. He is very unapproachable, and is quite different in this respect to Capt. Sullivan, in charge of the [ ? ] Perhaps I will get a chance to see you all before going south, but there is no certainty. I have been just one month from home, and feel a little homesick once in a while yet. But I cannot say that I wish myself at home, nor could I in my greatest fits of homesickness [ ? ] here.

However, I can tell you that you do not fully appreciate the comforts of your present position, and never will until you have been away from them for a time.

Now Dave, it will not cost you much time tonight to fill up another sheet for me and send it along. Tell me how [ ? ] stand since I left, whether you have shot anything since. Has Dolly got over that limp? Remember and pay Brennan. Is John Sutton still in town? When did you last see "Billy"?