

Letter From Austin, Matthew S. written Tuesday, November 4th, 1862

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Soldier: Austin, Matthew S.

Allegiance: Union

Unit/Service Branch: 5th Infantry

Date Written: Tuesday, November 4th, 1862

Location: Bristo's Station, VA

Correspondence Type: Letter

Subjects: Camp Life, Commanders, Comrades, Daily Life, Eastern Theater, Family, On the March, Rumors, Warfare

Camp Fifth New Jersey Vols

Dear Father~

Since my last, we have executed a march to this point. Briefly, the details are: During the night (or morning) of Friday last, we received orders to be ready to march at a moments notice with two days "cooked" rations in the haversacks and five in the wagons. Nearly all of Saturday (1st) was consumed in getting ready but at four o'clock our brigade got under way and by sundown the division, with its train of ambulances, ammunition and provisions was on its way to Fairfax C.H. Halted for the night some 6 miles from Alexandria and bivouacked. In the morning (2nd) took up our line of march, passing through F.C.H. on to Centreville and encamping in the west side of Bull Run on the same ground occupied on our retreat. The division was all up soon after sundown with its five batteries. Both yesterday and today were as pleasant as one could wish. On yesterday (3rd) came up to Manassas and halted west of the Junction - this regiment and the 6th doing "picket" on the R.R. to Warrenton. Today we were advanced to the above station four miles west of Manassas. Here there appeared to be some indication of rebel presence as we were halted and went into line of battle within a belt of timber with artillery and cavalry in position, in which position we are apparently to remain for the night. I do not know the position of the other brigades - they are not far away - probably to our right and rear. We have some new regiments attached to the division - so we are quite strong. Our own strength is about 325. The weather is the best that could be desired for field operations. With present five days and nights, men can make quite a pleasant camp. I presume we shall advance on Warrenton tomorrow. There are absent 188 men sick - 75 or more have deserted - 60 have died of disease and 60 from wounds received in battle or killed outright. 40 are on detached service - 86 joined the cavalry service. We require 437 recruits to fill our ranks. Would be well if we could recruit at some point in Jersey - say Beverly. So long as we are in active service, recruits will be hard to obtain. Love to all.

Truly,
M.S. Austin C.S. 5th NJV