

Headquarters 92nd Regiment
White Oak Swamp, Virginia
Dear Sister Lib,

Sometime since I received a letter from you and now propose answering it. Mother's letter of June 18th came to hand after the usual wandering of such messages 'up and down over the earth' finding me in enjoyment of good health and possession of the usual amount of hard bread and bacon. I was gratified to hear of the good health of the family; and the postage stamps and paper were very acceptable indeed in this wilderness world, where we are serving our country "without money and without pay".

We are still in camp on the Chickahominy and in all probability will never be ordered to the front again. Casey's Division is used up, and will never go into battle again. We got no praise for what we did at Seven Pines and although we held the field against desparate odds for a long time, Mc Clellan gives us no credit for it. Spratts Brigade (which the 92nd supported) fired 266 rounds of canister shot in less than an hour, now a canister is a bag with 100 bullets in it and 266 such canister shots give the number of bullets fired as 26,600. As soon as the canister is fired it bursts and the bullets spread in all directions and you can imagine how many they would kill or wound, but this was only one battery and there were others on the ground and they were all busy I assure you; and another thing, the enemy were so close up to the battery that every shot took effect and piled up their dead in heaps, and besides this, our Regiments of infantry were all firing as fast as they could. There were more dead on that part of the field than any other; the Secesh themselves admit that their greatest loss was there, and Casey's Division lost far more men than any other, in proportion to their number, and yet because we had to retreat before the superior numbers that threatened to out flank us and take us prisoners and because that retreat was not conducted in a proper military manner pacing over the ground in solid columns with measured tread and military bearing while the enemy came surging onward like an ocean flood, thundering up on our flank and rear, pouring in a storm of death upon us, before which our men fell like forest leaves in the autumn. McClellan says we behaved shamefully. The men are discouraged and many swear that they will never fight again for they don't like to be blamed after suffering what they have for their country.

The 92nd is about used up, most of the men are sick and many of the officers have resigned. The Col. Was wounded in the battle and is not with us yet. Exertions are being made to get it mustered out of service.

Whether they will succeed in doing it remains to be seen. To give you some idea of our situation at present I will give you Co. I's report as made out by your humble servant this very morning.

At Potsdam we had one hundred men.

Where are they now?

Absent sick	33
Wounded in battle	6
Missing in battle	3
Killed in battle	2
Discharged	18
Detached service	5
Present sick	19
<u>Present for duty</u>	<u>5</u>
	91
Died of disease	<u>9</u>
Total	100

Thus you see we have only 24 men in our Co. here and only 5 of these men are able to do duty. The other Co.'s in the Regt. are about as bad off and this morning at inspection of arms and dress parade the Regt. mustered 66 men fit for duty out of 957 that left Potsdam.

The fact is we have not been used as we should have been and the men don't care whether "school keeps or not" and when they get on the sick list they stay on it as long as they can to get rid of duty. Our Co had 8 corporals and 5 sergeants and not one of them is within a hundred miles of the Regt. except myself. The rest being sick, wounded or dead, and the three new corporals which we put in are also used up and I have all the business (which in fact is not very great) to do and any day when we are ordered out on Picket or fatigue duty or for drilling, I as Orderly Sergeant am duty bound to report myself unfit for duty and if need's be I get an excuse of the surgeon. And when I wish, I report for duty again.

I have to keep the Co. books , make out morning reports, detail the guards, take the sick to the doctors each morning, warn them out to drill, inspections, and parade and see to things generally and like all Orderly Sergeants have to know far more about the Co. affairs than the

commissioned officers. As for standing guard, I have not done any of that work for two months for I have been acting Co. commissary when not engaged as orderly and that has excused me.

We have a nice camp. It would do your soul good to see it. It is in a nice fine grass all laid out in streets and beautifully adorned with shade trees. Which after standing a few days we change for fresh ones. Our tents are raised up on scaffolds of poles two or three feet from the ground to allow the air to circulate beneath and then we set our street full of shade to keep the sun off. The streets are swept clean early each morning and the dirt carried off in pails. We are not allowed to throw anything under our tents or in the streets, and take it altogether, it is very pleasant and quite healthy.

But the mailman is calling for the mail and I must hurry. De Kalb boys are well, except Stevens and Loure, and they are not very hard up. I have not heard from Court Cooper yet. The 3rd Brigade, General Palmer, has gone up. Palmer has gone in to Couches Division and we in the 2nd Brigade. My love to all the friends write very often all of you.

Yours as ever John.

PS Mother wants to know if I lost my diary at the battle. Tell her no. I had it in my pocket.

Address:

Co I 92nd Regt NYSV

General Casey's Division

John