

58th Regt. P.V.

March 13th, 1862

My Dear Wife,

I find myself seated again this evening upon a box for the purpose of writing a few lines to one left amongst friends whilst I am far away in an enemies land amidst all the dangers and privations of camp life.

Yesterday our regiment was ordered under arms and messengers could be seen riding from regiment to regiment as fast as their horses could carry them to give the alarm that the enemy was approaching us. Our boys all turned out cheerfully and seemed to be anxious for a fight but secesh backed down and retired without firing a gunn. We expected that we would be fighting by three o'clock. I was ordered by the surgeon to take my packett case and accompany them to render them such assistance as they might need. We did not however march out of camp. I think perhaps we may have an engagement before you get this. One knows but little here what is going on until the time comes for action.

You have a view of our campground upon the first page of this sheet. I have marked the position of our regiment with an index over it and pointing towards it. The bridge you see leads over to the fortress which is not seen in the view. This point is low and sandy it being perhaps fifteen or twenty feet higher than high tide. You see over an area of about 1 mile in length and perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in width back of this on the right and also upon the left is a low swamp for some distance then we come upon plantations across this swamp the rebbels are now encamped it is said that they are about forty thousand strong. I do not know how many troops we have but I suppose here and at Newport News some 6 or 8 miles from here we have some 20,000 all together. I understand that there are 11 regiments landed here this morning and sent to Newport News. It is said that the Bucktails are amongst them.

The 1st Michigan Regt came in yesterday and encamped upon our right. I have marked their camp with a *. This marked with a **P** is a deleware Regt. and the one with a **C** is a Cavelry Regt. This was lithographed some time ago when an Indiana Regt. occupied our positions. You will see that they were in the small wedge tent. We have the large Sibley tents. The house marked with a **MM** is one now used for the Brigade or general hospital it belonged to one Judge Clarkson who died there and when the Union troops took possession here his house keeper who was a rank secessionist went off in high dudgeon and left the premises for our use.

It is raining this evening. We have no floor to our tents here only the sand. The Surgeon told me this evening that he was going to get boards for a floor in the Hospital tent. We have now some five or six patients here with no floor. My bed is upon the sand. We have cots for the sick. The weather is quite warm comfortable without a fire until this evening it being damp a fire was very exceptable. We have cool mornings from 2 A.M. until about 7 A.M. when it begins to get warm.

Our boys went down to the bay seen here below the camp yesterday at low tide and got about a bushell of Oysters. They are quite plenty here. This was previous to this war quite a noted watering place and summer resort for sea bathing etc. I should judge it to have been a very

pleasant place. Hampden lies back of the picture. I should judge about where the **P** is place over the picture. I have learned this evening while writing this that they do not send letters from here now but I shall however put this in the office and let them mail it when they get ready. I wish you to write me what the date of its reception is. I suppose if they are detained at all they will be detained until after we have this expected battle or the present plans are changed. If you do not get letters regular I want you to write as yours will come direct and I will get them regular. I shall write once or twice a week and you will get them some time. Be particular to put P.V. on all your letters now so that they will be sent to the 58 Pennsylvania or I will be very likely not to get them. Direct as the heading of this letter reads and they will come direct to me.

Friday morning March 14th, 1862

Three Rebbel Boats have been in sight this morning but they keep out of reach of our gunns. They are evidently making preparations for an attack. I think we will be ready for them. Let them come as soon as they are a mind to.

This is a warm lovely day seems like a warm June day. I have been busy fixing things around the Hospital tent to make it convenient and comfortable all the morning. I have not been into the fort yet but intend to pay it a visit as soon as I get a little leisure.

Now to Ada I want to say be a good girl until I come home. I saw some little Negro girls and boys the other day they are slaves their masters own them just as we own our horses. Your pa is a great many miles from you as many as 8 or 9 hundred and you must write me another letter. I think everything of the one you wrote me. Be a good girl and I will come home and see you before long.

I must close for it is time for the mail to be collected.

Yours in affection.

Newton

M A Na Na (?)