

Captain William A. Barnard, 20th Michigan Infantry, 1862-1865.

Envelope: Miss Ellen A. Barnard, Willsborough, Essex County, New York

Newport News, Va. Mch. 11th 63

Dear Sister

I have received your letter of Mch. 1st & one sometime ago & was glad to get the W. News - ~~we~~ are here yet [sic] - and getting a thorough course of drill - have a beautiful camp along the bank of the river - with comfortable quarters - Streets laid out & graded - with side walks & shade trees & every thing in City style - at Dressparade there is almost an unbroken line of troops for three miles - the whole length of the Corps.

It is a healthy place here and we get all the Ja. river oysters we want to eat and five hours drill every day - and have to come out with boots blacked - white gloves, and clothes & accoutrements in the finest style [?] possible. I cannot get a furlough now - it is the first time since we have been out that anyone has had an opportunity to go home & only two line officers can be absent at the same time & only two out of every hundred enlisted men - and there are too many ahead of me - and they can have only fifteen days leave of absence. As soon as I can get a furlough I shall do it and make you a visit - but shall wait until I can get about thirty days leave and some of my pay as Lieut.

There is nothing here to mention for news - and we do not know what the destination of the Corps is - but think we are kept here as a reserve to be sent where we shall be needed the most. It is rumored about here that we are going to Texas - but it seems hardly probable - and we feel very well satisfied with our condition here. I wish you would send me another pr. of stockings before long - & remember me to the people of Willsboro & write soon.

We are getting reinforcements every few days now via conscripts from Mich. - who are allowed to join any Regt. they wish.

We get pleasant weather here most of the time but have a rain regular about twice a week - & once in a while a little thunder & lightening. Write all the news.

Yours &c

Wm. A. Barnard
Lieut. 20th Mich.