

Excerpts from the letters of Daniel E. Burbank, 1861-62

The following transcription is of excerpts from the [letters of Daniel E. Burbank](#), a Union soldier serving in 1861 and 1862. Spelling and punctuation (including misspellings) have been retained from the original letters. Editorial additions and explanations are given in brackets. Words crossed out by Daniel are written with strikethroughs.

[flag and eagle image]
2d REGIMENT.
TRUE TO THE UNION
AND THE STARS AND STRIPES.

Head Quar 2nd

Portsmouth N H June 19th

Dear parents and friends it is the last day in this place I will write to you I expected to have had a letter from you before this time but I am disappointed. I wrote to you nearly a week ago and have received no ~~any~~ answer we received ~~us~~ our amunition this morning 60 rounds a piece the cartages are the minie they way about one oz a piece and our knapsacks about 60 lbs we leave for W. tomorrow at seven oclock we packed our knapsacks this for noon and went before the reviewing officer Gen. Abbot we have got new canteenes and bread baskets a tin plate and sup knife and fork so you see we do not have much to carrie not more than a hundr and ~~£~~ 50 lbs I have sent my valice home with what things I cannot carrie John and Jone and I have sent ours all to gether in in the care of Mr Burrell my boots will be ~~Jo~~ write for H. I cannot write much more now next time I write to you it will be in W. give my love to all of the folks give my love to ~~ad~~ Addie and tell her to write to me often
good by

N. B

there are some pictures in my valice give one to Lewelen and Ven
keep up good spirits and write often tell Emma not to forget me you Harvey I know wont we go through Baltimore and it is expected that us shall have some of those bricks and stones in our ranks and let them come we are ready fore them we ~~are~~ shall march with our ~~m~~-rifles and pistols loded and the first man that fires on our men will see the end of the war in less ~~time~~ than no time
give my love to all of the folk
Ed
good by

[image of US Capitol building]

Headquarters	Regt.,	Camp	Co.	
2nd.		Sullivan	A	
				1861.

July 29

Dear parents

I received your letter day before yesterday and glad was I to here from you and to here that you were well. I had writen before I received yours I was glad you did not send eny money fore we wer payed off ~~they~~ the next day after I wrote my letter I shall not be able to send home eny this time fore there are some things that I want that I shall have to buy sutch as stockings and a shirt or two the march was a hard one fore clothe as well flesh you wished to know how I get along with my mending and washing and I will I get along firstrate you know I could always wash and mend some when I was obliged to do it I get a darkey now and then to wash my shirt they will do it for six cts- Father wishes to have me write all the war news but you get as much news in the papers as I can tell you I could tell you more perhaps about the battle than you get in the paper. but the general news you know more than we do here there is a great many of this reg. that are going home they are sick some of them and some of them are playing sick I should not wonder if some of the Fitz. should come home I tell you that march and fight ~~w~~ has used up a good meny men we shall lose two or 300 men. the orderly sargent of Co. A has gone home to enlist 200 men fore this reg. (I think that they will break up this reg.) but you must not say eny thing about it but if there is eny of my friends that want to enlist in the ~~first~~ 3d. reg tell them that they had better wait a little while till they see how things are going. I wrote a letter to Warren the day before we went to bulls run but I have received no answer yet I expected a letter from hom to day but I was disappointed if you see Ven tell him that I think that it is time that he had answered my letter I wrote him more than a month ago and have received no answer. John B. had a letter from home to day and they say that busyness is very dull in F. and that Mrs Frank [Bowker?] is dead ~~that~~ I was much suprised to hear of it I should think frank would feel very bad. There is one thing that I want you should write me and that is where is uncle Leysander I want to know so that I can write to him my sheet is full please answer this as soon as possible
From your son Daniel EB

[image of US Capitol building]

Headquarters

2nd.

Regt.,

N. H. V

Camp

Sulivan

Co.

A

Aug 8th

.....1861.

Dear parents

I received your kind letter yesterday and I was very much pleased for it had been so long since I had had a letter from home that I began to think that you had forgotten all about me I received a letter from Addie the 6th and that is the first word I have received from Fitz. since the battle I don't know but you have written but I have not received them we are haveing a pretty good time ~~know~~ now but it is most awful hot here though the sweat dropse off of my skin and as I sit here writeing and sweat runs into my eyes so that I cannot follow the line. but I must prseed to answer your ~~just~~ questions in the first place you wish to know when I lost my revolver it was in the fight the case got unbuckled and it hopped out I suppose as we wer going double quick over a fence. I

have seen what you call Va fence in N. H. but never in Va till we marched it is about 7 feet high and made of [18?] railles all split. it is as much work to take down a length as it is to take down one of [?] old double walls. 2ndly you wish to know how far we wer from the ~~er~~ rebles when we made the first shot it was about 200 yards from us to the advance of the enemy and about 600 from there battery. 3d.ly whether I saw eny of the dead and wounded of the rebles I did not see so meny as some of the N. Y. boys did although I saw some 4thly whether we charged on them or not we did not we wer drawn up in a line for that purpose but just before the order was given we saw that they was making a flank movement to the right of us to cut off our retreat and then was the time that tried our souls for they wer pouring a show of musketry into us on three sides and then that was the time that we fell back we had to go about half a mile in this condision with a charge of grape from there batteries about and a minute these mostly passed over our heads hising and screaching through the air. 5th ly. Whether it was friends or enemyes that we rushed over it was both the place was where Ellsworths zuaves charged on the enemies batteries and did such execution it did my heart good to see those brave fellows when the famous black horse cavalry charged on them that cavalry little knw what they ~~had~~ wer falling into when they made that charge and there was not but a few of them that ever found out. 6thly Capt. Barker was in a wagon when they fired into us at the bridge. it was about a quar. of 7 when they fired into us at the bridge. you wish to know how far we went before that is very easly answered they did not get to gether till the 2nd day and at the old camp at Washington it is 60 miles from Washington to the battle field the the way that we came. it was my left hand man that was wounded and left at the ~~hol~~ hospital his name was Heaton. he was wounded in the retreat there was not a man killed by the side of Sy. Faft he was just behind Sy the ball that killed him hit Sy but it did not hurt him much. his name was John L. Riel. it was a reg. of Geo. Troops that we faced in the battle I did not lose eny thing but my revolver in the battle my catrage box strap was shot off but I did not drop it till this side of fairfax. there was a great meny of our boys that lost there guns and I am glad of it fore we have got some new ones they are the harpers fery rifle. there are sevaral things that I should like but we have got orders to move camp tomorrow morning at 3 oclock I do not know where we are going but I believe it is back about 16 miles towards Baltimore. the reg. is so much broken up that they are not fit for service so we think that we are going to for Mc. Henry to recruit. when we get settled down again I will write you and tell you what we want. but my sheet is allmost full and I have hardly answered your questions. Mother you wish to know how far I went with our seeing eny of our reg when the cannon ball came so near to me I cannot tell but I shoold think it must hav been a mile. I was not a lone as you suppose but mixed up with men from all most evry reg that was in the fight. Sam [?] has not been heard from here one of the boys that we supposed was killed at richmond his name is [?] from Jafry. give my best to all the folks tell John not to stop to blow his nose, now please write as soon as you receive this

from your son Daniel E. Burbank

[on front of letter written over image of Capitol] tell Emma that she must save some of those large sweet apples for me fore I don't get eny here we hav a chance to get all of the milk we want but we don't get eny brown bread.

I should like your picture first rate

[on front of letter written sideways over image of Capitol] there was one of our corporals shot here day before yesterday morning by one of the guards that did not know his duty his name is Caliph he is on the [?] I think he will live he was shot in the mouth

[image of US Capitol building]
United States Capitol.

7th

~~Washington, D. C.,~~ [?] , 1861 sept
Camp [?] Bladensburg

Dear parents I received your letter of sunday in [?] time and was very glad to here from you and to here that you wer well and hearty. I was glad that you went on to the mountain and had a good time I had a letter from Warren the other day he said that the folks were all well bobb has got here with his recruit he brought me your picture it looks very natural I think. there is a saloon here now and I think I shall have myne taken and send it home ~~and~~ so you can see how I look here the boys say that I have grown fat since we have come here but I don't know whether it is so or not. you wished to know whether I had written to aunt H or not. I wrote to her some time ago but have not received an answer yet. I dont know what the reason is I wrote to Mary some time ago but have received no answer yet. there is not much new here now. the report is current that Jeff Davis is dead I do not know how true it is one this is certain all the rebell flags ~~are~~ along our lines are flying at half mast. there is skirmishing over the river most evry day. we are under orders with two days cooked rations and have been fore some time there will bee a big battle before long. the box that you sent has got so far as the citty it will be up here to morrow if you have a chance send me a pair of cotton under shirts I had a pair of stockings sent to me by some body in old Cheshire do not know who it was they are a first rate pair those papers that you sent I received and was very glad of them wish you would send now some evry week. we have not been payed off yet should be ~~tomorrow~~ monday I think. I shall send some home. tell the boys to enlist and come on fore this war must bee closed by one bold stroke with men enough to drive them from the country most of there men are in V.A. now. old ben Butler has opened there eyes for them all of the battles lately have been favorable to our side but I must stop writing please write soon from your son in the army D. E. Burbank

tell Emma that I was very glad that she wrote to me. I am very sorry that the horse trod on her foot I hope that it will get well soon tell Harvey to write to me
D. E. B

Camp Union Oct 17th/61

Dear parents I received your letter last saturday and now take the first chance to answer it. we were on guard and we were under marching orders and expectted to go evry moment as it was thought that the enemy were about to attack our advance at fairfax but they did not and the excitement died away sunday night and monday, and we still remain at the old camp. Gene Hooker has been promoted to Maj. Gen. and Col. Couden of the Mass 1st has command of the

brigade. that is about all the news that I know of. you sayd that you through it strange that I should not have eny thing to write about but if you wer here you would see at once that you wer mistakened. I could write you pages of camp rhumors that there is not eny truth in. but you recollect that a private knows no more about the movements of the army than you do where you are till he sees it published in the papers. and what is published here you get there. you speak of haveing the same round of labors to perform evry day. you must recollect that we have a round of labor to perform and it is the same thing day after day and week after week nothing but drill drill drill all the time there is about 4,500 men here now we shall stay here with out doubt some time if there is no attack made from the other side. for there has got to be a force kept here eny way and we have got a good camp and got it fixed up in good shape and I think that we shall stay here till we are kneeded perty badly over there now. I am very sory that Harvey has got hurt I hope it is not very serious. tell him that he must not be to smart he must not ride would with Ell to often if it sits him up so that he jumps over the horse. I had a letter from Uncle Le day before yesterday. I will send it to you. I cannot send my picture fore the saloon went off before I got it taken. the box has not come yet I hope it will come soon fore I want some shirts. [?] has gorne into Co. F. but the captain is with us and he will stay with us. we have not got the enfield rifles but the spring field they are just as good and a good deel lighter. we went out the other day to try them we fired 600 yds and we put 360 balls into a mark the size of old Jeff. they will range 1500 yds with considerable certainty they do not cary so big a slug as our old rifles and are not as heavy by 5 lbs which is considerable on a long march. The rebles have fallen back to fairfax and perhaps farther there largest force in V.a is in the neighborhood of mannasas. I want to know if there is eny body enlisting from there now if the 5 reg. has started for the seat of war. if the 6th is filling up pretty fast and where they are encamped &c. it rains hard here now and I hope it will rain a week and drownd them out of bull run. the [bows?] are all well now. A. C. Stone is in this Co. but I will write a few lines to H...

please write soon from your son in the army D. E Burbank. U. S. A.

Dear Brother

I will write a few lines to you I am very sorry that you have got hurt, but you are not as bad off as some of those poor fellows that wer at the fight of bull run. it is not like geting your arm bloed off. I hope you will get well in a few days. I have heared that you rode out the other night I hope you had a good time how was it? want you should write and tell me about it. I had a letter from Mucy Ann and she says that she wrote to you but you have not answered it. I must give you a disscription of my house. I am writeing on a rough board table covered with tin dishes and old cegar boxes filed with all sorts of eatables such as old pipes matches blacking boxes balls and most everything else but money. but our candle stick is what not um right smart I reckon it is a block of wood with a hole bored in it the worse trouble is it gets afire when the candle gets burned down. but I must stop for it is time to go to bed please write to me and tell me all the news. and how the girls are. and eny thing else you can think of. tell Emma that I have not got room to write to her now kis her fore me.

Jan. 24th/62
Camp Beaufort Md

Dear parrents

As it continues to raiyn and I have not eny thing to do I will write a few lines to you I am pretty well only the good things that you sent, set me into a [?] for a day or two but I am allright now. Bill Dunton has just been in here and brought me a letter from you he did not stay but a moment he said you wer well and hearty. I suppose you wer somewhat surprized to see him I am very sorry you did not have more time to see him he would have told you some pretty hard stories (there the enemy have just opened there battery on cokpit point) I wish you could have talked with him about half a day he could have told you more in that time than I can write in a month. you wished to know why the do no more damage I can tell you. our camp is partly behind a bluff so that if they elevate there guns enough to through over the bluff ~~they~~ that the forse of the shell is spent before it strikes and it is the same on there side then the guns they have got in there batteries & are 66 & 72 ours are light artilery the biggest is only 12 pounds that is the reason, but it is so dark that I cannot see the line and I will stop till we get a candle. I have just got a letter from Lucy Ann there folks are all well but I will stop there is no more news so good by
From your son in the army E