

Transcript of Letter from Charles Warner to his Mother Mrs. Almon Warner, August 20, 1863

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Author: Charles Warner

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Camp 145th Regt New York Vols.  
Kelly's Ford Va  
Aug 20th (1863)

Dear Mother:

I can steal a few moments now to pen you a few lines, but I assure you I am pretty busy nowadays. You will see by this that we still remain at Kelly's ford, and the prospect is that we will still remain here, though I suppose we are liable to be driven back at any time. The weather is cooler, we have been paid, and all goes merrily as you please. The only drawback to our general enjoyment is the prospect of witnessing another military execution to morrow. Day before yesterday I happened to be over to the Provost Marshals guard, which is within a few rods of my tent, and in plain sight, and I noticed a crowd of officer around a private, so stepping up. I found they were reading his sentence to him he appeared to be somewhat cast down though not particularly sad, I presume he did not fully realize his situation. I was near where he is bound to day, and I see they have given him the benefit of the Clergy – It seems like mockery to see a man thus enjoying good health, with the prospect of death staring him in the face, to call in a Clergyman to comfort him. I should not have said mockery exactly, but it does seem hard to see a man thus fall by his own countrymen in arms. The drum beats for battallion drill and I must tend to Co. "F". Drill is over. and dress parade is announced in fifteen minutes, so I can write but little now. and get ready for parade. I received a letter - Republican & Tribune last night, also stamps. I presume I get all the stamps you send as well as papers. Dunn Brownie belongs in the 19th Ct, 2nd Corps. The fact that I had been court-martialed and dismissed the service would not worry me a particle unless it was for neglect of duty in face of the enemy, or something disgraceful. Capt. Badger told his superior officer that he lied, and though it was so proven on trial, (that he did lie), yet he was dismissed; and various other things that would not be noticed in civil life, dismiss some of our best officers. The drum again beats and I must postpone till after parade

Again I seat myself to write, but expect every moment to be interrupted again, to draw ordnance stores, and I shall refuse to draw all that is drawn by Price for me. I may be under arrest before morning, and I do not care if I am – for I had rather mult (?) the issue than not.

I have just heard that the prisoner who was to-morrow to suffer the full penalty of the law, is reprieved for one week, and I have al so heard that a new trial will be allowed him, but I do not know how true it is.

I am interrupted so often that I do not think it best to write any more now.

While I .am quietly in camp you can not expect me to find much of  
interest to write about – yours in haste Charles

Aug. 20th (1863) (Cont'd)

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P.S. Friday morning. I am going on camp guard duty this morning. We have a brigade guard which surrounds our whole brigade with sentinels, and I suppose I shall be charged with its good behavior for the next 24 hours.

Gambling is driving a good business and many a poor duck is without money or friends, though the Paymaster's tracks are yet fresh on our ground. One man informed me last night in the company that he was a 100 dollars "in" since pay day, and if he will send any of it to his widowed mother I think it will prove acceptable. Another youngster; I should judge scarce 16 and small at that, took \$60 to his Lieut last night for him to keep, as the result of that days winning. I suppose it seems awful - to people not used to army ways to hear of such things, but you would soon get accustomed to seeing such things if you only tarried here for a short time. Sometimes it is endeavored by some law loving, individual to put a stop to this trafficking, but it only serves to drive the men away by themselves, so it is best to let them alone. The ridiculous farce of getting up till sunrise, or rather at break of day, is still persisted in, though I believe I have laid abed over roll call & drill nine tenths of the time, and Price is so near sighted that he cannot see whether one is out or not, and then he hurries back to bed before drill fairly commences. if I am caught it will be necessary to be quite sick; which can be done on the shortest notice

Good Morning C

Send no more stamps at present - buy something for the children