

Headquarters, 6th Cavalry
Army of the Potomac
July 13th, 1863

Dear Father'

Two days since the 6th Cavalry were ordered to report for duty at Headquarters, Cavalry Corps, by direction of Genl. Pleasanton. The regiment had been cut up so much, during the late campaign, that it has become necessary to place us, for the present, where the remnant may be preserved.

Since the 9th of June last, the 6th Cavalry has been in 11 severe engagements and has lost 306 enlisted men killed, wounded and missing in action, and 14 commissioned officers. One squadron composed of Companies D & H, which has been on detached service for some time, has joined, so that we now number 256 for duty.

Lieut. Balk, Lieut. Coates, and myself are the only officers present; but Lieut. Hutchins has been ordered to join. Capt. Brisbin is over at Frederick City on his way to the regiment. Capt. Cram is a paroled prisoner at Washington and may be exchanged. Madden (?) was wounded at Beverly Ford, but he is nearly well and Whiteside is expected soon. In all probability therefore, we shall have a number of officers reporting for duty in a few days.

I rec'd a letter from Sallie telling me that Tucker had arrived safely in Philadelphia. I saw him just after he was wounded. He was performing my duties at the time that he was hit, as I had been ordered temporarily to attend to other business. I was moving up toward the front of the regiment when I met him returning to the rear. I thought he was badly wounded, but found afterwards that it was only a flesh wound in the leg. He kept close to me until I had brought the remnants of the regiment into Emmitsburgh.

Our Sergeant Major has just made his appearance. He cut his way out of the rebels and escaped. One of our sergeants named Gorman killed 5 rebels and captured 2 prisoners himself.

At the fight near Fairfield I thought several times that I was destined to be an inmate of the Libby Prison. But, I made up my mind that I would be badly wounded first at any rate. At one time, I was entirely surrounded in the town itself, but I managed to cut myself out. About a mile this side of town we repulsed the enemy.

At Funkstown, July 7th, the regiment was engaged in another terrific hand-to-hand fight. With 146 men we fought the 7th Virginia Cavalry, numbering 600 men, with the whole of Jones' Brigade there to support them. They killed 10 of our regiment and they wounded 40. Among the wounded was Capt. Claflin. We succeeded in driving them at last with the help of the 1st Cavalry, which came up at the right time. We killed and wounded about 70 of the rebels and took 10 prisoners.

We have been expecting to have a general engagement for the last 2 days, but this morning it appears that we are entrenching in our positions. The rebels have been also throwing up works. Genl. Couch has just affected a connection with the right of our line. About 60 prisoners arrived this morning from the front.

Since the battle of Gettysburg, and including that action, we have taken in the neighborhood of 20,000 prisoners. Our troops have occupied Hagerstown. Genl. Meade's Headquarters are about 200 yards from the spot where I am writing, and he and Genl. Pleasanton seem to be continually together. Vice President Hamlin is here. I had quite a talk with him last evening. He knows Senator Cooper very well; or rather he did know him. He is an old gentleman, very affable, smokes incessantly, and talks a great deal to the officers that he chances to meet. I saw him receive a packet full of letters, to place in the Post Office when he got back to Washington, for different individuals.

I have no time to spare in these days, I can assure you. Now that we have so few officers, I perform the duties of adjutant, line officer, quartermaster, and almost everything. It has been intimated to me that I can be appointed an aide of Genl. Pleasanton if I wish it, but I am not anxious for the position. When I am offered a regiment of cavalry, I will leave the old 6th, and not for much less. My position of Adjutant does not give the rank of 1st Lieutenant, as some of my friends seem to think...The 1st Lieutenant generally performs that duty, but in this case I do.

I rank now as No. 3 or 4 on the list of Second Lieutenants of the 6th Cavalry, so that in all probability I will be a 1st Lieut. before a great while. By the way, I have received my commission at last from the War Department.

I have lost almost all of my clothing, my field glass, my album, and a number of articles during this campaign. I am sorry about the album. I ride a very good horse, which I captured from the rebels on Stoneman's Raid. The bridle that I use I captured during the fight at Fairfield. I lost my own sabre in that fight and captured another at Funkstown. Altogether, I am nearly equipped from the Confederacy. The rebels use a straight Prussian sabre a great deal, made rather for thrusting than cutting.

Major Starr is now in Washington. He has had his arm amputated. Claflin is in Frederick, wounded in the shoulder. McQuiston has gone to his home in Ohio. Poor Balder was killed. McClellan and Wade are aids for Pleasanton. They are here a great deal of their time.

The mail is about to leave and I must close. Give my love to all.

Your affectionate son,
L. Henry Carpenter