



HEADQUARTERS 2d REGIMENT,

Scott Life Guard,

38th Regt N.Y.M.

Dear Cousins

Aug 13th 1861

According to my promise I will endeavor to give you a detailed account of the Battle at Bull's Run, as far as coming under my own observation.

We were ordered to leave our camp, (where we are at present bivouacked) on the 16th of July, in light marching order, that is with Musket and accoutrement, Canteen and Haversack, and Blanket, with three days ration in our Haversacks, and march to Fairfax Station, we commenced our march at 11 o'clock, A.M. and march until 10 o'clock that night, through the most rough and unpleasant road, that I ever beheld, about 7 o'clock we arrived at a point, where a stream was running, which we crossed on a plank, one to time, with the night so dark as to scarcely discern the plank under our feet, a single misstep would have precipitated one in the stream beneath, we crossed without accident, and after marching until 10 o'clock, we encamped in a rough field using a stone for a pillow, and blanket for a bed, with a heavy dew falling, we made a camp fire and lay ourselves down to rest. On the morning, being the 17th inst, we again started for our destination over rough roads, through valleys and over hills, stopping occasionally, to send out scouts, and reconnoitre, for fear of masked batteries, being placed in suspicious looking places, during one of these stops, a man was shot accidentally, by getting an order to move, the rear came to the front and in going in quick time, one of the men fell, and his piece went off

edged in the heart of his fellow soldier, he was buried where
we then proceeded on our way, and when we got within
miles of Fairfax, we learned that their Pickets had found
coming, and has started to alarm the enemy at Fairfax.
ceeded, and found that the road had been blocked up
which had been felled across it, our road running through
for about 4 miles before we reached Fairfax, we cut our
rough the road until we reached Fairfax, about a quarter
before we came up however we came to a battery, which
approach had been deserted, and we march into Fairfax
molestation, the enemy having left some 4 hours previous,
started for Fairfax Court House a distance of 3 miles
not proceeded for more than one mile, before we were
and ordered to march back to the station and encamp
night which we did, after shooting several Pigs, and
a few fowls, and 11 secessionist prisoners,
afternoon of the 18th we again took up our line of march towards
and after a very wearisome march, which was done in
time we arrived at Centreville before dark, the Federal troops
Col Tyler had been a skirmishing during the afternoon with the
and retreated, before we came up. We then encamped about a
w Centreville, and remained there until the morning of the
morning of the Battle. On Saturday afternoon an order
be ready to march at 2 A.M, on the 31st our men, and
d Horse of our Brigade, we were up at 12 midnight and prepared
by half past one, we were then kept standing or sitting with
s in hand and accoutrements on, until 6 A.M. when we
ted off in quiet time over a hilly road and through woods for
ce of nearly 8 miles. We were ordered to the rear of the enemy.

so we were between them and manassas, with only one wood
and for a course of three miles, in reaching distance of the
when we arrived on the ground we were out of water, and
we could get on the field, was taken from the run, which
color of water after having rusty iron washed in it, then
to the battle field, and after marching for half a mile on
time. (Throwing off our coats Blankets and Haversacks, we were
in line of battle, in direct range of the enemy's battery,
in good order to the bottom of a slight eminence, when
to ascend the eminence and engage the enemy, which was
good order, finding that the enemy's batteries were telling
effect on our ranks, we were ordered by a right flank move
support Griffins battery which had taken a position on our
order was promptly executed, we got within supporting dist
and remained until the battery was forced to leave, having
silenced from the fire of the enemy, on the right of us
Ricketts Battery supported by the fire howaves, from which
forced to retreat in disorder, seeing their movement and no
the cause, our regiment seemed to be about following, when
Col. J. H. Hobart Ward, and Lt Col Painsworth with others of
officers ordered them to return, which was done in comparative
order, the enemy had now shown themselves for the first time,
Crown of the Hill, our regiment was ordered to fire, which had
deadly effect on the ranks of the enemy, and they fled
wildest confusion, to the wood from which they had pr
emerged, leaving Ricketts battery in our possession, which se
be the principle object of their attack, after that our regi
many other, got mixed with others, and all fought manfully
Black Horse Cavalry dashed out from among the trees, and m

will never return to tell the tale, The 3rd Iowa and 35th Regt were the only Regt at this time on that part of the field, after which ~~attacked~~ detached portions of many might be seen. It was terrible that our forces could not gain the day, and a retreat was ordered, while leaving the field I came up with one of our Captains who was wounded, and assisted him towards getting off the field, another soldier relieved me from my duty in this case, and marched ahead, I had not proceeded far however before I saw a Lt enquiring for some of the 38th Regt I offered to assist him and help him until he was (as I considered) safe, in an ambuscade. We afterwards was taken prisoner by the enemy. The army then was retreating in disorder, the enemy following with their Batteries from which all who did escape done so through the providence of God, not by any foresight of their own.

A ball struck my caps which was the only narrow escape I had, they may have passed, (and no doubt they did) as near, or nearly so as that, but a miss is as good as a mile, we returned to the same ground that we started from on that morning, and after a rest of two hours joined the army who were on their way to Washington, we arrived at the camp from which we started on the 16th on the 22nd in the afternoon, foot sore and weary, with many left struggling on the road, or mixed with others found their way to Washington, word was sent to Cornelia that I had been taken prisoner as many of my own company had not seen me since they had left me assisting the Lt off the field. This ended my first scene in the action of War, A word or line to Cornelia convinced her I was safe, with many wishes for your health and happiness I remain with all yours with love to all

John Haller

Now is my watch coming on,