

Camp at Bolívar Tenn, Sept 23d, 1862

Dear Sister

Not because I had forgotten to answer your letter that I have bin so long but because I have not had the opportunity, and as you requested me to write about my hardships I will give you a history of a few days. last Sunday week we were out at mineral spring 3 or 4 miles from here guarding our hospital after dark an order came to go to camp. it was very warm and we marched very fast. between the heat and dust I could not sleep so after roling about an hour or so I got up made on a fire went to the spring and got a bucket of water warmed it and took a good wash I then got to sleep but we were routed at 3 in the morning with orders to have our tents down and town loaded and be over at the cars, and went to Corinth, Mississippi. here the most of the night was put in on top of the cars, and we got a little sleep towards morning. after Breakfast, we marched 2 1/2 miles to camp got our tents up and beds made and was prepairing supper when we got orders to march in 15 minits with 2 days rashions and our knapsacks leaving tents and those unable to march behind we went to the Memphis and Charleston railroad to the cars and went a few miles got of and stopt all night but it rained the most of the night so I got ubt little sleep. we were up at day brake got some breakfast took the cars and went to a little town called Burnsville here we learnt that they had a fight the day before and the rebels drove our men but only a small forse from Iuka. it rained hard all day. we sheltered in an old car shop we were short of rashions and the way the boys went down on hogs and sheep weren't slow. I had made my little bucket ful of coffee (that I cary on al march) and was about to comence on my dinner when I spied a cow standing a short distance of looking very wishfully throug a fence at me. ----- went out raining as it was and got nearly a tin full of milk so I had what I call down here a feast coffee with plenty of milk in it. Several of the boys followed my example I had to laugh in the evening the men come and led the calf up to the house the cow followed and the woman came out to

milk she was on one side stripping away and the calf on the other pulling and bulling but you might have put all the milk they got in your thimble as it still continued to rain and there was a prospect of staying all night we got new boards and laid a floor in the shop but just before dark we were ordered out to supply the pickets and it rained all night so we got no sleep again. next day we came in about noon it had stopt raining. we were ordered to put our knapsacks in our enfit(?) house and be ready to march at 2 p.m. but did not start till about ____ . we had gone but about a mile outside our pickets when our advance (it was the 7th Illinois Cavalry) met 2 rebel cavalry they halted each other each demanded who they were. after growling at each other a while our men ast if they belonged to the 7th Illinois not by a d_b site but we belong to Armstrongs division both parties fired but none of the balls took effect we loaded and followed on up a sharp skirmish took place between our advance and their pickets but it was soon dark and we took our position in the edge of a woods. Our Colonel was in command he called on Co. F for 12 good men that was not affraid to face anything I was one that was chosen. we were sent to a house that stood in a cornfield some distance in front with orders to let no one go to or from the house and if any made the attempt to take them alive if possible but shoot them if we couldn't, so again I got but little sleep next day a flag of truse was sent in demanding a surrender so we laid ther's untill nearly dark when we mooved forward a couple of miles our company was sent _____ in a line of skermeshers in the rear a crop a corn field with orders to hold the position untill further orders whitch we did not get until morning we went forward to the regt. got our breakfast and fed in and soon expected to be in a fight but we had not gone fer untill word came that Brice as usual had skedaddled. we went on to Iuka got some dinner and marched back to Burnesville got thers after dark we had to draw rashions and one thing or other that kept us up till late and we were routed at 3 in the morning so I got little sleep again. we marched back to Corinth but I fell out on the way eat my dinner laid down and took a knap this was Sunday, and we got to sleep on our beds that night, on Monday I was setting very busily

engaged writing when I heard our bugle I went to see what was to be done and we were ordered back here where we arrived about midnight, but we got a good sleep from that till morning when we marched back in our old camp this makes the third time we have moved to this camp, but I don't think we will stay long here or any other place now till the war is over for I think from the movements now that it is going to be first through and that suits me to a T. Yet we have got the men now and if we have to fight why let's be at it and get home and if we fall in the battle why I feel all is well I don't know why it was but I feared going in that battle more than any before, but still I felt that all would be well. Dear sister if ever I kneaded the prayers of gods people it is now. Remember me in your prayers, and give my love to Brother Thomas(?) and let him to pray for me.

General Rosencrants that was on the south side of Brice(?) a fight with him only it(?) _____ following him up and has had another fight with him since. I think we are going back to Grand Junction I have no surity of it but only judge so from the movement but I must close, I am in good health and spirits and think that the war will not last much longer. Give my love to all enquiring friends and receive the same, your truly Brother in Christ Thomas W. Hopes.

Direct as before and write soon.