



Thomas Montgomery and family papers.

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Head Qrs Co. "B" 3rd Mo. Vols of 42.
Benton Barracks July 23rd 1864.

Dear Mother,

I have the gratification of having again, a few leisure moments, to spend in conversing with you by letter. I received your last letter on the 13th inst, and was pleased you heard from me. Since coming here to enter upon my new duties, I was afraid you might be getting uneasy again about me, because I delayed so long in writing. I was glad to hear that your health was so good. My own health at present thank God is very good.

I have had a busy time, since I last wrote. I have worked from early dawn till after midnight. I would devote day time to, drilling, drawing rations wood, coal & clothing, arming &c. and at night I do all the writing. I have to make a report to Regt H. 2nd every morning of the numbers & whereabouts of the company, and tri-weekly reports, of visits to the sick in the Hospital, and also a report in writing, every time I am officer of the day, which is now about once a week. I have now 18 men in the hospital, most of them will soon be back, for duty. I have had an addition to Co "B" since I last wrote of 35 men, this brings the Company up to the maximum of 98 men, which with S. Moore and myself makes just 100 men.

I have had, last week, in addition to my own Company
Command of a detachment of 111 recruits. These men
I had to provide for with food, quarters & Blankets, and
make out their Muster in rolls (40 each) have them
mustered, and assigned to different Companies to fill them
up. I first drew them in line, and read the Rules and
Articles of war to them, and then marched them up to
Adj. Hqs of Post, and had them mustered by Col Bonnerille
(a Reg. Army Col.) He with the Surgeon & Examined each
man, and 31 were rejected mostly old men and boys.
I then took 83 of these men to fill up my Comp and
gave the balance to other Comp^s. I then had to make
out the discharges of these rejected men & get them signed
deliver them to the men, and send them to the Contraband
Camp free men. I then had my new recruits to arm
and clothe. I now have a full Company clothed and
well armed, and not behind any other Comp in drill.
I didn't expect to receive any Valentines, away down here
in St. Louis, but I was agreeably disappointed. for in addition
to some small ones from anonymous parties, I received
one from no less a personage than the President
of the U.S. through Adj. Gen. Thomas appointing me a
1st Lieut in the 3rd Mo Vols of Col. which pleases me
very much, as I did not care to go East. I then proceeded
to make out my Muster in roll & other papers, and
was mustered in on the 15th inst, in Co. B, 3rd Mo ad.
my rank to date from Jan'y 35th. Capt. Whitford, formerly an
Orderly in Co. B, 9th Minn. was mustered into Co. B as Captain.

He is a nice fine man, He is now in command of Co. C., and will not assume command here for some time.

There is only 3 captain yet in the Regt, the field officers are all here, and the regt. is almost full, Saturday I went down to St. Louis, to put on a little style, I purchased a drap Coat which cost me \$30, a pair of straps \$4, & a sword, belt and sash, of the finest quality for \$30, Putting on these and after leaving the Barbers Shop, I wended my way to my old Co. C.'s 7th Minn. Having my overcoat on I entered the kitchen, but they soon took it off, and I was forced to enter the quarters in full uniform, and then Oh, I was pelted by runners, and the doors thrown wide open, I wished I could read the thoughts of all at that time, Some would stare, perhaps with envy, and others look on in mute astonishment, but I was no longer in Co. K, and felt as unembarrassed and independant as I care for, Ed Valbot was examined last week, and passed for, at least a 1st Lieut, He is awaiting his detail, I am in hope he will be in this regt, as there are room for 4, 1st Lieut yet, I saw the old 7th on drap parade, It is now a small battalion, but those left are good stout soldiers, Many a staring eye was turned on me, as I viewed the parade, I yesterday presented my final statement and other papers and was paid by the paymaster up to the date of muster, on the 15th \$117.78, I have selected a waiter from among the rejected men, named Washington Barton, He ran away from his mistress, and enrolled his name as a soldier, from him I borrowed \$39, which helped me to get my uniform, He is a fine boy, well clothed, and has been waiter in a hotel.

Feb, 22

I day another of my men entrusted me with \$120, for safe
keeping for his family. This I will deposit on interest. Keeping
enough to buy me, pants, shoes hat shirts &c.
Yesterday morning being Sunday we had Regimental inspection
after which, the field officers & Comp. Commandants, visited all
through the quarters & kitchens of the Regt. and I have the
pleasure to say that I was complimented several times
by the Colonel who all decide I had the cleanest and most
orderly quarters & kitchen in the Regt. At 5 P.M. we had dress
parade when I first made my military debut with full
uniform. Several from the city were up to look at us.
The weather now is mild and beautiful. Last week we
had some bitter cold weather. I purpose going down
to the city next Sunday, as Bishop Baker is expected to
preach. It is a pleasant trip to start from here on the Great
Car and ride down 4 or 5 miles through this great city
for 10 cents. Hester, as you are aware is now in command
of this Dept. I could fill an interesting letter, with scenes
and tales of these darkies. They have meeting every night
and sing. I had instead of receiving orders, to give orders
but he was mistaken for I receive ten times more orders
now than I ever did, but this to me is no pain, for that
is the first duty of a soldier. I endeavor to do my duty in
every particular, and obey with alacrity and good faith every
lawful command of my superiors and I require the same
of those under me. This military machine is very complicated
and I don't wonder often that Horner got involved in debt for
want of watching and directing too closely. The hundreds of papers
must be not only filled out properly and duly signed, but also sent
to the authorities at the proper time. I think so far I am on the
safe side. I am desirous of our Capt. coming and assuming the
responsibility. I am glad I am not Capt. yet a while till I learn
a little more. It pleases me to have my own office where I can sit
and read & write in peace. I have to write lot of letters for the men.
I endeavor to read my Bible and do my duty as a Christian more than ever.
I feel that I have your prayers, and surely I have need of them.