

On board Steamer Ariel Off
Fortress Monroe, Oct. 25th 1861
Friday morning

Dear Father,

You will see that we have
not left up to present time - Last night
it was generally understood that we should
leave this morning - But this morning came
and with it came orders for this Brigade
to be ready to disembark at 9 o'clock A.M.

Yesterday I was over to the Rip-Ropes -
It is a spot of not many acres and nothing
visible but granite. I suppose that you are
aware that there was once a fort there. Part
of it still remains and there are some very
heavy guns there. I saw the celebrated
Sawyer gun which you will remember, did
such execution on the Rebel works at Sumner's
Point. One of the Lieutenants in our Regt. was
at Sumner's Point in the Rebel Army at the time
the first shot went up a gang way of plank -

I saw about twenty Rebel prisoners who
were taken with rising too others at Hatteras Inlet.
One of them was reading a book which

belonged to the Library. I judged by his looks and his delicate hands that he had never done any work. He told me that he and all the others taken at the time were natives of North Carolina. He was dressed in a neat grey suit which I judged had been furnished to him since he was taken. Some had on their uniforms they were taken in - The pants were all I saw they were dark with a black stripe down the seam. Every company had their own uniform he told me. I know that when I was in Tenn. the companies furnished their own uniforms expecting the Confederate government to pay for them - I asked him if he thought he was fighting in a good cause - He made no reply and I changed the subject - In the afternoon I went ashore and went into the Fort. It is a mile and a quarter in circumference and contains 75 acres. The wall is 60 ft thick and is surrounded by a deep ditch from 40 to 100 ft. in width. The wall is built in a zig-zag form making a great many angles and leaving every part of the ditch exposed to a lengthwise fire from the port-holes if they should ever ~~be~~ attempt to cross them in boats or otherwise.

he made - The number of guns wounded I did not ascertain but it is great. The Fort is impregnable - Unless starved out - All the water they use comes from 13 altitudes they are boring for water inside the walls now.

A flag of truce came off from Norfolk a day or two after we got here - They brought off one prisoner - They were instructed not to come on that errand again and that the flag of truce would not be respected.

I do not know what our orders of this morning mean - Some think that they are fighting on the line of the Potomac {and there is a report to that effect} and that we are going to make a diversion here to keep the rebels in this quarter busy, while others think that we are to go to land to make a point to deceive the rebels as to the object of the expedition - And some think that Gen. Vile is to take command of Forts Monroe But it is by no means certain that we shall land here at all - We had orders to be in readiness at 9 o'clock this morning - We are in readiness but have not gone yet - though it must be 12 - Our boys are all well - and the Regt. is very healthy there being but

few in the hospital - The men growl
about their fare though they get as good as
I expected to get when I enlisted - They have
a pound of hard bread to each man a day and
it is the best hard bread I ever saw - A great
many talk of starving but when they have
thrown it away because they do not like
it so well as beef - They say they do not wish
to live any better than they did when ashore
but they growled just as bad then as they do
now - They have not had a thing to do
since we came aboard but they thought
it very hard because 40 of the regt. were
detached to shovel a little coal -

The weather is good not very hot
nor very cold. ————

I have enjoyed myself well since
I left home - We have not seen any
very hard times yet but I expect
we shall soon -

We have not heard from Annapolis since we left

Write to

E. J.