

Near Fredericksburg, Va. Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 1862

My Dear Father and Mother

As I have a few moments to spare I will try and write you a letter I wrote you a note yesterday, just to let you know that I was alive for I knew that you would feel anxious about me after the battle. I suppose that you have heard from William some time before this if you have not you need not feel anxious about him for there was not a man killed in the 6<sup>th</sup> Me. nor in the 1<sup>st</sup> Me Cavalry tho' we were in a tough place I will tell you how it was, we were in camp near Aquia Creek so Old Abe came from Washington to see Burnside and he told him to move his army forward, and he would see that it was

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society  
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Date: Dec. 19, 1862

Description: Pvt. John Sheahan on Battle of Fredericksburg

well supplied with provisions and other  
necessaries, that was enough Abe had  
only to say that he wished the army  
to advance and Burnside was ready, in  
two days after the president left Burnside his  
army was on the move thousands upon thousands  
passed by our encampment before we received  
orders but at last orders came for  
us to move too, So we started on our march  
tuesday that night we encamped about five  
miles from Books Station on the side  
of a hill, here you might have  
seen what the soldier has to endure  
the ground was all covered with snow  
but finally we got a fire to going and  
boiled our coffee for supper which con-  
sisted of hard-bread and pork, after we  
finished our supper each one scraped away  
the snow from a place to lay down  
upon, tho the night was quite cold  
I never slept better in my life  
for I was exceedingly tired after riding  
so long, The next day we remained

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here; that was wednesday, Thursday morning before  
day break. Our folks commenced to shell  
Fredericksburg, we marched all that day  
and at night camped on the banks of the  
Rappahannock, here was the most of our  
army I do wish that you could have seen  
them the banks of the river was all alive with  
men 't was a grand sight to behold just  
as the sun was sinking beneath the western  
hills I was standing on a hill where I  
had a good view of the whole affair our  
men were laying the pontoon bridge all  
this time at last it was finished and such  
a roar as went up from the whole army  
you never heard, and then such a rush as  
there was for the bridge, many a brave boy  
crossed that bridge never to return for  
the next day the battle commenced, our  
regiment crossed on the morning of the  
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came thick and fast. our regiment was  
drawn up in line of battle to support  
a battery which was playing on them in  
splendid style. They saw us standing  
behind the guns and so they put  
the shells at us one struck within  
ten paces of our company if it had  
burst it would have killed a dozen  
or more. That night we stayed on the  
battle field till about eleven o'clock then we  
were ordered down the river to relieve another  
regiment which was on picket. our pickets  
stood on one side of the river and the rebs  
on the other. one of the rebs came  
down to the river near where I was a  
hollared to the man just above me and  
asked him over to take breakfast with  
him and bring over some coffee. we have  
been relieved from picket and are now  
encamped in an oak grove some think  
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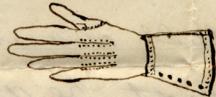
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the next he died, his name was  
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I must close now send  
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contain the accounts of the  
battle if you do them up small  
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they will reach me do the gloves  
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