



Camp near Bell Plain Va
Jan 29th 1863

My Dear father
I received your letter
day before yesterday and I was
very glad to hear from you
I do not write so often now
as I did, and for that reason
you do not get so many letters
if you think that I had better
write twice a week and send
me stamps I will but it dont
hardly pay. The regiment is out
on picket but I was left in
camp for I was chafed so that
I could not ride and I am
not sorry that I was for it
commenced to rain the morning
that they left and it has rained
and snowed ever since. I suppose
that you are well aware
before this that Burnside
tryed to cross the river again
but failed. it rained and the mud
became so deep that he had hard
work to get back into camp
The artillary got stuck in the
mud so that twelve horses

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by the Maine Historical Society (Local code: Coll. 184 Box 1-3)

Date: Jan. 29, 1863

Description: Letter from John Parris Sheahan to his father about his service and activities in the Union Army, the mud in Virginia, and the horrors of war.

could not haul one six
pounder and that you heard
is not a very heavy gun
you have no idea how the
mud is in the roads of
Virginia I saw two horses which
had fallen down and they were
some covered with the mud in
some places it is over my
head I saw one field half
as large as Lincoln's so deep
with mud that a horse could
not wade through it I tried
to but had to give it up my horse
sunk so far into it. I know
they have superceded Burnside because
he did not go across the river. I
am just I am sick and discouraged
and wish that the war would end
it was once a war for union
but that is past it is now a war
for office and power do you not
think so? I think you must. but thank
God "who doeth all things well" There
is soon to be a change in this
matter at the first of may next about
four hundred thousand of our great
army are going home the nine months
men and two years men and what
do you think we can do with
an army of about 220,000 against
the rebels? we have got to do
something and that soon or our
country is lost for ever. They
must do one of two things compromise
or acknowledge the independence
of the south When I sit down and
think of these things I tremble
yes I tremble for my country
thank God I have done all
I could for the preservation of
the union you have done all
you could you gave cheerfully
your two oldest sons that
if occasion required they might
die in defence of this once great
republic. many who were far
better able did not do so much
as you have done and they are
not such ones as you are, are to blame
for our poor success, but let
us even at this dark hour in our
countries history hope for the best
I got the Bangor papers that you
sent me where you wrote

I will write again soon
I have seen William since they
came back

John Sheahan

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a little over a months pay
so as to make my time equal
with the old soldiers when
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William told me to keep the
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who is going home to recruit
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