

From Richard M. Hulse to Parents

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Head Quarters Co[.] H 2 Cavalry MSM

Dallas MO

May 7 1864

Dear Parents

It is with feelings of satisfaction that I sit down to night to write a few lines, informing you that I am well and have just completed my arrangements here that relieves my mind of a great burthen. when I last wrote you I was in a very dangerous position, all thought and commented freely upon it that I would be taken in, by the Rebles in less than five weeks. I went to work with my little band of fifty-eight men and to day have got everything fixed secure so that I could defend myself against a thousand.

I have taken the Court House which is a substantial Brick Building have the windows & doors barricaded with port holes. Also we have built a large fortification in the rear for our horses so that I feel secure and can now lie down & sleep with perfect safety, a feeling that I have not Enjoied for a long time. few who are not simerly [similarly] placed can realise the responsibility even of a Capt[.] in the service of the Government[,] setting aside the danger of self, the horrors of a Southern prison[,] the toilsom journey, the [galling?] tortures of the Ignorant guards placed over you. All this is nothing compared to the disgrace of being [castuised?] [chastised] or dismissed for Cowardice or incompetency[.] But you know me to well to think for a moment that either of these will ever be imputed to me. Caution is no sign of a coward, and I would rather work my men six months on fortifications to protect them from the Enemy than to be taken again prisoner. A burned Child dreads the fire & so with Co[.] H[.] they once have tasted the bitter fruit of Rebledom & do not intend trying a second doce without a Struggle.

I have but little to write that would interest you from this [wooden?] country. I might say that this is the most destitute country I ever saw for anything to Eat[.] when I go to my meal & see the hard & scanty fare I often think of home, & how glad I would be to have a plate of Orange Co[.] [County] Butter to spread on my corn bread[.]

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our fare is horrible[.] there is nothing in the country to eat[.] there are thousands suffering for the necessaries of life[.] Luxuries has longe been only in imagination with them. it is almost impossible for many to get even meat & corn bread & there are many farmers cannot get corn to plant[.] cattle & hogs have died during the past winter by thousands.

I received a letter last week from Mary & also one from Sister Harriet & Sister Mary. Mary & the children were all well[.] I wrote for [Jim?] to come down & see me[.] it is so lonesome out there & he has longe been wanting to come down so I gave my consent[.] I have got him a very nice little pony to ride if he comes.

I have two good horses myself[.] one is the best in the country & the fastest. I would not take five hundred dollars for him. I sold a very fine grey horse last month for one hundred & fifty dollars[.] he was a noble horse[.] so kind and gentle but such a hard rider that he did not suit me[.] I often wished you had him, he was almost a match for the one I lost at Chalk Bluff last April a year ago.

One of my men died last month of Pneumonia[.] I bought his horse of his mother. I wrote to her of his death. Oh it is a painful duty to inform a parent of the death of a son of whom you have had charge for two years & over. I have had several trials of it & I hope it may never occur again. it was a sad & mournful spectacle to see two of my best men wrapped in their Blankets at Chalk Bluff & laid in their final resting place. that was a case of necessity[.] they were killed in battle & could not be Expected they should receive the burial rites[.] But here this one died of disease & I had a respectable coffin made & expected to have a funeral, but no there was not a preacher within twenty miles, & there in the burying ground in light of a church that stands as a monument of what it once was[.] the glass all broken out & riddled with bullet holes[.] Evidence of some former battle. we buried him with honors of war, & as I stood by & thought of the desolation this war was making I brushed away the falling tear & left wondering whose turn next. I have made this letter much longer than I expected when I commenced.
remember me to all & my love to you both
R.M. Hulse