

Historical Notes to accompany letter dated:

07/27/62: 033

Historical Notes

Following the intense fighting that occurred during the *Seven Days Battle*, the Union army had strategically relocated and encamped at Harrison's Landing on the York river. It was a time for both sides to rest, recuperate, and get ready for the next battle. The Confederates following the *Battle of Malvern Hill* realized the futility of further attacks on the Federals and fell back to Richmond. Both sides were exhausted from the intense engagement and needed time to mend, heal, and reorganize their armies.

Undoubtedly due to its "skirmisher" role and assignment to Porter's division, the 1st Regiment of Berdans suffered significant losses during the seven days of battle. In the Battles of *Gaines Mill*, *Glendale*, and *Malvern Hill* records indicate there were at least 15 dead, 17 wounded, and 4 missing.

In addition to battlefield deaths, a significant number of Civil War combatants died of disease, infection, and other illnesses. Union and Confederate army health records indicate that there were actually more deaths from sickness and disease than from the enemy's weapons. Confederate and Union soldiers were twice as likely to die from disease as from combat death. As Hardaway has indicated in past, and will again in future letters, disease and sickness were constant factors within his company and regiment. His own bouts with kidney infections, chronic cough, and dysentery are testament to the risks soldiers encountered within their own friendly camps.

Disease and sickness were most dangerous in a soldier's first months in camp. Contagious diseases, including measles, mumps, and tuberculosis attacked everyone but particularly those without prior exposure. If a soldier survived this set of initial camp diseases, he could anticipate that as he was worn down by hard marches, poor food, and battlefield stresses other diseases and contagion would appear: typhoid, dysentery/diarrhea, and pneumonia. During summer months in the South, Union soldiers also battled mosquito born diseases including malaria. Venereal diseases were common as well.

Hardaway's poignant comments regarding camp sickness, death, and Episcopalian burial rites confirm, not only his membership in New Berlin's St. Andrews Episcopal parish, but more importantly, the unhealthy reality of the Union army's conditions in the summer of 1862. The deteriorating health of Berdan's Regiments, as well as the entire Federal army encamped at Harrison's Landing, amid the heat, humidity, swamps, and mosquitoes of the Virginia peninsula, soon caused the Lincoln administration to order the withdrawal of McClellan's army and a relocation nearer Washington, D.C.