

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

10/28/62: 046

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Cyrus Hardaway's letter home dated October 28, 1862 gave no indication that the George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac was a well supplied, currently paid, and "ready to fight" force presumed by President Lincoln. Reduced to "foraging" supply wagons for food and fun, many of Hardaway's companions and fellow Berdan's Sharpshooters were without clothing, blankets, and likely to desert if an active campaign ensued.

Federal forces near Sharpsburg, including Berdan's Regiments, broke camp and moved off during the night of October 30, 1862 marching along the Potomac. The following day, Hardaway crossed the Potomac near Harper's Ferry by pontoon bridge and camped three miles south of Hillsborough, Virginia. On November 2 the regiments marched to Snicker's Gap in the Blue Ridge mountains. During that night, the Sharpshooters were ordered to climb the mountain as a scouting party and determine the location of the enemy. Skirmishing occurred during this movement at Snicker's Gap as both armies jockeyed for position. Over the next several days, Berdan's regiments left Snickersville and arrived at Warrenton, Virginia where they remained for a week.

In response to McClellan's slow, ponderous, and careful southward movements, Lee was able to interpose General James Longstreet's army between Richmond and the Army of the Potomac. Additionally, Lee remained in the Shenandoah on McClellan's flank. Instead of a clear road to Richmond, after a disoriented and retreating enemy, Lincoln was exasperated at the failure of McClellan to quickly cross the Potomac and get between Lee and Richmond. Lincoln wanted the larger Army of the Potomac to force Lee to engage in a "fight to the finish."

On November 7, 1862 Major General George B. McClellan was relieved as Commander of the Army of the Potomac and replaced by General Ambrose Burnside. Five days later, General "Fighting Joe" Joseph Hooker, replaced General Porter as Commander of the V Corp. Porter was considered a friend and protege of McClellan. Lincoln's patience had been exhausted. Despite his "successes" at the *Seven Days Battle* and at *Antietam*, McClellan's inexcusable failure to rapidly move the Army of the Potomac upon the retreating Lee allowed the Confederates to block a Federal advance upon Richmond