

*Historical Notes* to accompany letter dated:

4/11/63: 074

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Cyrus Hardaway's letter home dated April 11, 1863 expressed his continued frustration with the Army of the Potomac's military bureaucracy. After nearly 18 months as a member of the an elite special tactics regiment, Berdan's Sharpshooter Regiment, Hardaway had finally obtained a commission for him as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 114th New York State Volunteer Infantry. Hardaway applied for a transfer to that regiment, but the transfer process was delayed for an inordinate time period.

This letter is among the shortest written by Hardaway to his mother at home in Pittsfield/New Berlin during his entire 1862-1865 military service. Its brevity might be explained for many reasons but not among those reasons would be an active military campaign.

Berdan's Sharpshooters and the Army of the Potomac were busy in preparations for the forthcoming spring campaigns. General Joseph Hooker had done miracles in restoring the Army of the Potomac from the debacle at *Fredericksburg* and the frustrations of the "Mud March." To the surprise of those who knew Hooker, he had shown remarkable skill in improving morale within the army. Good food, new supplies, and clean camps reestablished the Army of the Potomac as a worthy force compared to Lee's Army of Northern Virginia camped across the Rappahannock River near Fredericksburg, Virginia.

President Lincoln visited Hooker and "his" army in early April 1863. Leaving Washington on April 4th, Lincoln traveled to Fredericksburg where he met with the generals of the Army of the Potomac. After conferring with Hooker, Lincoln's notes indicate that "our prime object is the enemies (*sic*) army in front of us, and is not with, or about, Richmond." On April 10th Lincoln reviewed troops at Falmouth, and from Hardaway's letter it appears the President's review included Berdan's Sharpshooter Regiments. Lincoln left later that day and returned to Washington by way of Acquia Creek. On April 12, 1863 Hooker wrote Lincoln and advised the President that he intended to cross the Rappahannock River and outflank Lee and the Confederate army. Hooker's first campaign of the spring of 1863 would culminate in the *Battle of Chancellorville*.