

Camp 159th N.Y.S.Vols.
Alexandria La April 17th 64

Dear Father

Yours of March 26th came to hand on the 14th inst. & of Apl 2d this morning. I was glad to hear of your continued good health at home & am happy to say I am also in good condition.

Since my last we have had some tall fighting in this Department. Our regiment was not in the engagement. It appears the army was marching along towards Mansfield, the cavalry being in advance followed by the infantry & artillery, when the rebs. in force made a rush on us driving the army back some 35 miles capturing 100 wagons & 22 pieces of artillery, of which four were retaken. Our boys made a gallant resistance but the rebs. were too much for them. On the second day at 20 minutes past 5 P.M. the fight was renewed. Our army was formed in three lines, the second line kneeling & the thrice standing. The rebs. came down with a yell when the first line broke & fled. The second stood firm 'til the rebs. arrived within about 30 yards when they poured in a volley & charging the rebs. with a cheer the rebs. broke & ran. They were followed up some four miles when the order to retreat was given, & our army fell back to Grand Ecore (about six miles above Natchitoches) where they now are. This is the story as I have it from one of our wounded & I guess it is pretty nearly correct.

All of our Division except our regiment went to the front on the 14th. We were left to take care of the town & moved inside the town the same day the troops left. The next day back came the Division again, for what reason nobody knows. We are engaged in throwing up breastworks around our camp as a raid is anticipated.

I forgot to say that the rebels have lost three general officers killed – Mouton, Sibley & Green. This is a terrible blow to them as they were three of the best Generals they had on this side of the river.

There has been continual skirmishing since the battle & I think we will have another engagement before long.

We feel perfectly safe here as the streets are all barricaded & the enemy would have a hard time getting in. The boats are constantly fired on as they pass up the river. One of them, the "Black Hawk," is fairly riddled with bullets.

There is no further news of interest.

I remain
Your Affectionate Son
Frank.

Love to all the folks