

CW/VFM-145: Charles Warner Letters Collection

This collection of Civil War letters sent by ‘Charlie’ Warner, 2nd Lieutenant of Company F. in the 145th Regiment New York State Volunteers. He enlisted as a 2nd Lieutenant in August of 1862 and was mustered out with the unit in January 6th of 1864.

Charlie’s letters to his mother and father collected here exemplify not only the deep connection and power of letter writing during the American Civil War, but also discuss various themes connected with the life of a soldier during the conflict.

A great example of the importance of correspondence to soldiers is expressed in a letter dated for October 14th, 1862, Charlie starts a letter to his mother with,

“I have just received your letter, the first I have received for the last month, and can assure you I was very happy to hear from somebody.”

Frustrations, also, are expressed within the contexts of these letters. In a letter written on November 2, 1862, Charlie wrote that

“Military Life is a grand farce – as one soon finds out – as for instance – if a Colonel or any of his Superiors conceive a dislike or jealousy against their inferiors – they have only to order them before a board...of examination, and they are never known to come forth from this modern inquisition unscathed.”

Not long after, on November 9, 1862, Charlie expresses further his dissatisfaction with his officers, among who is Colonel Allen. Allen, commander and raiser of the 145th NY Regiment, was arrested shortly before this dated letter, leaving the Lieutenant Colonel in command. Charlie expects mutiny against the unpopular Lt. Col., and also an upcoming battle. He writes that

“...curse me if the Lt. Colonel is not shot. The battle field is a favorite place to get rid of hated officers; and I hope for one more. I presume you [mother] know that Col. Miles who surrendered at Harpers’s Ferry was shot by his men. many other instances I can note.”

(Reports of men shooting their officers during the heat of battle were common, and in fact, the 145th New York was not the only regiment to do so. For more on this subject, see Webb Garrison's book, *Friendly Fire in the Civil War*, available at the Musselman Library at Gettysburg College.) Nearly two months after Charlie wrote that the Lt. Col. had been shot. On January 16th, 1863, Charlie wrote:

"The Lieut. Col. has sent for his resignation...there is nothing to be feared from him now. That shot that he received frightened all the spunk out of him. There has been a number of persons tried for shooting him still no one can be found guilty, and I think it will be some time before they will find out. I am well satisfied who did it...I only wished that the ball had come from a musket instead of a pistol."

Original letters located in the University of Maine Library:
<http://www.library.umaine.edu/speccoll/FindingAids/Bean.htm>

History of the 145th New York 1pp.

Keywords: Union – East – New York – 145th; Letters; Army – Infantry; Soldiers – Commissioned Officers

Location: Civil War Vertical File Manuscripts, Special Collections & College Archives, Musselman Library at Gettysburg College.

See also: [Civil War Sources in Special Collections](#)