

Ten Years in the Ranks U. S. Army

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BY

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NEW YORK
THE STIRLING PRESS
1914

PART I.

ENLISTMENT AND SERVICE ON GOVERNOR'S ISLAND, NEW YORK HARBOR, IN 1854.

ON March thirty-first, 1854, with the consent of my widowed mother, I joined the United States Army. I enlisted for a period of five years, as a musician in the general service, at the recruiting office, at No. 115 Cedar Street, New York City. My age was twelve years and nine months. I was of slender build, but in good health and passed the medical examination. After being sworn in at a notary's office in Nassau Street, I was conducted by the recruiting sergeant to the Governor's Island boat landing at the Battery; there he placed me in charge of Sergeant John Brown, cockswain of the eight-oared barge manned by soldiers from the Island. As this was then the only way for passengers to reach the Island, I had to wait a long time for the next trip of the barge, and it was late in the afternoon when we started.

There were but few passengers besides myself, a woman, a civilian or two and a few soldiers returning from "pass," more or less hilarious. After a struggle with the swift currents of the East River and considerable pitching and tossing, we landed at the Island dock near the Guard House, where I was taken in charge by a corporal of the guard who conducted me to the South Battery on the east side of the Island opposite Brooklyn, where the boys learning music were in quarters. We reported to Sergeant Hanke, who was in charge of all the non-commissioned officers and music boys in that battery.

Sergeant Hanke, after looking me over, asked whether I desired to learn to be a drummer or a fifer. When I expressed a preference for the former, he made some remarks about my

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slim and very youthful appearance, and advised me to think it over for a day or two. He called for Corporal Butler, who conducted me to Room No. 1 on the ground floor, to the south of the sally-port, of which he had charge.

On my entrance into the room there arose a cry of "Fresh fish" from the boys who were present. They surrounded me, asked my name, where I lived and many other questions and demanded to know whether I had any money or tobacco, taking no pains to hide their disappointment when I confessed that I had neither. The corporal, who had left the room, fortunately returned soon and relieved my embarrassing position. He assigned me to "bunk" with the only boy in the room who had no bedfellow or "bunkie."

The corporal's presence diverted the boys' attention from me for a while and gave me time to examine my surroundings. I found myself in a room with two windows that overlooked the parade ground and one facing inward towards the interior of South Battery. There were six iron double bedsteads in the room and a single bedstead for the corporal in a corner next to a window. The double bedsteads were made so that one-half could be folded up over the other half when not in use. This in a measure relieved during the day the very crowded condition at night when all the beds were down. The beds consisted of a bedsack stuffed with straw, which was rolled up in the day time, and a pair of blankets, neatly folded, laid on top. There were no sheets nor pillows for the boys—the corporal was the only one who enjoyed these luxuries, and he had provided them himself. The boys slept on the bedticks and covered themselves with their blankets when it was cold, or used one of the blankets to lie on when it was warm enough, folding up a jacket or some other piece of clothing as a substitute for a pillow.

A wide shelf around the room above the beds provided space for knapsacks, extra shoes, drums, fifes, and other objects, and on hooks under the shelf were hung the overcoats. There was a coal fire burning in the grate. A few wooden

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benches and a chair for the corporal in charge; this, with a water pail and a tin cup on a shelf behind the door, completed the furniture of the room.

After a while I heard a drum beat, which was the first call for "retreat." Ten minutes later, the "assembly" sounded to form ranks on the parade outside of the sally-port. The boys formed in two ranks, those who were proficient with their drums and fifes on the right. The command, "parade rest," was given by one of the sergeants, and the "retreat" played by the musicians as prescribed in the regulations. Then came the command, "Attention," and a roll call, at which each boy present answered, "Here." Some special orders were read and then at the command, "Break ranks, march," the boys rushed back to their quarters, to deposit their instruments and adjourn to the mess room in the basement for supper.

I was directed to follow, and found the mess room large enough to hold the entire company of boys at one sitting. There were long pine tables and benches without backs, all scrubbed clean. At each boy's place was a thin plate, containing a small portion of stewed dried apples, a large stone china bowl filled with black coffee (sweetened but without milk) and a slice of bread about four ounces in weight. There were iron spoons, knives and forks, and a few dishes on the table containing pepper and salt.

I asked one of the boys if they had the same kind of a supper every day, and was informed that sometimes they got molasses in place of the dried apples. As the boys finished their meager supper they left the mess room without any formality and returned to their quarters or went out to have a smoke in some place unobserved. I went back to my quarters and sat on a bench, chatting with some of the boys, who told me many things about their daily duties and the treatment they received. They all wished to leave the Island, and hoped to be sent soon to join a regiment somewhere. Some were reading books by the feeble tallow candle light, some

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played checkers on home-made checker boards, or amused themselves with other games.

Thus passed the evening until nine o'clock when the call for "Tattoo" sounded. There was considerably more music than at "Retreat," otherwise it was the same. There was another roll call and dismissal to quarters, where the beds were let down and the blankets spread. With a little skylarking, the boys undressed and lay down. The orderly covered the fire in the grate with ashes, "Taps" were sounded by the drummer detailed for that purpose, lights were extinguished, and all were supposed to be silent. But there was whispering and smothered laughing, which ceased only after some vigorous language and threats of reporting by the corporal.

I lay down alongside of my strange bedfellow, who kindly shared his blanket with me, my head pillowed on my jacket. There was a glimmering light from the fireplace, by which I could make out the forms of my companions and that of the corporal stretched out on his more comfortable bed in the corner. Soon all seemed to be asleep except myself. I remained awake a long time, thinking of the circumstances that had brought me here, the strange company I was sharing, and wondering what my future would be. At last, weary with the day's unusual experiences and excitements, I also fell asleep. And thus ended my first day as a soldier in the United States Army.

I was awakened next morning at daylight by a drummer beating the first call for "Reveille," and the corporal's voice shouting, "Get up! you lazy fellows," to some who were slow to respond. The boys, who slept in their underclothing, hastily put on their pants, stockings and shoes. Then each grabbed a tin wash basin from its hook in the hall, went out of doors to a pump and filled the basin, which he carried into the hall, and, placing it on a bench, performed his ablutions, drying himself on a roller towel. In the warm season this performance took place out of doors. It was a cold, raw morn-

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ing, and it made me shiver as I followed the others outside ; but I concealed my distress to avoid being laughed at.

We finished dressing, and soon heard the drum beat the "Assembly," and the corporal's call to "Turn out and fall in." Ranks were formed, as at "Retreat" and "Tattoo," and the roll was called. The fifers and drummers played the "Reveille," which was a much longer performance than either "Retreat" or "Tattoo." It consisted of perhaps a half dozen tunes, commencing with a piece called "Three Camps," then "Slow Scotch," "Austrian," "Dutch," "Quick Scotch," "Hessian," etc. Some of these pieces were played in slow time and others in quick time; they and the regular calls were the same as were used at the time of the American Revolution and had never been materially changed since.

Immediately after we were dismissed, we went to breakfast which consisted of a small piece of boiled salt pork—cold—a piece of bread and a large bowl of black coffee. There was also some grease in a dish, saved from the boiling of the pork, which some of the boys spread on their bread as a substitute for butter, seasoning it with pepper and salt.

Soon after breakfast "Doctor's Call" sounded, and those who felt unwell were conducted to the hospital to be examined by the surgeon. The boys now became busy making up their beds, cleaning their shoes, brushing their clothes and polishing their brass buttons with the aid of a brush and what was called a "button stick." Some pipe-clayed or chalked the white braid on their jackets. The room orderly, who was changed daily, swept the floor, replenished the fire and everything in the room was put in order for the daily inspection made by Sergeant Hanke.

At eight o'clock came the call to "fall in" for guard mounting, ranks were formed and after a critical inspection as to cleanliness by the sergeant, the company marched to the main parade ground in the center of the Island. About the same time we heard a band playing as it left the main garrison followed by the guard detail for the day. The lines were

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formed, the adjutant and the officer of the day took their places. Then the arms, accoutrements and clothing were inspected. An orderly for the commanding officer was selected from the guard and one from the boys for the adjutant.

The entire interesting ceremony of the Guard Mount was performed according to regulation, the band playing at intervals. The guard passed in review, marched off to their station and relieved the old guard. The boys were marched back to the South Battery where, shortly after their arrival, a call for "School" sounded at nine o'clock. As I was in citizen's clothing I did not have to take part in any formation of ranks. I was simply a spectator until I was uniformed.

At eleven o'clock school was over and practice on the fife and drum continued until noon. The drummers, twenty-five or more in number, went outside and made a great racket under the east wall of the South Battery, which could be heard on the other side of Butter Milk Channel in Brooklyn. They were in charge of their instructor, Sergeant Moore, who was called the drum major and had Corporal Butler as an assistant. I watched the boys practicing and noted how difficult it seemed to be for some to hold the drum-sticks properly and beat the first exercise, called "Mammy-Daddy," without hitting the rim of the drum as often as the drum-head, which would bring down upon them a reprimand from the instructor, or in some cases a rap across the knuckles for some persistently awkward boy. When I took note of the exceedingly large and heavy drums used in the service at that time, which the drummers were obliged to carry, I resolved to become a fifer, as I considered it more genteel and a step towards acquiring some knowledge of music.

While the drummers were practicing outside of the Battery, Sergeant Hanke, the fife-major, and a corporal were instructing an equal number of fifers in the school room that was filled with a shrill din as each tried to play a different tune.

At noon musical instruction ceased, and we went to the mess room for dinner. The menu consisted of a bowl of rice

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soup containing some desiccated vegetables, a small piece of boiled beef and the usual piece of bread. I was told that about three times a week there was bean soup served with boiled salt pork or bacon and, at rare intervals, one or two boiled potatoes.

After dinner there was nothing to do until two o'clock when school opened again for two hours. At four o'clock in the afternoon drill commenced. The boys were instructed in what was called the "School of the Soldier"—facing, marching, etc. They drilled singly at first, then in squads and finally by company according to Scott's Tactics, always without arms. Drill was over at five o'clock when there was a rest until "Retreat." This was the daily routine of duties, except on Saturdays, when they ceased at noon.

On Saturday afternoons some of the boys were detailed in turn to scrub and holy-stone the floor of our quarters and the benches, which consumed some hours. The remainder of the boys were free to do as they pleased.

On Sundays we attended guard mounting at eight in the morning and at ten-thirty we marched in a body to the Episcopal Chapel, a short distance from our quarters. The chapel was a frame structure, seating about two hundred besides the music boys. The services were attended by some of the officers and their families, soldiers' wives and their children and such of the soldiers and recruits as wished to attend. There was no regular post chaplain; I do not think there were any in the army at this time. A minister from New York or Brooklyn conducted the services. I do not remember whether any collections were taken up—if there were I am sure it was fruitless so far as the boys were concerned, unless the Sunday immediately succeeded a pay day.

The interior of the chapel was very plain, only one aisle had cushioned seats and they were not for our use. There was a small organ and a few wooden tablets were hung on the walls. One of them was much larger than the others. It commemorated the wreck of the steamer *San Francisco*, bound

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for California, and the drowning of a number of soldiers and music boys, whose names were on the tablet. This always interested me, and if the sermon was dull or I felt sleepy, I would read it over and over again until I could repeat all the names by heart.

On Sunday afternoon we were free to roam about the island as we pleased, until about sun-down when, if the weather permitted, we had "dress parade" on the main parade ground. This was a more elaborate ceremony than guard mounting. It was always interesting to me and I liked to attend it. The post band turned out and all the armed soldiers on the island were present as well as our "Field Music Battalion." We made a fine show, and sometimes we had a few spectators who came from the city in row boats. Once in every two months we had muster and general inspection by the commanding officer of the post, who called the roll and looked over the arms, accoutrements, clothing and quarters. For this inspection we were obliged to appear on parade in full marching order, our knapsacks packed and bulging with our spare clothing. Muster was a preliminary to pay day, an event always welcomed.

On my second day on the island I was taken to the quartermaster's store house to draw the first installment of my yearly clothing allowance. There were issued to me, one blanket, one great coat, two fatigue jackets, two pairs of trousers, two pairs of white flannel shirts, two pairs of Canton flannel drawers, two pairs of woolen stockings, two pairs of shoes, one forage cap and one leather stock, also a knapsack, a haversack and a canteen.

The blanket was coarse and heavy; it weighed five pounds and measured seven by five and a half feet. It was grayish brown in color and had "U. S." in four inch black letters worked in the centre. The overcoat as well as the trousers and jacket, were of coarse sky-blue cloth. The overcoat was single breasted and had a cape reaching down to the elbows; there was a row of brass buttons on the breast and on the

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cape and some more on the coat tails. The jacket came to the hips, had a standing collar, an inside breast pocket, a row of brass buttons down the front and a few on the sleeves. The shoes were coarse looking with broad toes and heels and leather thongs, but they were good serviceable marching shoes. The trousers were plain without stripes and had two pockets. There were no waistcoats issued. The forage or fatigue cap was a heavy, clumsy looking affair, made of thick dark blue cloth. It had a large overhanging crown with a welt, a chin-strap with a brass button on each side and a leather visor.

The most objectionable part of the whole uniform was the leather stock or "dog collar," as we called it, intended to serve as a cravat and keep the soldier's chin elevated. It was a strip of stiff black shoe leather about two and one-half inches high and arranged to fasten at the back of the neck with a leather thong. It was torture to wear it in hot weather, but we found means to modify the annoyance by reducing the height of the stock and shaving down the thickness of the leather until it became soft and pliable.

As the soldiers' clothing was made up in men's sizes only, there were none to fit the boys. I believe there were about six different sizes in shoes and three or four in clothing. The smallest size in clothing, No. 1, was issued to me, and I was sent to the post tailor. He took my measure and altered the great coat, jackets and trousers. He also put some white braid on the collar and sleeves of one of my jackets. The cost of these alterations were deducted from my first pay due. It was moderate enough, for the tailor's price as well as those of the laundress and the sutler were fixed by the Post Council of Administration. With the shirts and drawers I was obliged to get along without alterations, voluminous though they were. The shoes were too large for me also, but the thick woolen socks helped to fill them. No dress coats were furnished to the boys while they were on the Island. We only got those after joining a regiment.

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In about a week my clothes were ready. I arrayed myself in my new sky-blue uniform, experiencing a boy's pleasure in a new suit and some pride in what I considered my fine soldierly appearance. We were not allowed to keep any citizen's clothing, so I sold my clothes to a Hebrew "Old Clo' Man" who often visited the island for that purpose. He paid me a dollar for them, the possession of which made me quite popular with a few of the boys who showed me where we could buy pies and ginger-pop at the sutler's store.

On the third day after my arrival, I was ordered to commence attending school and to learn music. The school was in a room within the South Battery, which was much too small for the attendance. There were some pine desks and benches, a blackboard, desks and chairs for two teachers and some shelves. We were divided into several classes and were instructed in three R's by Sergeant Evans who taught the older boys and by Corporal Washburn who had charge of the younger ones. Each of the teachers had a rattan, for it required more than patience on their part to keep the unruly element quiet. I think both the sergeant and the corporal were very forbearing men. They were excused from all other duties and paraded at muster only, receiving a mere pittance of extra pay from the post fund.

Every month Sergeant Evans read to us the hundred and one Articles of War from the Army Regulations, wherein punishments were prescribed for all imaginable offenses, the ninety-ninth article covering everything else that might have been missed in the preceding articles so long as the offense was "to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." I noticed later that there were more charges and trials for "violation of the ninety-ninth article of war" than for any other. It seemed to fit nearly every case.

At eleven o'clock the two hour morning session of the school was over. The drummers who were nicknamed "sheepskin fiddlers," left the school room for an hour's practice, the fifers, called "straw blowers," by the drummers, had their instru-

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ments with them and remained in the school room. They got out their notes, and as soon as Sergeant Hanke and his assistant entered, commenced to practise, producing a terrific racket with their differing tunes. I was handed a "B" fife, the kind that was used at that time, and was shown how to hold it and place my fingers over the holes and my lips over the embouchure. I found it difficult to make a sound at first, but after a time I managed to produce some noise. I struggled with the gamut for a week or more and spent another in trying to play a bar or two of music correctly. After that I got along faster and commenced to learn some of the more simple calls and to understand the meaning of the notes in my music book. In about two months I had made sufficient progress to take my part in playing the reveille, retreat and tattoo. After that, I learned to play marches and other pieces. In the meantime, I had also made progress in drill and was considered sufficiently proficient at the end of three months to take part in parades and all other duties.

During the course of my musical instruction, I found the corporal instructor, whose name I do not recall, a rather impatient man very much given to scolding. Sergeant Hanke was more kindly, but he had a habit of taking a boy's fife out of his hands and playing part of the piece for him to show him how it should be done. As he was an inveterate tobacco-chewer this was very disagreeable. Wiping the fife on the sleeve of the jacket did not remove the strong odor. In my case I used soap and water as soon as I had the opportunity to do so.

I was obliged to submit to the customary "hazing," inflicted on new arrivals. I had to do various foolish stunts such as innocently asking Sergeant Moore for a pair of knapsack screws. He very promptly chased me out of his room. But the worst was what the boys named a "blanket court martial." This was performed in the quarters, a blanket was spread upon the floor, the victim was brought into the room blindfolded and placed standing upon the blanket by his guards. He

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was accused of a number of crimes such as stealing one of the heavy guns, swimming to Brooklyn with it and selling it for junk, and other ridiculous things.

Finally he was asked by the president of the court if he was guilty, and upon his reply "No!" the president said, "Then what are you standing there for?"

This was the signal for jerking away the blanket from under his feet, tumbling him to the floor. It was both rough and dangerous and I was sore after it.

I also had to have a few fights with some of the boys. These usually took place under the east wall of the Battery and were witnessed by a number of spectators. Such little affairs were not serious; the combatants usually had a rough and tumble scrap and the only damage I ever received was a bloody nose and a few scratches. Some of the older boys, however, occasionally had regular fist fights according to rules and had scouts out to give warning at the approach of any officer. Fighting was forbidden and the participants liable to be severely punished. After a time other "fresh fish" arrived and I ceased to be a novelty. I was then left at peace to pursue the regular course of events.

The greater part of the fifty or more music boys on the island at this time were from New York City like myself; the rest were from cities and small towns in adjoining states. There were half a dozen farmer's boys, mostly from Connecticut and the interior counties of New York State. A few of the boys were about my age, but most of them were from fifteen to eighteen or nineteen years old. None were enlisted without the consent of their parents or guardians whose inability to support them, no doubt, caused the greater part of them to join the army.

Some of them, however, seemed to have left good homes, or at least had prosperous looking visitors who brought them nice things to eat or gave them money. Poorly dressed women also appeared, mothers, who took their boys to some retired spot and had a cry over them. There was a very nice, genteel

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boy a year or two older than I, whose father owned a hotel on Broadway near Bleecker Street, in New York. I wondered why he left home to enlist. He and I became good friends and served in the same regiment later on, but he was always reticent on that point. By far the greater part of the boys were native born, but largely of foreign parentage, the Irish predominating.

With the exception of a dozen or so who were rather "hard cases" and boasted of it, and who formed a clique by themselves, the boys, I always thought, would compare quite favorably as regards morals and good behavior with an equal number of boys of even age at some private school. Discipline was of course stricter with us and punishment more severe. For minor offenses we got a few whacks over the shoulders with a rattan in the hands of one of the non-commissioned officers, confinement to quarters, or deprivation of passes to the city. The most frequent punishment of all was to "walk the ring," but this was inflicted only by order of the adjutant, who was the officer in command of the musicians. He could also confine an offender in a cell for twenty-four hours in the guard house without formal charges.

The ring was in front of the guard house under the observation of the sentinel of Post No. 1, who had orders to keep the culprits moving. They were required to walk around in a well beaten circular track of about thirty feet in diameter, sometimes two or three at one time. They had to attend to their duties and walk the ring during recreation time in the afternoon and from retreat to tattoo in the evening. This punishment might last anywhere from one day to a week or more at a stretch. Graver offenses were tried by a garrison court martial whose findings were submitted to a higher authority for revision or approval.

The punishments of a garrison court martial were limited to thirty days' confinement in the guard house, part of it, perhaps, solitary confinement on bread and water, or the forfeiture of a month's pay and allowances. Very serious offenses were tried

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before a general court martial which had power to sentence the prisoner to almost any kind of punishment, including death, according to "Articles of War." Their proceedings were reviewed, however, by the Judge Advocate at the War Department in Washington, and some cases required the decision of the President. There was also an intermediate court named a regimental court martial which had somewhat larger powers than a garrison court, but no such court convened at the island during my stay there, as there was no regimental headquarters, all the soldiers belonging to what was called the general service.

One day at a morning inspection for guard mounting, Sergeant Hanke noticed the end of a pipe stem protruding between the buttons of my jacket. I had carelessly thrust it into the inside breast pocket when the call to "fall in" sounded. He pulled it out and confiscated the pipe, remarking, "You will get a month on the ring for this." I was greatly alarmed at this threat of so severe a punishment and fully expected to receive orders to report to the sergeant of the guard after school that afternoon to be placed on the ring by him and commence my endless march. When the order was not given I thought sure it would come the next day, but it did not. It was a week before I felt safe and concluded that the sergeant had not reported me. Only on one occasion did I receive any punishment. I once threw a basin full of dirty water out of a window and inadvertently dashed it over Sergeant Moore, who was passing. He saw me and immediately got his rattan and gave me a good whipping.

Governor's Island in 1854 presented a very different appearance from what it does in 1914. It was much smaller. Its diameter was less than half a mile and there were but few buildings on it. More than a hundred acres have been added to it by filling in a part of the bay and a sea wall has been built around the entire island. Many buildings have been erected; trees, shrubbery and flowers have been planted and walks laid out; sewers have been put in; water, gas and electricity provided and the island generally improved and beautified.

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Many of the venerable old buildings still remain, however, as they existed during my time. Castle Williams, at the southwest angle of the island, is a circular structure, pierced with three tiers of embrasures. At its portal can still be read the inscription cut in the stone, "Commenced 1807, finished 1811." It is built of brown stone, backed up with brick. The granite parapet on top was erected shortly after Civil War, replacing one of brown stone. As a work of defense it has long outlived its usefulness, but in 1854 there were still guns mounted in the first tier of casemates which were considered formidable, and others were mounted en barbette on the parapet. These guns were used sometimes in firing a salute to foreign warships in the harbor.

Northward from Castle Williams, near the northwest angle of the island, was the ordnance building, then came the guard house with its prison cells in the basement and the adjutant's office above them. The quartermasters' and commissary stores, the commanding officer's house and a few other houses for the married officers of the higher grade were all on the north side of the island. Next came the hospital on the east and near it, but somewhat to the west, a row of small two-story buildings partly used as the sutler's store and as quarters for some married soldiers and their families. At the southeast corner of the island was the South Battery, mounting a few guns. Some distance to the west was the chapel and next to it the graveyard, in which some officers and a number of soldiers were buried, most of whom had died of cholera and yellow fever which had often visited the island. Beyond the graveyard was the post garden, several acres in extent, in which all kinds of vegetables were raised. West of the garden was the parade ground, extending to the garrison, and from the commanding officers' house sloping gently to the shore line on the south.

Fort Jay, or Fort Columbus, as it was then called, was generally known as the "garrison." It is situated on the westerly part of the island on raised ground—a square-built, old style fortress with a dry moat, portcullis, draw bridge, and ramparts.

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Guns are mounted en barbette on three of its sides. An artistic and elaborate piece of sculpture over the portal, representing the various arms of the service, cut in brown stone, is still in a fair state of preservation. Passing through the deep sallyport, the interior is found to be quite roomy, having a sodded parade ground with quarters surrounding it on four sides. The buildings in the south were used as quarters for the unmarried officers. On the east lived recruits, and on the west were the quarters of a company of soldiers, about seventy-five strong, who were officially called the Permanent Party. On the north was the post band on one side of the sallyport and the non-commissioned staff and some buglers on the other. There was a smaller gate on the south leading into the moat and a sunken way leading from there to the entrance to Castle Williams.

All of the buildings which I have described still exist except a few of the officers' cottages on the north side of the island, the sutler's row and the chapel which was destroyed by fire and lately replaced on another site by a much larger and finer building of cut stone, a gift of Trinity Church of New York. The post-garden has disappeared and so has the graveyard with its few monuments and many headstones. The remains were disinterred and reburied elsewhere, and the site is now covered with buildings.

Governor's Island was the principal recruiting depot in the east, and in 1854 Major John T. Sprague of the Eighth U. S. Infantry was in command. He was a West Point graduate, who had joined the army in 1837 and had been breveted as a Major during the Mexican War. Major Sprague was relieved and ordered elsewhere before my departure from the island. He was succeeded by Captain Mansfield Lovell, a dashing artillery officer, who later joined the confederate army and had something to do with the surrender of New Orleans. A captain or two, an ordnance officer and six or eight lieutenants from different branches of the service, were all detailed on detached service away from their regiments to serve here as instructors of recruits.

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A very fine military band was connected with this post under the leadership of Bandmaster Bloomfield, who was a celebrated musician. There were two drummers in this band, brothers, named Jack and Pete Vigo, who were considered to be the best in the army. Later on both served in the band of the regiment which I joined, Pete Vigo, in the meantime, having married Bandmaster Bloomfield's daughter, who accompanied him to the frontiers.

The band played at guard mounting and dress parade, musters and general inspections. It also gave concerts on certain summer days in front of the commanding officers' quarters. Bandsmen had permission occasionally to play in New York City, which was lucrative for them. Indeed they were very much petted and pampered and enjoyed many privileges. They received extra pay and had especial fine uniforms and instruments, all of which had to be paid for out of the post fund.

The Permanent Party, also called Company "A," was a company of soldiers selected from the recruits for stature, physique and soldierly bearing. They were mostly tall men and, as I imagine, must have borne some resemblance to the grenadiers of Frederick the Great. They looked well on parade in their striking uniforms—dark blue coats with facings and sky-blue trousers, white cross and waist belts, epaulettes and black shakos with blue pompons and brass chin straps. Occasionally some were sent away to serve with a regiment at their own request or as a punishment. The Permanent Party did all of the guard duty that was required on the island, and guarded the prisoners who did the scavenging.

Other troops on the island were the recruits, generally several hundred of them, who were quartered in the garrison and in the upper casemates of Castle Williams. From time to time they were sent away in detachments of a hundred or more, generally accompanied by some of the drummers and fifers, to vacancies in regiments serving throughout the country. Officers were detailed to accompany these detachments to their destinations. The non-commissioned officers were generally

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selected from the most worthy and efficient of the recruits and promoted to lance sergeants and lance corporals, a rank with authority but without extra pay. Often a few re-enlisted old soldiers, rejoining regiments on the frontiers, went with these parties and helped to take charge of them.

The recruits were unarmed. Arms were furnished when they joined their regiments, unless it became necessary to march through a part of the Indian country to reach their destination. In that case they were armed and accompanied by an escort of experienced soldiers. These departures from the island were always occasions of considerable military ceremony. The recruits were escorted from the garrison to the wharf by the post band and the Permanent Party. And when they had embarked on the steamboat and the lines were cast off, the band would play, "The Girl I Left Behind Me," amid the parting cheers of the spectators.

The final complement that made up the garrison of Governors Island were the music boys, designated as Company "B," and stationed in the small South Battery. We were under special command of the Post-Adjutant, but never saw him there except on muster days. He troubled himself very little about us, leaving the care and management of the fifty or sixty boys to the two sergeants in charge. Sergeant Hanke, of whom I have spoken before, was a Dane who had been for many years in the United States service. He was of low stature, very corpulent, with a large round florid face, and was bald, except for a fringe of gray hair below the top of his ears. He had sharp twinkling eyes and a strong voice. He was married but had no children and lived in a couple of small rooms on the second floor of the quarters. His Irish wife was his counterpart in stature and corpulency. She generally wore a white cap and a red skirt. That she had a fine brogue we knew from overhearing her disputes with the sergeant. She had a loud voice and was more than a match for the sergeant, whose English failed him when he became excited. Sergeant Hanke, while a strict disciplinarian, was not an unkindly man. He often listened

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patiently to our complaints and forgave us for many minor transgressions when we were brought before him.

Sergeant Moore was an Irishman and married. He kept house with his wife and several children in some rooms on the lower floor of our quarters. He also had served a long time in the army. He was a tall thin man with iron gray hair, quick tempered and not so well liked by the boys as Sergeant Hanke. Both of these men remained in the service for more than sixty years and were finally retired and pensioned by the government. Sergeant Moore lived to be ninety-seven years old and Hanke nearly as long.

Corporal Butler, the assistant instructor, was a young man of medium size, with a fiery temper and a profusion of very red hair and mustache, the greasing, waxing and combing of which consumed much of his spare time. The other corporal, who was assistant fife instructor, and whose name, unless memory fails me, was Pfaefle, was a tall and very good looking young German of a more pleasant disposition. He spent much time in "primping" himself and the boys called him "the dude." I never learned what became of him in after years, but I did learn that Corporal Butler remained in the service all his life and died only recently at a military post at Sackett's Harbor, N. Y., at an advanced age. Sergeant Evans and Corporal Washburn, our school teachers, were both very fair men with no peculiarities. Later on I believe they became citizen clerks in the War Department at Washington.

With a couple of the older boys promoted to lance corporals, who had charge of some rooms, this completed the list of non-commissioned officers who had the immediate charge of the boys and were responsible to the post adjutant, who cared very little how things went.

It took but a short time for me to realize that the quantity of food we received was very scanty for growing boys. While we were not actually starved, we did not get enough to eat and often felt hungry. We had a limited amount of credit at the sutler's store, which was deducted from our pay. Much

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of this we consumed in buying crackers and cheese or an occasional piece of pie or cake to eke out our scanty food, the sameness of which often palled on us. In the summer months we were given a few vegetables once or twice a week from the post garden after the officers and their families had first received all they wanted. The poor recruits never got any, although they contributed their pro-rata share to the post fund, while the officers were not obliged to contribute anything.

Had we received the entire ration allowed us, it would have been sufficient and we could not have complained as to quantity. The soldier's daily ration at this time consisted of sixteen ounces of salt or fresh beef or twelve ounces of pork or bacon, eighteen ounces of soft bread or flour, or one pound of hard bread and the "small rations," as they were called, such as coffee, sugar, beans, peas, rice, salt, vinegar, dessicated vegetables, soap and candles, which were sufficient, when used collectively, for an entire company. The flour ration of eighteen ounces, when baked into bread, will produce about one-third more in weight of bread. Hence there was a saving of about one-third on flour which was sold to increase the post fund. But we boys never received eighteen ounces of bread per day, and all of our other rations were also reduced.

A post fund, according to army regulations, was created by a tax of ten cents per month to be paid by the sutler for every officer or soldier stationed there, also from the savings on the flour ration between eighteen ounces of flour and eighteen ounces of bread at the post bakery. No saving is supposed to be made on any other portion of the soldier's ration. The management of the fund was generally in the hands of three officers, one of whom acted as treasurer; they were called Post Council of Administration and had power to fix a tariff of prices for the sutler, laundresses, tailor, shoemaker, etc., and the expenditure of the fund for other purposes approved by the commanding officer.

At Governor's Island one of the largest expenses was the band whose members were paid extra (according to their abil-

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ity) over and above their grade of soldier's pay. Their instruments, which the Government did not furnish, had to be purchased, as well as music and a showy uniform. Other expenses were the post bakery, the post garden and school for the boys. From all this the officers received the greater benefit and yet they were not required by army regulations to contribute to the fund.

When spring came, in pleasant weather I often sat on the west shore of the island, which faced Battery Park in New York, and watched the ferry boats and excursion steamers pass close by, crowded with people who were bent on enjoying themselves. This made me feel melancholy and homesick. Sometimes, when alone, tears would come to my eyes in spite of my efforts to restrain them. When the summer came, I felt less lonely and forsaken. We played ball and other games during our leisure hours and went in swimming very often on the south shore of the island where there was a good gravelly beach, interspersed with mossy rocks.

Early in June we received two months' pay. A private soldier's pay at this time was but seven dollars per month, but was raised by act of Congress to eleven dollars about six months after I entered the service. The officers' pay was raised also all along the line. The musician's pay was always one dollar more per month than that of a private, and I was, therefore, entitled to sixteen dollars for my two months' service; but after the sutler's, tailor's, and laundresses' bills were deducted, I had but a few dollars left.

Immediately after being paid the soldiers and some of the boys started gambling with cards and dice in secluded places all over the island, under trees, behind buildings and even in the grave yard. I was pressingly invited to join in some of the games but I refused as I had no inclination for playing. Gambling was forbidden and the gamblers punished if caught. I wished to get a pass to visit New York and did not care to take any chances. I applied for a pass and got permission to be

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absent from nine o'clock on a Saturday morning to Retreat at sundown on Sunday.

I put on my best uniform, polished my shoes and buttons, exhibited my pass to the guard on the dock and was rowed over to the Battery in New York, whence I had departed two and a half months before. I walked rapidly through Battery Park and up Broadway towards my home. I was anxious to see my mother from whom I had only heard by letter since my departure. I had not gone far when I was jeered at by boys and larger hoodlums and saluted with such questions as "Soger will ye work?" and their replies of "No! First I'd sell me shirt." I flushed with anger but could do nothing except to hasten my steps and get away from my tormentors, only to encounter others on my way home. Even respectable people looked me over as though I was a freak or a curiosity of some kind.

A soldier at that period was but little respected by civilians in the east. Only the people on the Western frontiers appreciated him and understood how much he did toward making the new country a safe place for them to acquire homes and develop the land. It required the lesson of the Civil War to teach the east the value of soldiers and sailors. The soldier particularly was looked upon as an individual too lazy to work for a living. He had not been much in evidence since the Mexican War. The entire U. S. Army contained less than twelve thousand men scattered over a large territory.

When my pass expired I caught the boat for Governor's Island, and reported for duty on time. I did not receive another leave of absence for about three months. The cholera broke out in New York and Brooklyn and soon made its appearance on Governor's Island, where it had been a frequent visitor as well as the yellow fever. Passes were suspended except in urgent cases, and communication with the city restricted as much as possible. A few of the boys were attacked but recovered. Some of the Permanent Party died of it, but the recruits suffered most. A considerable number of them died

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and were buried in the island grave yard. The funeral march was often heard and the report from the corporal's firing squad of eight, who fired three rounds over the grave, was the last farewell to the poor soldier, as no religious services were held.

I had formed a few friendships among the soldiers of the Permanent Party, particularly with a man named Lovell, a very tall, fine-looking soldier who later on became the drum-major of my regiment. Another of my friends was a man named Fisher, an estimable soldier. One evening Fisher sent for me from the hospital where he was sick with the cholera. I found the building crowded with cholera patients and others. Fisher was suffering intensely but was conscious. He expressed a wish, in the presence of the nurses, that in case of his death his trunk, keepsakes and money were to be given to me. I left him after a while and next morning learned that he had died during the night.

I got permission to attend his funeral, and the next day I went to the hospital to claim my inheritance, but the hospital steward, named Campbell, chased me away and for a long time I blamed him unjustly for depriving me of the little legacy, for his own benefit, as I supposed. He was an ill tempered man not liked by the boys. But later on I learned that he was within his rights in not allowing me to take anything. There is a great deal of military red tape in disposing of a soldier's effects and I dropped the matter. Steward Campbell was shortly after relieved by David Robinson, a kindly man, who at the present time is still on the island, retired and living in a cottage there.

The island, even when free from epidemics, was not a healthy place. There were no sewers, the water was supplied from cisterns and a few wells. There was no gas and on dark nights lanterns were carried. First sergeants of companies called the roll at tattoo by their aid. As the island had no sea wall and was directly in line of the tide currents of the East River, which it divided into two parts, much of the floating filth from the city was deposited on its shore. Dead cats, dogs and other

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small animals were washed on to the beach daily. Sometimes a horse and, on a few occasions, a human body. Fruit of all kinds, but all more or less decayed, great quantities of wood, all sorts of boxes and cases, in fact anything that could float, seemed to be cast upon the island's shore. A squad of prisoners under guard were busy all day long in "beach combing," gathering up this filth and burning it.

One day, when passing along the south shore, I noticed a curious looking object partly covered by rubbish. It was high and dry up on the beach, where it must have lain for some days exposed to the hot sun. It was very brown and very small, and I thought it was a dead monkey or perhaps a mummy of some kind. I called the attention of the prisoners' guard, who were close by, to the object. They uncovered it and declared it to be a new born infant. One of the prisoners carried it on a shovel to the grave yard, only a few steps away, where he dug a shallow hole in a corner of the fence and buried it.

Some parts of the shore were sandy, and at low tide I often saw some of the hungry recruits gathering soft clams and eating them after boiling them in a rusty can, picked up along the shore. They also ate much of the fruit cast up by the tide. All this no doubt contributed to the greater mortality among them during the prevalence of the cholera. Very few boys, I think, ever touched any of the fruit. We were strictly cautioned against it.

Changes made by boys being sent away to join regiments made it possible for me to move to a room on the second floor which was more cheerful and to have a more congenial bunkie, whose name was William J. Milligan. He was a New York boy, whose mother kept a millinery store on upper Broadway. We became fast friends and remained so as long as he lived. We were separated when he was sent to join the Sixth U. S. Infantry, as a fifer, and I did not meet him again until we both served in the same brigade in the Army of the Potomac, during the Civil War.

One day orders were given to prepare for a grand inspection

of all the soldiers on the island by General Winfield Scott, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the army. We were busy for some days cleaning up for the great inspection. Finally the day arrived, so did the general in his cocked hat, a gorgeous uniform and splendid sword. He was very tall, large and dignified. Despite his age he was erect and soldierly. He was accompanied by some of the officers of his staff, also in full uniform. As he debarked, a salute of thirteen guns thundered from Castle Williams. All the soldiers on the island, not on other duty, were drawn up on the parade ground and the band played "Hail to the Chief." For occasions of this sort we were required to appear fully equipped and with knapsacks packed.

There was always a rivalry among us as to who could pack his kit the neatest and show the fewest creases in the overcoat when rolled up and strapped on top of the knapsack. In this particular we never seemed to be able to equal the Permanent Party, whose overcoats were faultlessly rolled. The usual formula of a general inspection was carried through, as prescribed in the regulations, ending up with opening ranks, unslinging and opening knapsacks and displaying our kits. The General and his aides-de-camp, accompanied by the commanding officer and the adjutant, first inspected the band, then passed through the boys' opened ranks without any comments and on through the ranks of the Permanent Party, each of whom stood like a statue at the position "order arms." An officer of the General's staff, remarking the immaculate rolling of many of the overcoats, tapped one of them with the scabbard of his sword. It emitted a hollow sound. He asked the soldier what it was, and the man explained that it was a dummy made out of a piece of stove pipe covered with blue cloth. The old General noticed the incident but merely smiled as did some of the other officers. However, it proved to be the end of the dummy overcoats on parade.

One summer's day several French ships of war arrived in the harbor, opposite Governor's Island. They fired a national salute which it was necessary to reply to, gun for gun, accord-

ing to custom. Unfortunately at that particular time there were no artillery soldiers on the island, but a sergeant of the Permanent Party was found who understood how to load and discharge guns. He was furnished with a detail of infantry men to assist him. Salutes were always fired from the first or ground tier of guns at Castle Williams, about a dozen in number. When not in use the embrasures for these guns were closed with wooden shutters which could be removed and taken inside while firing.

The Sergeant ordered the shutters to be detached from their fastenings and laid down flat in the openings. He then commenced firing, and at every discharge we saw the shutters being blown to splinters into the harbor, fortunately without damage to any one. When all the guns in the tier had been discharged the Sergeant and his inexperienced crew had to go back to reload and fire them over again. This caused a long gap in the completion of the salute, which should have been fired continuously, and no doubt astonished our French visitors.

A day or two later on a Saturday afternoon the French admiral, with some of his officers, accompanied by the post adjutant, came on an informal visit to the island. I was on the scrubbing squad that day when they passed through the sallyport of the South Battery, unannounced. I was the first boy whom they encountered, hatless, barefooted, in shirt sleeves, with my trousers rolled up to the knees and a broom in my hands. I was startled, but stood to attention and came to a salute, which was returned by the admiral. My few companions did the same. Most of the boys were out fishing, swimming and playing games. The distinguished party remained but a few minutes and did not enter the quarters. I think they were not favorably impressed by our sloppy appearance.

Sometimes recruits deserted the island by arranging to have a row boat appear on the shores at night or by swimming across the Buttermilk Channel to Brooklyn in the night time when the tide was right. If recaptured they were tried by a general court martial and sentenced to severe punishments. There

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were few desertions among the boys; but two of them who failed to return from leave of absence were caught after a time. They were tried and sentenced to receive twenty-five strokes with a rattan well applied to their "bare buttocks," so the sentence read, and to be confined in the guard house at hard labor for two months, also forfeit their pay for the same period.

We were turned out and formed in ranks on a spot near the graveyard to witness the punishment of the poor fellows. They were marched to the place under guard. The Adjutant read the sentence of the court martial. Then one of the boys was laid face down on a long bench and held by a member of the guard at his head and another at his feet. His clothes were removed sufficiently to expose his buttocks, and at the adjutant's command, a corporal commenced to apply the rattan, which left a red mark at every stroke and made the boy squirm and groan and finally cry out with pain before the adjutant cried "Halt" at the twenty-fifth blow. While the blows were not inflicted with anything like full force, yet they were cruel enough if only by their number.

The unfortunate second victim was obliged to witness his comrade's punishment and then endure the same himself. Both of the boys were about seventeen years of age and served out their enlistment. One of them I met during the Civil War as a lieutenant of a volunteer regiment. The trembling and sobbing boys were reconducted to the guard house, and we marched back to quarters after this distressing scene.

The summer passed away, the cholera, both in the city and on the island, was almost extinct. Leave of absence was again granted and I went to the city a few times during the fall and early winter. One morning I felt ill and reported at "doctor's call." I was taken before the surgeon, who examined me and ordered me to bed in the hospital, thinking, no doubt, that I was about to have an attack of fever. I did not expect this and hoped that I would simply be marked "sick in quarters" and excused from duty. I was put to bed in a ward that contained about eight beds occupied by soldiers with all sorts of ailments,

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some of them very disagreeable. Some of the boys who had been in the hospital had told me that tea and toast was served there to the sick. I hankered for some of it, as I had not tasted any for a long time. I got it twice a day and a little thin gruel, but nothing else. On the third day, I begged to be let go. I was disgusted with the hospital and its inmates. As no serious complications had developed, I was sent back to quarters and excused from duty for a few days.

As the winter approached we were obliged to give up many of our little outdoor diversions and confine ourselves more to our crowded quarters. As there was no place indoors for exercise or amusement, our condition became more melancholy and dejected. Our clothing we found insufficient to keep us warm. Many of us bought woolen knit jackets, which we wore instead of a vest and which gave us some protection against the fierce cold winds that blew across the island and chilled us to the marrow when we were on parade. When we began to have severe frosts, the bandsmen did not appear at guard mounting on the plea that their instruments would freeze. The fifes and drums furnished the only music. Often our fingers were so numb with the cold that we could hardly play a note. The drummers could manage to beat a march with gloves on their hands and suffered less.

One cold night late in November there was an alarm of fire which proved to be in the sutler's row near the hospital. It broke out in several places at once. There was some excitement in getting out the soldiers' wives and children who lived there, but none were injured. There were no fire extinguishing appliances on the island, save fire buckets. The soldiers formed lines to the nearest pump and cistern and passed the buckets along. But they could make no impression on the fire, and the row was a mass of ruins in little more than an hour. Long before a ferry boat brought some firemen and a hand engine from the city there was nothing left to save.

Two of the older boys were accused of setting the houses on fire. They were arrested and confined in the guard house on

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charges of arson and were still awaiting trial when I was ordered away shortly after.

The winter had set in early. It was very cold at times and there was snow on the ground. We felt generally depressed and miserable, when quite unexpectedly, one day in the early part of December, 1854, two other boys and myself received orders to prepare to depart to Carlisle Barracks, at Carlisle, Pa., there to be assigned to the Second U. S. Infantry. I do not know why I was selected to go. Quite a number of the boys had been on the island longer than I, and some were more proficient. But I felt glad. Surely any kind of a change would be for the better. The next day I and my companions, Peter Moritz and Edward Young, both a year or two older than I, received a pass to go to New York and say farewell to our parents or relatives, whom we were not likely to see again for years.

A trusty corporal was placed in charge of us. He had orders not to allow us to separate nor to lose sight of us and to return with us to the island before evening. In this way we were obliged to witness each other's leave taking in the presence of our conductor. There were tears and lamenting, and the corporal, who was kindly, but did not like his task, was importuned when about to leave one house for another to "let the poor boy stay just five minutes longer." When he acceded it generally extended to fifteen minutes or more. As none of us had any intention to desert this painful way of parting might have been spared us. There was no special need to hurry us away, and sufficient time could have been given to notify our relatives to come to the island and bid us farewell there. I always looked upon this as unnecessarily harsh treatment.

We all had some lunch in an eating house, made a few small purchases and in due time returned to the island, angry at the way we had been humiliated by the orders of either the commanding officer or the adjutant. Next morning we packed our kits and started for the boat landing shortly after noon, accompanied by some of the boys and another corporal who was to

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take us to Carlisle. We boarded the barge in which I had come to the island on the day of my enlistment nearly nine months before. Sergeant Brown, who soon after became a member of my company at Carlisle, was still cockswain. We pushed off amid the cheers of our comrades and passed over the East River to New York.

No one seemed to have any clear idea as to where Carlisle was or how long a time it would take to get there, so they loaded us with three days' rations of boiled salt beef and bread, which filled our haversacks to bursting. This, together with a canteen filled with cold coffee, made no inconsiderable load. We wore our overcoats, and our knapsacks were packed with a five-pound blanket, an extra jacket and trousers, underwear and stockings, an extra pair of shoes, clothes and shoe brushes and knick-knacks. A tin wash basin was strapped onto the back of the knapsack. All this made a load enough for a man to carry. We passed through Battery Park and staggered along West Street in the direction of the Jersey City Ferry, making occasional halts for a rest, when crowds would collect about us and ask us many questions. No doubt we three small boys looked ridiculous to them, overloaded as we were. I overheard a longshoreman remark that he'd "be damned before he'd make a pack horse of himself for Uncle Sam."

We reached the ferry, crossed the North River to Jersey City and were put on a car that had wooden seats without any cushions. It was the first time that I had ever been away from New York on a railroad train and I was much interested in watching the scenery all the way to Philadelphia, where we arrived about dusk and changed trains for Harrisburg. I opened my haversack, ate my frugal supper and went to sleep, tired out with the day's excitement. About midnight the corporal woke us up at Harrisburg to change cars for Carlisle, but we found that there would be no train to Carlisle until eight o'clock next morning. The station master kindly allowed us to stay in the waiting room of the depot for the remainder of the night. There was a good fire in the stove and some benches to

lie on, so we passed the night quite comfortably. We all had a little money and got some hot coffee and rolls at the depot next morning before we left on the eight o'clock train for Carlisle. We arrived there in less than two hours, with our three days' rations almost intact. There was snow on the ground, through which we trudged laboriously towards the garrison about a mile away.

I was glad to leave Governor's Island. Its narrow limits impressed me as a place of confinement. The quarters were overcrowded, the food was bad and insufficient, the discipline very strict, and there was little time or opportunity for recreation. It was monotonous and depressing, and although later during my service I suffered much hardship and encountered many dangers, I never wished myself back on the island again. Among the many boys whom I knew on the island I saw but few again, outside of those in my own regiment. They were scattered all over the country, serving at distant posts and often changing. Probably but few are living now, and I know the whereabouts of only one, who served in the Seventh U. S. Infantry for many years and now resides in New York, where I see him occasionally and talk over old times.