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A Letter to A. C. Van Raalte from His Son, Ben

Ben Van Raalte

Clarence Jalving

Nella Kennedy

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Marietta, Ga., October 14, 1864

A letter to A. C. Van Raalte from his son, Ben, who said that the hospital would be moved to Atlanta shortly.

Original in the Netherlands Museum.

Translation by Clarence Jalving.

Loving Father,

I am glad to be able to write you a letter in good health. We long to hear from home for the last letters from home came while you were in Nashville. Dirk's wound is almost healed now and if the way were now open and he would receive furlough he could easily come home now. He still does not know when or if he will get his furlough. The hospital is to be moved to Atlanta tomorrow or the day after. So Dirk will get to see Atlanta after all. On the 5th we had the pleasure of seeing our boys

[2] march past here with the bands playing. They marched right past the hospital and I had gotten ready to join them. The captain was up ahead on his horse. I told him that I was ready to go along, but he said that I shouldn't do so. When our regiment marched past Dirk stood on the side of the road and nearly everyone greeted him. The Colonel rode up to him, shook hands with him, and asked how he was doing. He also said that I could

continue to take care of him and that he had reported me as being on detached duty. That

was a pleasant day for Dirk to see the old regiment once again.

The Corps came from Decatur, and when I heard the brass bands I became sick and tired of being at the hospital and accompanied the Co. for three miles, to the other side

of Kenesaw Mountain where they camped. I stayed with them until the next morning. It was quite a night. It rained extremely hard and the camp was as soft as porridge the next morning. The boys were as wet as rats. I was happy about one thing—our boys had certainly changed. The McClellan fever was all gone. Lieut. Kramer, who had always been such a staunch Democrat, also made a complete about face. We have good news about Grant here. Our army has once again, as we say here, whipped the Rebs. I am eagerly looking forward to mail from home.

Your loving B. Van Raalte

Dirk sends you [his] warm greetings.

P.S. I hope that our Hollanders will know better than to vote for such a peace Democrat as McClellan.

[Translation: Clarence Jalving, revision: Nella Kennedy, February 2009]

¹ BVR wrote that it "was een moije nacht," literally, a beautiful night. In Yankee Dutch this is a Dutch translation of a "fine, or great night." It is not clear that Ben referred to the enjoyment in being with his comrades, or that he is sarcastic since he followed it up by mentioning the hard rain.

² Perhaps BVR is referring to the saying about rats leaving a sinking ship. The Duch use zo nat as een kat (wet as a cat).

Liefhebben Vader.

Met genoegen is het dat ik uw van daag nog in goede gezondhied mag schrijven. Wij zijn verlagende om van huis te hooren onze laaste brieven die wij van huis gehad hebben ontfingen wij toen uw te Nashville was. Dirk zijn wond is nu haast geneezen. en als nu de weg open was en verlof had dan kon hij nu goed naar huis koomen, maar weet nu nog niet wanneer of hij zijn furlough kijgen zal. Het Hospitaal zal morgen of overmorgen vervoerd worden naar Atlanta. dus dan krijgt Dirk Atlanta ook nog te zien den 5^{de} hadden wij het genoegen om onze

- [2] hier verbij te zien marscheeren zij kwaamen hier door met vol muziek. flak voor het Hospitaal langs. Ik had mijn eigen klaar gemaakt om me te gaan de Captin kwam voor uit te paard. Ik zij teegen hem dat ik klaar was om mee te gaan, maar hij zij dat ik het nog niet doen moest. toen ons Regt: verbij kwam stond Dirk bij de weg, een ieder zij hem haast gedag de Cornel reed naar hem toe en gaf hem de hand en vroeg hem hoe of het met hem ging en zij dat ik op kon blijven passen dat hij mij reporte aan Detached duty, dat was een plijzierige dag voor Dirk om het oude Regement nog is weer te zien. de Corps kwam van Decatur. toen ik de Brassbands hoorde werd ik het Hospitaal meer dan moe en ging me met de Co. drie mijlen aan de andere
- zijde van de Kenesaw Mountain waar zij in Camp gingen en bleef bij hen tot smorgens het was een moije nacht. het reegende dat het liefhebberij was de camp was smorgens zo zagt als pap, en de jongens waaren zo nat als rotten, een ding was ik blij van dat onze jongens zo veranderd waaren. De McClellan koors was geheel over, Luit. Kraamer was altijd zoon sterke Dem, maar is nu geheel om gedraid, wij hebben hier goed niews van Grant, onze Army heeft de Rebs: ook ge wiped dat is de spraak hier. Ik zie met verlangen uit naar brieven.

Uw Lief: B. Van Raalte

Dirk stuurd uw de Hartelijke Groetenis

Ps. Ik hoop dat onze Hollanders niet zo laag zullen zijn en stemmen voor een peace Democrat als McClellan

[Transcription: Nella Kennedy, February 2009]



Holland Historical Trust Collection
of the
Joint Archives of Holland

Marietta, Gar; Oct., 14,22/864

Lifhebben vader.

Met- genoegen is. hit dat Ik um van daag nog in goedegedondhied mag Schrijven. mig Dijn verlagende om van huis to hoven onse laaste brieve die my van huis gehad hebben ontfingen my toen unte Mashville, mas. Dillo sign mond is one haast geneven. en ab nu de neg vopen mas en verløf had dan kon by me gold man huis Roomen, maar seet nu nog nut nanneer of hij Tijn furlough Kijgen lal. het-Hospitaal Lal morgen af overmorgen vervoerd morden man Alanta, dus dan Briggt-Dirko de Atlanta aok nog le Tien den so de haden my het-genoegen om onse

hier verbij to Rien marscheiren Dy Romanmen hier door met vol musick, flak vool het Hospital langs, IR had mijn eigen Klaar gemaakt om me togan de Captin Rmaan voor cut to paux Ik Dig leegen hem dat Ik klaar mas om mee to gaan, maar hij by dat Ik het may niet down moust toen ons Regt; verby Rnam Stand Duk by de meg, een ieder lij krem haast gedag de Overel led naar hem the en got hem de hand en voeg hem hoe of het-met hem ging in Ley dat It ap Kong bligven passen dat hij - mij rejorte aan Detached duty, dat-mas een plijzurige dag Voor Dak om het-auce Regement. nog is near to dien. de Corps Rmand van Decatar. toen Ik de Many Branbands hoorce merd . The het-Hospitad meer dan moes en ging or. met- de l'o, drie mijlen aan de andue

Tijde van de Kenesam Mountain maar sig in Camp gingen en bleet by hen tot smorgens het was een more macht, het reegende dathet- liefhebberig has de camp masomorgen To lagt als hap, en de jongens B. maaren do nat-als rotten, een ding Mas IR blij van dat onse Jongers To veranderd maaren, de M. Clellan. Moors was geheel over, Luit. Trained mas altyd som Merke Dem, maur is nu geheel om gedraid, drig deblen hier goed niens van grant, onse Army heeft de Rebs: out once go voiped dat is de spraak hier. Ik sie metverlangen un - maar brieven,

> Un Luf: B Van Rualte Dort Micera un de Hartelyke Groetenis.

Le lace Lutten Tijn in Himmen voor een place Dimocrat; ale, 1864 delland forridge

Dear Father:

I am glad to be in good health and able to write you a letter. We are anxious to hear from home as the last letters came while you were in Nashville. Dirk's mouth is entirely healed and if the way were now open and he could fur but get permission he could easily come home. He still does not know when he will get his furlough, but the heapital is the will get his furlough, but the hospital is to be moved to Atlanta tomorrow or the day after. So Dirk will still get to see Atlanta. On the 5th we had the pleasu of seeing our boys march past here with the bands playing. They marched right past the hospital. I had gotten ready to join them, and the captain was up ahead on his horse. I told him that I was ready to rejoin the boys but he said insisted that I shouldn't do it. When our regiment marched past Dirk stood beside the road and nearly everyone greeted him. The Colonel rode up to him, shook hands with him and asked how he was feeling. He also told him that I was to remain and take care of him and that he would report me as being on detached duty. That was a pleasant experience for Dirk to see the old regiment once again. The Corps came from Decatur, and when I heard the b bands I suddenly became sick and tired of being at the hospital and marched along with the company some three miles on the other side of Kenesaw Mt. where they camped. I stayed with them until the next morning and spent a very pleasant night. It rained hard and the camp was waterlogged and the ground as soft as soup. The boys were soaked. I was happy about one thing our boys had certainly changed - the McClellan fever was all gone. Lieut. Kramer, who had always been a staunch Democrat, also made a complete about face. We have good news from Grant and, so they say, our army has again cleaned up on the Rebs. I am anxiously looking for mail from home. That's the work do are here

B. Van Raalte

Your loving

P.S. Dirk sends his best regards. I hope that our Hollanders will know better than to vote for such a peace Democrat as McClellan.

rats leave the Filling Ship