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Sackets Harbor Sept. 11th 1813

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 26th August ult. came to hand yesterday & am much obliged to you for the same. Your speculations in regard to the invasion of Canada & best mode of conducting the war on the frontiers are in my opinion very correct, and are what I hope to see soon realized. The command of Lake Ontario is still doubtful - Both squadrons are out & a few days will decide the superiority. The command of this Lake is not considered by Gen. Wilkerson as necessarily connected with the operations of the army tho' the particular movements of the army will probably depend on it. We expect to leave this place soon but cannot conjecture in what direction. We are ordered not to write to our friends any thing relative to the movements of the army till the close of the campaign - you will therefore pardon the impropriety of my saying any thing that can be construed into a breach of the order. Gen. Wilkerson has gone to the Niagara frontier - The Secretary of War is here - Gen. Lewis has gone eastward - tis said to the Springs for his health - may the waters prove salutary to the army of the U. States.

Gen. Wilkerson has inspired new spirit into the troops at this post. He inspires a degree of confidence in every officer & soldier that I never saw equalled. Under him I am confident the army will not shew a want of courage or conduct. He throws a mystery

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that are impenetrable & are highly necessary when so near the enemy & where every thing that can be known is immediately communicated to the enemy. Col. Walbach, one of the Adjutants general, is here & is as popular as Adjt Genl as he was as Captain & commander of Fort Constitution. We have many other officers that would do honor to any army.

You speak of the army under Boyd as the most experienced troops - they are so no doubt and have

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been harrassed and piquated into a degree of watchfulness & discipline that make them useful; but I dare engage that the troops now here, should they ever be engaged with the enemy, will do as much honor to the American name as any troops that ever fought under Gen. Boyd. There are five companies of our Regiment here and are allowed to equal, both in appearance & discipline, any troops in the service. Our Regt have not distinguished themselves yet - in consequence of their having been kept by the commanding General as a corps de reserve, the highest compliment that could be paid them.

You mention the reports of a fatal sickness said to prevail here - 'Tis true we have had many sick principally of the diarhea or camp disorder but not more than is common with all new armies till the men get habituated to a camp life. The health of the camp is greatly improved - not one half so many on the sick report as there were in the first of August & the most of those sick are convalescent & will soon be fit for active service

I have frequently heard of John Hanson - he was at the taking of York & I understood was not hurt he went to the taking of Fort George where he is now. I have not heard from W. Parsons tho I have enquired. His manner of writing to his friends is not only indecorous & ungrateful but is directly against orders. Could he be convicted of it before a Court martial he would be cashiered or was the Secretary of war to know the fact he would be struck from the rolls of the army

I am sorry to know that Thos. Brogdon has sued Mr. Johnson - he did very wrong - it was my fault that the writ ~~was~~ not returned - I sent it by mail

but it did not arrive so soon as usual by a few hours. I told Bragdon I would pay him & agreed to offset a debt he owed my brothers & I supposed the matter settled — Bragdon commenced another action & he & Libbey settled all affairs and, as I supposed, would content themselves with taking a bill of cost, unnecessarily swelled, from me. I shall write to York at this time & stop the business — I believe by agreement of Bragdon I settled with you a charge you had against him you can by turning to your books & whether that be the case & I should write often, but have nothing to write except the affairs of the army and of them we are forbidden to write or rather it is difficult to distinguish what is proper & what is not. You very justly remark that there are many things about an army that never reach you through the papers I believe the truth is never more than half told — that the most important is kept back. I know that to be the case at the attack on Sackets Harbor & that Gen. Brown was promoted from a Brig. Genl in the militia to a Brig. Genl in the regular service — I will not say in consequence thereof but I will say that had the enemy done what they might with ease (burnt the new ship) Gen. Brown would have been more censured than Smyth or any other. —— A heavy cannonading is now heard on the lake — the fleets are undoubtedly engaged — they are so near that I feel the barrack jar very sensibly every discharge (40 O'clock P.M.) — I was interrupted when I had written the above The cannonading continued one hour & a half very heavy [illegible] of an hour before sunset & continued till sunset most tremendously — almost a continual roar of cannon — since that not a gun has been heard (10 O'clock evening) The command of the lake is no doubt now decided. The force of each nearly equal — very doubtful which has gained the victory. A few guns like signal guns or those in chase were heard all day — I will not close this till I know the result. The mail is stopped between this & Utica & we are obliged to depend on the expresses — I do not consider it safe to send money or I would inclose you 50 or 100 dollars which I wish you had — I would also send a few dollars to E. Haskels father & some others.

I have mentioned to I. Pitcairn to send home his money & he says he will. I could not get Jellison to say whether he would send any to his wife or not. He may have sent some by E. Clark who has gone home on furlough. Give my best respects to Mrs Holmes & children. I hope Mr Goodwin's family, Mr Hayward's family & all the neighbors are all. Yours most Respectfully
Reuben H. Hunter
John Holmes Esq.

If the enemy had been successful ~~we should have supposed that we~~ we should ere this have heard a Royal salute from Kingston as on other like occasions. It is not improbable that our fleet would proceed up the lake after their success to report to the commanding General. We are extremely anxious to hear the certainty of these things. There is a mail going again & I must close

Rufus McIlhe

John Holmes Esqr.
Counsellor at Law
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District of Maine

Rufus McIlhe
11 Sept 1813

P.S. Sept 14th We have waited in vain for certain information from the fleet in the lake. It is reported & believed here that our fleet has been seen passing up the lake since the action & were thirteen sail and among them three ships. If this be true we have captured a part of the enemy's Squadron. Reports from other sources says that the Wolf only escaped & that all the others were captured or destroyed and that the Pike is a complete wreck. I do not know what credit to give these reports.