

Head Quarters Judicial Dept. Southern District
Key West,
May 12, 1862

Dear friends,

The mail by the *Baltic* has just arrived but the letters are not yet distributed so I don't know if there are any for me. The mail leaves in half an hour for the North compelling me to hurry up if I wish to get this in.

The news of the evacuation of Yorktown has set everything upside down here. Salutes are being fired, whiskey is being drunk and jack cut up generally. It is too bad that we were taken away from there when they are having such a good time of it. And our old division in the advance, too. But our turn will come and we are expecting it every day now. The paymaster is to be here in the next Steamer and often that "for the field" for glory and victory or death.

Enclosed find a receipt for a box I sent home. It is filled with coral I gathered at Tortugas. I suffice it will be filled with saw dust therefore in washing it out make a pretty strong solution of salt water and hold the branches down and dash the water over it. Mind now hold the butt up and the branches down or the dust will get in the coral and then it is very hard to get out, in fact, it is almost impossible. Then set the coral in the sun for a while and it will bleach a most beautiful white.

My Company is drilling Heavy Artillery at Fort Taylor now and get along finely. We drill twice a day, two hours each time. I go down with them as business in my office is rather slack just now.

My men are all getting along finely. More of the men from town are sick. I have only one man (Gardner) in the hospital and he is improving. I am in splendid health - never better. The weather has been quite warm again today. However, we are getting used to it and don't mind it any more. But time is up, I must close. Write soon. With love to all, I remain

Yours,

Shindel