

Letter from Texas

The following is an extract from a letter to a friend in Hannaford from Clarence Kelson, who is now with the First North Dakota Infantry at Mercedes, Texas:

I enlisted in Co. B. at Fargo June 21st and at once started drilling. The citizens of Fargo sure treated us fine and we were welcome to anything of which we wished to take advantage. We were stationed at Ft. Lincoln a month and had heavy drilling every day except during the time we were laid up with sore arms from typhoid inoculation and small pox vaccinations.

We were all getting very anxious to get to the border and cheered with joy when the message came to strike tents. It was on Saturday evening July 22nd, that we left Bismarck over the Soo line. The trip was an interesting one and the Pullman sleepers were a treat to us.

From Oakes, N. D., we rode the Chicago N. W. R. R. to Kansas City and then the Missouri, Kansas & Texas to San Antonio, Texas, and then the Gulf Coast line to Mercedes. We had double track roads most of the way which enabled us to make good time and we made 65 miles per hour for long stretches. It is a big change between North Dakota and Texas, and though the mercury rises to 120 degrees we do not mind it much.

The North Dakota Regiment is stationed within the limits of Mercedes and we are enjoying life only six miles from the border and thirty miles from the Gulf. We have now arranged our camp very nicely and are drilling three hours and hiking one hour per day. This forenoon we had our regular Friday two hour hike making ten miles and this afternoon we wash clothes, shave and prepare for Saturday's camp inspection.

There is not as much actual fighting here as we thought there would be and we have not been mixed up yet but can't tell when we may have some fun. All our water comes from the canal and therefore is hot at all times. Ice water is a treat which we seldom get here. The population is mostly negro and Mexican and a white lady is a curiosity.

This is the rainy season and we have only had one day without rain since we came here. At present we are having a soaker and it looks as though it is good for the balance of the day.

We may be here for some time but hope to be back to North Dakota before my enlistment expires. Tell the boys I'm happy in the land of palms.

Clarence H. Kelson.