

"A FRENCH FURLOUGH"

"July 1st (1863)...The Company reached Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg about 3 o'clock, and formed a line on the Ridge above the town. Markham's brigade was ordered down the opposite side of the town to check the rebels and hold them so that the defeated comrades could get through the town. His Regiment was soon surrounded and most the men with himself were taken prisoners...The prisoners were marched back to the rear of the rebel army, where they could see only the smoke and hear the firing of the second and third days' battle.

"At Stanton the prisoners, including Markham, were put on the cars and taken to Richmond where they went into prison on Belle Island...When Markham had been in this prison about three weeks he was taken sick, and was sent to Libby Prison.

"After a few days an order came for about 300 sick men to be paroled...The next day they were taken to City Point, put on the transport, New York, and taken to parole camp at Annapolis...Here Markham found L. L. Hunt (who had been captured at Chancellorsville) and a number of other men of the 154th Regiment.

"Markham and Hunt agreed to start for home on Monday noon (August 24, 1863) on what soldiers call a "French furlough". They felt that they were of no use to the government till they were exchanged, and they could return as soon as wanted.

"So they left camp without permission, walked across the country through Maryland into Pennsylvania to Harrisburg, up the Susquehanna River to Williamsport, following the river to the Allegheny Mountains, across to Olean and Little Valley and Dayton. They walked this distance entirely with the exception of one half-day when they rode on a canal boat up the Susquehanna River, and from New Albion to Dayton they rode with Chapman of Versailles.

"They reached Markhams on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 5th, making eleven days on the road. Having been prisoners they had no money, and were obliged to beg their food, all the time endeavoring to avoid villages and officers where or by whom they might be arrested and taken back for desertion.

"While Markham was at home he gained in health and flesh and was in good condition for soldiers' life again. After receiving word that he was exchanged on Friday, Oct. 2, on the following Sunday, the 4th of October, he reported in parole camp at Annapolis as ready for duty, and was given quarters and rations".

FROM: "SKETCH OF THE LIFE & ARMY SERVICE OF P. A. MARKHAM"