


May 22nd 1983
Sunday AM

Dear Mike (if I may)

I've been meaning to write to you, for some time now. I've had a running acquaintance with Mr. Dunkelmann for some months now! In fact, he owes me a letter! I can well imagine your wondering; just who the — is this person, who's writing to me? Right?

I am one of two surviving great-grandsons of "1st Lt. ALEXANDER Bird, 154th, N.Y. (Inf.) Volunteer's G.A.R.". Now, does that help?

I got Mark's letter, addressed to my uncle Gerard A. Bird, in a round about way! Uncle Gerard, passed away several years ago, by the way! His widow (2nd marriage) sent the letter, on to me, via my mother (Carol Melissa). I then started writing to Mark; then I sent for the book "Hard-Tack Regiment". I cannot tell you, how much I've enjoyed the book! My grand/father John (Jack) H. Bird, had regaled me with war stories of Alexander Bird, when I was small; so some of the history was a little blown out of shape; but what year that small; any story sounds good!

I remember, that for years grandpa carried around in his pocket, a minnie-ball, with a magnified piece of glass at the fore-end,  with a picture of "Jenny Wade"; inside the other end! I have no idea, what ever became of it; but I was always fascinated by it. I have no doubt that you know all the "Jenny Wade" story? I was born in Bradford (McKean Co.) Pa., on the 2nd of February
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1927. Alex, passed away a month earlier in January (3rd?),
so I never saw him! You two, have shown and told me
more about my great-grandfather than I'd ever known before!!
My interest in the Civil-War has now increased more
than ever, thanks to you!

My daughter is married to a career Army man (I'm
retired Navy!), who will be arriving in Pa., sometime
in October, for re-creating duty! We don't know the
exact location yet! They've been stationed in Frankfurt
at the 97th General Hospital, for the last three years!

Getting back to Alexander Bird! There was a whole block
(Bird Block) named after him, in Ellicottville, N. Y.!

His grave-marker has only his birth, and not his death
date on it! My mother, who is flying back east on June
11th, is going to look into having the death date put on
while she's back there in the Ellicottville area! Just for
interest sake, I thought you might be interested
to know that on May 28-30th, that there will
be a Civil War battle re-enactment, in Felton (Angels
Camp) California! I hope to get down there,

and get some pictures I can send you! I'm not aware,
if Mark had spoken to you about me or not! Several
years ago, I wrote a poem "The Blue & the Grey". I was
trying to remember my grandfather's stories about
Alex, and put the memories down, as they came
to me. This was long before I knew that you two
even existed! I sent Mark a copy of same!
After reading the book, I wrote another one entitled
"Drummer Boy"! I've pinned both of them into the (over)

3// flyleaf of the book! See, your works do inspire! I'm now interested in making up a Civil War uniform! I already have a kepi and belt buckle and have an 1864 Remington 41 cal. cap & ball pistol; as a starter! Could you please send me pictures or drawings of a Sgt.-Major uniform? My wife is an excellent seamstress and I brought back some dark blue wool from my last trip to Germany! I'd like to get it done by Veterans Day (Nov. 11th) or I usually march in our annual parade here in the Bay Area! I know it would be probably cheaper to rent one; but Hollywood's a long way from here! Mark tells me, you may also have some pictures of great-grandfather Reed, that you might send me! I will be glad to re-emburse you Mike! Well, I've written more now than I intended too; (I'm at work!) so I shall close for now, and try and get this letter in the mail to you sometime tomorrow morning. Hope you can read my poor-hand writing. I'm so used to printing, that I often find it hard to actually write! I do hope that I shall hear from you, in the near future and if you are ever in the Bay Area; please feel free to call and we'll always room for one more! Say hi, to Mark for me and tell him he's delinquent in answering my last letter! I look forward, to continue in the future; to meeting both you and Mark!
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Until such a time, as I hear from you;
I remain

Respectfully Yours

Bell Wilmoth (USN Ret.)

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