

# Letter From Holmes, Orrin D. written Tuesday, September 27th, 1864

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Camp of the 29th Mass Vets  
Blicks Station

Dear Friend Sam,

I will now take the time to write you a letter. I received a letter from you a week or two ago and wrote one to you a few days before I received yours. I should have written again ere this but I tell you I have had my hands full lately since we received the recruits & being the only old member of the company present I need to be Corporal, Sergeant and Captain. I don't know as you have heard that Co. E has been growing some lately. One regiment received eighty odd recruits, and they were all put into the consolidated companies. Our company has fifteen "seventeen & merry" and one of them, Otto Denger has been promoted to Corporal he has served in the French and German armies we have a first rate lot of men, although they are about all Germans. I have need to drill the company most every day, but Nat has joined the company so he takes command he is Captain and I am First Lieutenant now We have ten companies in the regiment now and there has been a lot of promotions lately made. Co A, Scully Orderly Sergeant, Gammen Corporal and transferred to Co. D. Co. B, O. Dell Sergeant, Mat. Leonard to Corporal in Co. I, Co. C, Harlow Orderly Sergeant, Ripley to Corporal and Dyer to Corporal. Co. D, Hoxie to Orderly Serg't and a recruit to Corporal. Co. E, Denger and Holmes to Corporal, Co. F, Burns to Corporal transferred to Co. I. Co. H, Thomas to Serg't transferred to Co. D. Co. I, Gooding to Serg't. Co. K, Blackhall and Ewart to Sergeants. Billy Howe to Corporal. I believe that is all now, but I expect their will be more promotions soon. Col. Barnes commands the regiment now. Col. McLaughlin of the 5-7th Mass took his place as Brigade Commander. McLaughlin is a regular old tyrant, but he don't trouble us much now as our regiment is detached from the Brigade now. Our whole Corps has gone into camp some miles back from here leaving us alone to garrison Fort Howard. Our regiment received orders from Headquarters Army of the Potomac last Sunday to remain here as a permanent garrison for Fort Howard. The Corps can go where it chooses but we can't leave here without orders from Grant The Fifth Corps joins us on the left and the ni\*\*\*\*s on the right of the fort. The 11th Mass Battery are in the fort, it is quite a strong fort and has been named after Gen. Howard. Our regiment has no picket duty to do now but has a camp guard. I am Corporal of the Guard today. We have to be right on our military now, have drills, camp guards, dress parades and inspections the same as we used to at Newport News. The Sergeants of companies have their tents pitched the same as if they were Captains and Lieutenants of companies Nat and myself are together. We have logged up our tent and have five pieces of tent up and corduroy beds and are living in style. The Commissioned officers now with the regiment are Barnes, Tripp, Richardson, Dean and Cap't Taylor. He joined us Sunday. He is Cap't now. Joseph Madigan has been promoted to Sergt Major. I expect a number of the Sergeants will be made commissioned officers soon as I understand we are to receive more recruits. We have an Orderly Sergeant every day for Officer of the Day. Barnes is learning some of them how to perform the duty of an Officer. I expect Barnes will resign as soon as three years of Lieutenant Colonelry expires. He is bound to do all he can for the old members of the regiment before he leaves. I wish you were well and with us and Shannon (?) and Nick. I hope and trust we shall all come together again sometime. Sooner or later I am afraid we shall not see Shannon again very soon. I would like to look in upon him now and see how he is getting along.

I saw by the Washington Chronicle that Curt Rand was dead. We were surprised to hear of his death as he only got a slight wound in the hand. No bones were touched. I can't believe that he died of his wounds. I am glad to hear that you are getting along so well and are enjoying yourself. I am afraid your head will trouble you out here in hot weather. but I hope we will finish this war up before another Summer I think things look favorable for our side Sheridan is doing a good thing in the Valley the news from Sheridan was received with cheers along our line and a salute was fired I guess about all the regiments cheered excepting(?) the 29th, I think these victories will help us a great deal towards putting Lincoln in for our next President. I received some papers from you yesterday and among the rest a secesh paper I hope you don't think I am an McClellonite I am not. If I have a chance to vote I shall vote for Old Abe. I used to like Mack well enough but I don't think much now of the party that supports him. It is the opinion of many that Mack would get the largest majority in the army but I think the majority would be on the other leg. Our regiment would go strong for McClellan but our regiment is only a small part of the army. Well it will be but a few weeks now to election. I suppose you will be at home to vote. If they don't allow us fellows to vote, you will please vote twice, once for me. I would like to be at home a few days with you. We would take our guns and go out hunting copperhead. I suppose we would not have to hunt far to find them. I suppose you are having some good times now adays. I think you deserve good times if any body does. If a fellow that has fought bled and died for his country don't deserve a rest and good times I don't know who does. I have got to go on guard duty so bye bye

Later We have had guard mounting and I am Corporal of the 3rd Relief so I will have a chance now to finish this scribbling. We drill now three hours a day and the guard that goes on in the morning has to drill in the forenoon.

All is quiet here now. It is reported that Butler was attacked at Bermuda Hundred and got drove back, but I don't believe it yet I guess it is only a camp yarn. We received a letter from you this morning directed to Nick and we knew it was from you and wishing to hear from you very much. I took the responsibility of opening the letter. Nick has not returned yet from the hospital. I will write to Nick to day and send the letter and photographs. Please excuse me for opening it.

We got paid off yesterday two months pay and Burgess has just come in with a bottle of pickles, two boxes Sardines, 1 box Peas 1 can Plums, 1 bottle \_\_\_\_\_ Ginger &c.. Nat sends his very best respects to you and the rest and says you must hurry up and come out here as we want some more sergeants in the company and their is a sight for some thing higher. I expect I am looking for a commission. I will take nothing short of a Brigadier General. I don't know of much more news to write you from this department. The cook has just come in with a kettle of fresh beef and onion stew. A good one it is to. We have a firstrate cook, one of the recruits. We don't get much \_\_\_\_\_ now. Not one sixth \_\_\_\_\_ as much as we did last summer. I never saw the old members of the 29th looking better then they do now. What few their is left are tough. Con. Homan is round as usual he says remember him to Lam. Perhaps you would like to know who your Co. E brothers are now, well as I have got a plenty of room on this paper I will give you the list of recruits Gerhard Briggerman, Morris Collin, Otto Denger, Martin Eck, Frederick Gradholz, William Klinkler, Thomas Mooney, Herman Meier, Ruter Moritz, Leopold O'Breiter, Manual Portello, Frank A. Roberts, James Robbins, Henry J. Swett, Peter Van Hagen, Jacob Wagner and Hezekiah Sargent some join \_\_\_\_\_kers. I can call the roll now without the names on paper. The rebels killed one of our regiments recruits on picket last week and wounded another so that he had to have his arm amputated and to day a n\*\*\*\*r was killed on picket in our front, all on the same post. Co. I has one Plymouth man, William Barret, he is quite an old man. About all our recruits are drafted men and substitutes. We never will have as good a regiment as we have had.

Well I have posted my men and will now continue. Nat is out drilling the company. Some of our company don't understand much of English, but we get along very well with them. I expect I shall be a Dutchman in a few months. The worst of it with these chaps they might be calling me all sorts of names and I wouldn't know the difference. I know of no more news to write to you I am enjoying the best of health and so is Burgess. I wonder where Bates is now. I should think he would write to some of the company and let them know his whereabouts. I guess he don't care much where the company is as long as he is in snug quarters. I guess he don't know we are doing garrison duty.

I want you to give my very best respects to Walter and Phinnery (?) also to Packard and remember me to all enquiring friends. I want one of your photographs.

Don't direct any more of my letters to the 3rd Division that is the nigger Division. There are but three divisions in the Corps now and ours is as before the 1st so you will please direct letters accordingly I wish you would call in to night and take supper with us but I suppose you have most as good a supper as we have I wouldn't mind dining with you to night I guess you would see that I had full ratios of eatables but could I get full ratios of after supper.

Well enough of this. I don't know what I have written but I believe I have written about all the news I know off. I hope this letter will find you enjoying yourself hugely and if you should happen to be awake during the small hours of the night think how you would like to be with your peaceful Holmes in the army. My kind regards to all your folks. Hoping to hear from you again soon I Remain Ever Your True Friend Orrin D. Holmes