**Excerpts from the Civil War Letters of Sgt. Levi Barker Boodey, Co. C, 115th O.V.I. and Family**

**Context:**

Levi Barker Boodey was the youngest brother of 15 children in the Boodey family which was not originally from Ohio. Prior to the Civil War, he had worked at a variety of jobs in New York, Michigan, and Ohio, but had ended in Peninsula, Ohio living with his 15 year old brother Merrill and his 2-year older sister in law Martha who became his closest family. He enlisted in 1862 after being recruited by George L. Waterman and served with Waterman in C Company of the 115th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Over time Boodey was promoted to Sergeant. His service extended beyond Waterman’s death in 1863 when his unit was deployed South to support Union operations in Tennessee. His further military service after the Election of 1864 is summarized in the Epilogue Activity in “Putting it All Together”. Boodey did survive the war. He returned to Peninsula, got married and raised a family with which he moved to Kansas in his final years.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Why did Levi Barker Boodey volunteer for military service? What was he serving/ fighting for?

2. What does Boodey say about his life in the Army? How does he describe his fellow soldiers and the officers he served under?

3. What are Boodey’s politics? Is he a Democrat or a Republican? How can you tell?

4. When is Boodey’s morale at its highest? At its lowest?

5. What does Boodey say should be done to bring the war to an end?

6. What does Boodey ask for or comment on about his family, friends and hometown of Peninsula, Ohio?

7. What can you infer about Boodey’s plans for after the war?

8. How do his letters differ depending on whether he is writing to his brother, to his sister-in-law, or both?

9. What are your questions?

**1. Camp Massillon, Sept 21st, 1862**

Dear Brother-

…The boys are all well. I meant to get my picture taken yesterday, but could not get to town. George Beers went home yesterday, so I cannot send it if I do get it taken. I don’t suppose we will get a chance to come home again since we have been transmogrified and mortgaged ourselves to Uncle Sam for three years. For my part I don’t want to come under existing circumstances. I am of opinion that when I do come I shall have permission to stay for more than one day. I would like to see you all very much and don’t see why you cannot come to camp and see a feller once. I have received news that makes me feel very bad. I mean the surrender of Munfordville and seems hard for a General to stand off and see 4000 men sacrificed victims to his imbecility. It is a shame and a disgrace to the service to retain such men in command. Buell ought to be removed at once and superseded by a man competent to command an army. I see that little Mac is doing the fair ting on the Potomac. I knew he would if he was not hampered too much by broken down politician and imbecile officials. Long may he wave say I. I wish you would find out John’s company and Captain so I can write to him. I wish we could go to Washington and be under command of little Mac, it would give me great pleasure. I would like to be at the taking of that boasted stronghold of rebellion Richmond…

**2. Camp near Covington, KY, Oct 5th, 1862**

Dear Brother and Sister

…Coming in the (railroad) cars today the women were seen at nearly every house waving their handkerchiefs to the soldiers as they passed by. That set me a thinking. I have made up my mind that the northern people have not had schooling enough. They have not felt the effects of the war enough to fully appreciate it. The seat of war ought to be removed to their own hearthstones so that they can get the benefit of it in a little different shape from what they have had it. They want to see the sorrow of war where they have only seen the bright side of it. I think if the war was carried into Ohio and the other border states the rebellion would be crushed in a very short time. At least the war would become unpopular in a very short time. I wish it was ended honorably, but I must not complain. I enlisted to help put down this rebellion and I will try and do my duty…

**3. Cincinnati, Nov 5th, 1862**

Dear Sister

…I must tell you a story concerning this accursed rebellion. It comes to me from an eye-witness and a participant, also a sufferer. He is an East Tennessean from the neighborhood of Knoxville. He is an intelligent man and was with Morgan’s division at Cumberland gap. His story is a heartrending one and should be published ever where in a civilized country. His is the story of thousands more in the same region. He tells me that the rebels are the most arbitrary and tyrannical people in the world pursuing and persecuting Union men in the most cruel manner…The families of the hard mountaineers are left behind to the tender mercies of Jeff Davises’ blood thirsty minions. He says he does not expect to find them alive unless they get relief before winter sets in and there is no possible way of relieving them except by the aid of a strong military force… He says the women and children are suffering for the want of both food and clothing. The country has been overrun with both the Union and rebel armies and all the winter stock of provisions has been confiscated…There was an arrival yesterday of Tennesseans to the amount of about one hundred refugees from their native hills driven thence by the conscription act of the rebel congress taking every white man between the ages of fourteen and sixty years. Hundreds more of them are on the road to a more hospitable government. May God help those who are left behind. I wish this hellish rebellion was crushed out and those who are guilty of this bloodshed were brought to condign punishment…

**4. Cincinnati Nov 23, 1862**

Dear Sister,

… Those boxes came duly to hand and they were right welcome visitors. I found a very nice jell cake in one of them which the boys said was for me but I saw no name on it. I took possession of it however and gave you credit for it. I cannot find language adequate in which to express my thanks for it. I must also extend my most sincere thanks to Mrs. E. H. Cole for a can of pickled peaches which were very acceptable. Also to Mrs. Josephine Beers for tow mince pies which were the best I ever ate I think. I will tell you what it is Martha, it does a soldier’s heart good to think and know how many kind friends he has left behind him who are constantly thinking of him and are concerned for his welfare. It warms his heart up and make him think of bygone days and happy days in perspective when he shall meet them under the old roof tree to part from them no more for camps and battle fields and the horror of war. Although I have seen none of these things I know not how son I may…

**5. Kemper Barracks Cincinnati, Nov 26, 1862**

Dear Sister,

…I wish you would wake Merrill up and set him to writing a letter to me. I hope you will be successful in reviving the Thespian this inter. I would like to be there to help it along. If you are short of male players you can dress “Docs” wife in male attire, I think she would play her part well…I am sorry Henry and Harry were obliged to leave home and all its comforts again, but it is military law you know and must be obeyed; it is a despotism and should be abolished. I am glad Jim Matthews boat is done and I wish I was there with him. It is much better than soldiering… If you know anything of our County Bounty I wish you would let me know about it because if we are going to get it we would like to see it coming, if not we would like to know it.

**6. Cincinnati, Dec 13th 1862**

Dear Brother,

… the failure of the Peninsula (Virginia) campaign was brought right home to Abe and Stanton. Now I should think you would be ashamed of yourselves for sacrificing so many men as you did before Richmond and what did you accomplish? You saved Washington when it was not in danger and satisfied some party malice but lost what should be possessed by the chief magistrate of this mighty republic, the confidence of the people even of your own party. Old Abe you are a failure, a humbug as big as ever was seen, you are played out…

**7. Cincinnati, Jan 17th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

There has been the greatest fall of now here within a few days that was ever known. Some estimate it at 33 inches but I guess it will fall short of that. Lieutenant Waterman has had the mumps and has been very sick but is around again. Fred Boies is around and I would give a month’s wages if I was as tough as he is. We have not been paid yet, and the lord only knows when we will be. There is talk of putting pay day off till the first of March. It is a shame that soldiers can’t have their pay when contractors, congressmen, and other gov’t. thieves get paid as regular as pay day comes. There is some talk of raising soldiers’ wages but I guess it will end in talk as all such just and necessary schemes do. If they don’t use soldiers a little better it won’t be long before the numbers of our army will become miserably less as in fact it is doing now…I wish congress would go to work and do their work and stop quarreling over the (Blacks). The soldier should be provided for first, last, and all the time…

**8. Cincinnati, Jan 21st 1863**

Dear Sister,

Our forces in Arkansas have been very successful in capturing prisoners and munitions of war but that was only one place reduced and there are a thousand more left as strong or stronger than it was. “I wish this war was ended”. How many times I have heard that expression lately, how many times I have made it myself and how sincere I was when I said it, not that I am in any fear for myself but for the good of our country. How foolish men look when they say “no compromise with traitors”. “I am for a vigorous prosecution of the war”, and such kindred expressions. It always makes me think they are thirsting for the blood of their fellow beings whose life is as dear to them as ours is to us. When will providence or some other power interfere and put a stop to this blood-shed and murder. It is a sin against God and man and should be stopped by all mean. If my officers should see what I have written they would say that I was a traitor and should be punished for it. I am ready to go into the field to restore the constitution but not to free negroes and that is the sentiment of a large majority of the soldiers…

**9. Cincinnati, Jan 25th, 1863**

Dear Brother and Sister,

… I wish this war was ended not on my own account altogether but for the good of community at large. I don’t see any other way to end it except through the ballot box. Bullets have been tried and found insufficient arguments because the rebels are as good at that as we are. I say call a national convention and settle the mess without any more bloodshed. It can be done and will have to be done eventually and why not as well do it first as last. I don’t believe there is a man in this regiment but would throw up his cap and shout for joy if peace was declared today…

**10. Cincinnati, Jan 30th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

I hope, yes sincerely hope this cruel unnecessary war will soon come to a close and peace and prosperity be restored to our beloved but distracted country and every man and woman who have the good of the country at heart will use all the influence they have to put a stop to it. It now remains with the people to end the war, the administration having been weighed in the balance and found wanting back bone and brains to carry it on. I have been of opinion ever since the war broke out that it was for the (Blacks) but as assure to the contrary by old Abe. Now he comes out and shows his hand and says we must fight for the (Blacks) and nothing but the (Blacks). How cruelly have thousands of us been deceived, thousands who are willing to spend the last dollar and shed the last drop of blood for their beloved country to see it restored to its former greatness and prosperity, Deceived yes, cruelly deceived into enlisting by the siren song of patriotism… and forced into the alternative to fight for the (Blacks) or desert. I am opposed to both, but will be obliged to do one or the other. If it is the former I shall go contrary to principles and inclination. If the latter I shall I shall be forever disgraced and my name will be a blot on the fair name of our family. I could justify myself in my own eyes for doing so but could not satisfy others perhaps. Now which shall I do. Hoping this war will soon come to an end, I will close…

**11. Cincinnati, Feb 6th, 1863**

Dear Brother,

I have read to day extracts from a speech made in Congress by Conway of Kansas on the war. He goes in for peace the biggest kind. You recollect the speech he made the last session where he said he would not vote another man or another dollar for the war unless the President declared it a war for emancipation. He says the proclamation has been tried and had failed of its object and the next thing to be done was to let the south go and make a kind of a reciprocity treaty and live in peace with them… I for one say let the south go. Reason- It has been proved to a demonstration that we cannot conquer them or whip them back into the union, what is the use of pursuing an object which you are convinced you cannot accomplish. It is the heighth of folly to shed any more blood or spend any more in such a war. It is fighting brother against brother and that is wicked… Let them go and do for themselves. A continuation of the war will only tend to widen the breach already made and make them still more deadly enemies to us. I don’t see why there is not room for two nations on this continent. Why can’t we live in peace with them as well as we can with Canada.

**12. Cincinnati, Feb 8th 1863**

Dear Sister,

There has been an order issued by the war department to give no more furloughs to soldiers under any circumstances whatever. That is what I call Military despotism. When a man enlists in the army to serve his country in her hour of peril I think he should be used as a man and a patriot who has sacrificed the comforts of home for the dangers of the battlefield not as a condemned felon who has been guilty of the most heinous of crimes. They ought to let him go home as often as practicable… I am glad Merrill takes so much comfort cutting poles on the side hill. That was more than I could do in the same place. I am much pleased to hear that he has succeeded so well in selling out that old stock this winter and would not advise him to buy much at present prices….

**13. Cincinnati, Feb 19th, 1863**

Dear Brother,

I think we are in for guard duty for the balance of the war but that is better for a fellow than to set himself for a target for rebels to practice on or to listen to the groans of the wounded and dying on the battlefield or the fiery screeching devils of solid shot and shells or to go on a long weary march in the heat of a southern sun. I think I should prefer guard duty in Cincinnati to any such things as I have spoken of and I say may the gallant 115th never haver her ranks thinned by shot or shrapnel… It is now nearly four months since we have been paid and the boys are left destitute almost to a man of that most necessary of all commodities, money, and four month’s pay would come into play. Dan Kilboy had a letter from his wife stating that she was out of wood and nearly out of money. Dan has been a little down in the mouth about it and says he would like to have her provided for in some way. I think if I had left a family behind me with a promise from my neighbors that she should be provided for in my absences and the promise was not kept I think I should make myself scarce in the army for a while until they were provided for at any rate, and should be justified in doing so.

**14. Cincinnati, Mar 6th ,1863**

Dear Sister,

You say you don’t like the conscription bill, I don’t like it either. It is not stringent enough. As it is if a man has got $300 he can keep himself out of the army and his neighbor who is poor will have to fight his battles for him. If that and the substitute clause was struck out it would be all right. This rebellion will have to be put down with the bayonet and the more bayonets there is brought to bear on it the sooner it will be put down. I am done praying for peace as I think it does no good. You seem to think God has deserted us and gone over to the rebels. If that is the case the best thing our military authorities can do is send a detachment of the 115th OVI after him. They are good at picking up deserters…

**15. Cincinnati, St Patrick’s Day (Mar 17th) in the Morning, 1863**

Dear Brother and Sister

There is fears of riots here at the April elections and the military authorities are preparing for it in advance. Gen. Wright has issued an order to the Mayor to give up the arms which were issued to the police last summer when the city was threatened by Kirby Smith. A squad of Co. C was sent after them yesterday and they were taken to the arsenal and are now safe in the hands of the military. I hope for the credit of American citizens if nothing more there will be no disturbance but if there is it will be put down with a strong arm. The mob will be the aggressors and the worse will be their own. Soldiers will not be responsible for the blood of the rioters. Just so sure as there is any demonstration made on the part of citizens against law and order the military will be called out to suppress it…

**16. Townsends Bridge, Ky, Apr 5th 1863**

Dear Brother and Sister

We have had good times since we have been here living on hard bread and bacon, standing picket, scouting &C. The boys are all well. This is the most beautiful country I ever saw. We are at the junction of Townsend creek and the Licking river on one of the richest pieces of bottom land I ever saw. I don’t see what should possess men to find fault with the government when they are masters of such plantations as are to be found here. They have nothing to do but to set their slaves to work and lie down in the shade and sleep. Taxation was never very hard on them, nothing to what it will be before the public debt is paid. Kentucky never saw hard times before but if I mistake not they will repent them of their sins in sack cloth and ashes before this war is over… I would like to see Northern Ohio once more…

**17. Townsends Bridge, Ky, Apr 1th 1863**

Dear Sister,

I wish I could be there to get some of that new sugar. I am glad that boat building and other business is in such a flourishing condition and hope it may continue so. I received that letter from Dan but there was no news in it. He seems to have altered his mind on the war question and I thought the tone of his letter indicated a slight attack of the blues. It might have been caused by the passage of conscription law, I would advise him to take unto him a wife of some color as he would stand a better chance to get clear of joining the army of father Abraham. I am thankful that I am in good health, much better than I have been since we left camp Massillon and am gaining flesh every day. We live on pork, beans, rice, hard bread and coffee. It is rather dry but we manage to get fat on it. Well so long as I get no worse I will be contented with my lot. It comes hard on some of the boys but they would grumble at chicken pies and warm biscuits with fresh butter every day but thank the lord such men are few in this company.

**18. Dayton, May 8th 1863**

Dear Sister,

Yours of May 3rd came duly to hand and I was much pleased to hear from you once more. You will see by the heading of my letter that our location is changed again. We were ordered out her to quell a riot which was caused by the arrest of Vallandigham by the military. He was arrested for disloyal speeches made at Mt. Vernon and Columbus. We arrived here on the 5th, about an hour too late to save the office of the Dayton Journal which was broken open and fired by the mob. Although too late to save the office we were in time to save the Empire office and other buildings and make some arrests of the rioters… It is a pity that people enjoying such blessings and privileges cannot behave and obey the civil laws of the land. There is one thing certain if civil law will not keep them under subjection military law will. The county is under martial law. I wish to say one thing to Merrill knowing his opinions on political matters I would advise him to be very careful how he expresses them as he has friends there who would not scruple to take almost any oath to get him out of the way. If he cannot speak without expressing his opinions he had better say nothing. Mum is the word nowadays… Lieutenant Waterman sends his respects to the family. Give my respects to all and remember me as your brother for the union.

**19. Hamilton, May 20th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

Your arguments concerning riot law is thrown away on me for I can never believe that two wrongs make one right. I will admit that Mr. Vallandigham was arrested for opinions sake but I do not justify the act. It will not do for me to tell what I think on the subject and as I said in my other letter if a man considers his life and liberty of any value it would be better for him to keep mum as there are men who would not scruple to put an opponent out of the way. When I wrote to Merrill on that subject I meant no offence. I know that there have been instances where men have been arrested and injured in a dungeon for speaking what they thought on political and religious matters…don’t show this letter to anyone but Merrill as the very walls have ears. I would like to see you all and if that rumor is true which I wrote about yesterday (about the 115th being mustered out of service) I will see you in less than two months… I am glad to hear of the improvements in Peninsula especially the sale of the mill. It would have been a blessing if Bronson had died years ago and left the mill to some man to repair. The boys are all well except Geo. Cassie. He has a very bad cough and has gone to Cincinnati tonight…

**20. Peninsula, June 21, 1863**

Dear Brother- To Levi, from his sister Martha C. Boodey.

I attended the funeral of George Cassie yesterday afternoon; although there was no kend Father or devoted Mother nor Brother or Sister nor a loving wife to shed a tear or follow him to his last resting place, the people of this Town paid him the highest compliment; the flag was raised half mast. The coffin was placed on a stand in the church yard, there was a splendid wreath of flowers around the head of it and a beautiful bouquet of flowers at the foot of the coffin. The church was crowded full, the entry was full and many stood outside. I never saw so many people in that Church before. I cannot describe my feelings when I saw the wagon pass that contained all that remained of that young man but a few short months he left us in the full vigor of manhood, he came back to us silent and motionless. God forbid that any more of those brave boys that went with him to the Tenn. Field should come back as he did… I wish this war would end, but God only know when it will… We are having Union meetings here again; last week one evening Bill Hastings and George Welton and Isiah Humphrey enlisted. I don’t think much of these meetings; I think it will be pretty hard to get many more volunteers from this place…

**21. Dayton, June 25th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

I am glad that there was so much respect shown to the remains of poor Cassie. He was a good soldier when he was well, being always ready for any duty no matter how arduous it might be. He was a favorite with the whole company and his absence is noted from day to day by all of his comrades… Poor Cassie, he has gone where war is never known. Peace to his ashes. With you I heartily wish this war was over and although the rebels are making rapid movement towards our own peaceful states I hail it as a sign that the war is approaching a decisive crisis at last. I for one say let them come and we will fight them on our own ground and with the same advantages that they have fought us for two years…

…So Merrill thinks I had better not buy Jack Colliers house. Well if he wants a double price for it I think he had better keep it till he can find a customer elsewhere. I have been paying double prices for everything I have bought lately in fact ever since I enlisted an I am tired of it. We are charged double price for our clothing which we draw from Uncle Sam and it is not worth half price. I have overdrawn my clothing allowance now and have been in the service only ten months. My clothes are not fit to wear now hardly.

**22. Dayton, June 30th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

You asked me what I am going to do the fourth. There is only one thing for me to do, that is to hold myself in readiness for duty at a moment’s notice. I suppose there will be great doings here the fourth and we will have to act as police to keep the citizens from killing each other. A soldier cannot participate in any pleasure on public occasions unless it is to make a display of marching to amuse the people of the place he happens to be in. There is no real enjoyment in a soldier’s life except when he is off duty and then he lives in continual fear of being called on to drill drill drill or some other disagreeable duty. Military life is about played out with me and the sooner we are sent to the field or discharged the better I shall like it….

Southern Ohio has turned out a great many soldiers and good ones too but there is too great a proportion of deserters. The most of the deserters are those who went as substitutes and were bought at a big price. They got the bounty and some of them never saw their regiments until they were taken to them under guard but thanks to the furlough system desertion by company and almost regiments is about played out and our army is improving in strength and efficiency every day. Today we have good news from the army in Tennessee and may it continue good unto the crushing of the rebellion.

**23. Dayton, July 12th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

The Boston boys are all well and in good spirits and who under the circumstances could help being in good spiritis when we hear such good news from all directions. Vicksburg taken, the rebels defeated at Helena and Donaldsonville all on the glorious fourth of July and besides the news from Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. Is it not enough to make the heart of the citizen as well as the soldier swell with joy? I fell as if my term of service was shortened more than one half already. I tell the boys that if the war is prosecuted with energy becoming this great nation we will all be home on New Year’s day and I am thinking they are inclined to believe me too...

I don’t know what the authorities intend to do with us but I don’t think we will ever go to the field to stay any length of time. It may be if there is an invasion of Ohio, Kentucky, or Indiana we will be sent to meet it but I doubt that even. I wish this war was over, I would like to go to work again in the boat yard. This inactivity is almost intolerable and I almost wish they would send us to Vicksburg or somewhere or anywhere for a change. Well I suppose we will have to abide by the decree of fate and content ourselves seeking amusement to drive away the ennui of Camp life.

**24. Dayton, Aug 15th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

Your letter of Aug 12th came duly to hand and was thankfully received. It found e fat, ragged, saucy and lazy and ready for some fighting, fun, or anything exciting. You need have no fear of my getting so lazy that I cannot work in the boat yard again because I intend to go to work in it as soon as the war is over lazy or no lazy. I would like to be there now and I begin to think the time is not far distant “when this cruel war will be over”, then for a return to peaceful environments and home pleasures… I don’t think I shall be able to get a furlough at all if there is any truth in the report that we are going to Tennessee but however I will try. It pleases me to hear that Merrill is doing so well and I hope that time may come when he will be able to say to some of his old friends, ‘do you remember the time you wanted to crush me for being and honest man?’ and that they may look to him to save them from starvation. I cannot wish him better success or them worse luck. By the way what is the opinion of the people there of the two candidates for governor of Ohio? Are they in favor of electing a man who is banished for treasonable speeches or the election of an office seeker who has been thrown aside by his party for so many years. I am not in favor of either but would rather vote for an honest man H.J. Jewett for instance. I think Jewett is an honest man and he would get my vote if he was nominated, but Vallandigham will not get it. I was once an admirer of Vallandigham but living in Dayton his home town cured me of that most effectually. He is a smart man and it is a pity that he would try to hinder the prosecution of the war. I say prosecute the war with vigor. Call out every able-bodied man if it is necessary and crush out this hell born rebellion as quickly as possible. As it is to be done let us do it with vigor and as cheerfully as becomes a great people. The more men there is called out the quicker the work will be done and the less expense incurred. We have gained some glorious victories, now let us gain more instead of sitting down content with what we have. I am ready to go to the field as soon as called for and I have no doubt the rest of the company are as willing to go as I am and may be more so. I will prophesy that in six month’s time I, if spared, will be home at work in the boat yard.

**25. Dayton, Sep 14th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

We arrived here at 6 o’clock yesterday morning having been detained three hours in Columbus. I was so tired sleepy yesterday that I didn’t feel much like writing. I found Lieutenant Waterman doing very well. He has been very bad but is much better now. His wound was much worse than it was at first supposed to be, the ball having cut the two outer coatings of the artery. He has the best kind of care and will no doubt recover rapidly. The boys are all well and full of fun. You don’t know how glad I was to get back here again, it seems more like home here than it does there.

The man who shot Waterman was turned over to the civil authorities and was acquitted on examination. There was some pretty hard swearing at the trial and justice was cheated of her due but never mind, it will be all right in the course of time…. I promised to write to Waterman but Merrill can tell him how George is and it would save me the trouble of writing.

**26. Dayton, Sep 22nd, 1863**

Dear Sister,

Since I last wrote you there have been some very important occurrences here. The untimely death of Lieutenant Waterman has filled every hear with sorrow, genuine sincere and heartfelt sorrow. He was like a brother to all of us and you need not wonder that every one of the company harbor a feeling of revenge towards his murderer…On the evening of the 17th Sept Lieutenant Eadie was attacked at his hotel by a ruffian who fired three shots with a revolver at him but missed. The Lieutenant snapped his head which put a stop to his shooting for some time to come. He was not killed however. Lieutenant Eadie was ordered to Cincinnati under arrest…. It has been lonesome here ever since Lieutenant Waterman died and we have no hope of ever finding his equal again. May he rest in peace and many friends drop a tear to his memory. I pitied his poor mother, she was the very picture of despair but I don’t think she shed a tear. She would hang over him and moan, ‘my boy, my boy, may poor boy can never speak to me again’. It was the most affecting sight I ever saw and would have moved the hardest to tears. I pity the grief-stricken mother from the bottom of my heart. There was a funeral address delivered at the Episcopal Church and one of the largest processions I ever saw. Our company took the lead with reversed arms, then came the hearse, then the carriage with the mourners, then a battalion of militia with arms reversed, and each side the streets were filled with people of Dayton and vicinity. All seemed to sympathize with the afflicted parents. It is my earnest prayer that such a thing may never occur in our company again.

**27. Nashville, November 1st, 1863**

Dear Sister,

I now for the first time since we started from Covington have an opportunity to write you a few lines in answer to your kind and affectionate letter of October 25th. Your letter came to me at the steamboat landing as we were starting and we have been traveling ever since until last night. We left Covington on the 28th and arrived at Louisville the next night, stayed there until the next night when we took the cars (Railroad) for this place where we arrived yesterday after noon. We are now in camp waiting for transportation. We have drawn shelter tents and are ready for a long march… It is rumored that we are to march to Chattanooga. I think it will try some of the boys it being only 200 miles distant. Well we ar now in Dixie for sure and the time is not far distant when we will see the elephants’ tusks and tails. I don’t know as it is any satisfaction to me to be a target for rebel bullets but it is a satisfaction to give some of the regiment and opportunity to show their grit. To hear some of them talk you would think they would put the whole rebel army to flight single handed. And now the chance is at hand I would like to see how they will conduct themselves. Let me assure you that I am in as good spirits as ever I was in my life and my health never was better. We are not livening as well as we did in Dayton but we have enough hard bread and bacon and coffee but according to all accounts we will have to put up with a great deal less than we have now. You caution me not to entertain gloomy thoughts. Let me assure you that I shall not but shall keep a stiff upper lip and my nose clean and put my trust in the God of battles who favors the clearest heads and the strongest battalions. Believing in fatalism as I do I cannot consistently feel down hearted about my fate. I think that a man will never die thill his time comes and then nothing will save him. I have an idea that I shall live to see an end to this war and the country restored to peace and happiness and with that idea shall face danger cheerfully. I may be wounded and disabled but I don’t believe the bullet ever was or ever will be molded to kill me. If I am disabled I shall consider that it was done in the discharge of my duty to my country and that my country will be grateful to me for my services.

**28. In camp near Murfreesboro, Nov 14th, 1863**

Dear Sister,

Your kind letter of Nov 8th came to hand yesterday but I was out on picket and could not answer it until to-day. You will see by the heading of this letter that we have not got to Chattanooga yet… The second day from Nashville we came to the commencement of the battle field of Stone River. I am glad you know nothing of war because if you did it would be useless for me to try to describe it to you. The ground on which the battle wa fought is rolling and where it is cleared looks like prairie and where there is timber land the timber is mostly red cedar and oak… All there is to mark the scene is trees cut and torn by shot and shell, trees scarred by rifle and musket shots, an occasional skeleton of a dead artillery or cavalry horse, portions of gun carriages or army wagons, numerous graves of rebels and federals, the latter in most instances marked by their comrades, the former look as if the bodies were thrown in heaps and covered lightly with earth and in one case so lightly that legs and arms may be seen sticking out… In fact the whole country between here and Bowling Green, Ky, is a very fertile desert scattered with the debris of war. It is enough to make one sick to think of it. In observing the positions held by the rebels between here and Bowling Green I can only wonder why the rebels are now on the frontier of Georgia. I think if their cause was just they should now hold the line of the Ohio river or the north line of Tennessee at least. Their armies have always been more numerous than ours, they have always had the advantage of being among friends and in one of the richest countries for produce on the face of the earth. But they have been compelled to abandon it as they will be compelled to abandon other positions and other states until they are compelled to abandon their hellish scheme to destroy the best government on earth and they should be made responsible for all this devastation and destruction. Their leaders should be compelled to make restitution in a life of eternal misery.

**29. Murfreesboro, March 6th, 1864**

Dear Sister,

There seems now to be a chance for me to be promoted to orderly sergeant after a while as that place will be vacant and the next in rank is not competent to fill it so it will go on to the next- who is your humble servant. I would rather you would not say anything about it in public however at present. It will increase my wages to $21.00 per month and at the same time increase the responsibility in a still greater proportion but notwithstanding I think I am competent to fill the position and I know the company would prefer me to any other ma in it for that position… The boys have confidence in me for more than one reason. One is that Lieutenant Waterman was my friend, another is I have never betrayed that confidence, and another is I am one of the boys and always will be so long as we are in the company together.

**30. Murfreesboro, March 21st, 1864**

Dear Sister,

I don’t know as I have more than one action to regret since I have been in the service and that is of signing that paper concerning Judge Humphrey. That I consider the meanest trick I ever was guilty of and have only to say I am very sorry for and ashamed of it. If there is anything more that I have done that is “low, mean and contemptible, I am wholly unconscious of it and you will confer a favor on me by informing me of it in your next letter…I don’t believe this war will continue any more than a year and a half longer and we have only that length of time to serve anyway. Now that the government has come to its senses and removed old granny Halleck and put an able and successful general in his place it gives me new hope. I have faith to believe that Lieutenant General Gran will try and put an end to this war by the shortest possible method ie by whipping the rebel armies until they will be glad to sue for peace. Some people seem to think that the government ought to offer terms to the rebels as the best way to obtain a peace but have not they scoffed the idea time and again? Have they not said that they would not consent to any terms except a recognition of their independence? And let me ask who is there who wants to see this country divided? I know peace is desirable but I want to see an honorable one or none. I say let us all unite and put down this rebellion…

**31. Murfreesboro, May 1st, 1864**

Dear Sister,

Our army was never as strong or in as good a moral condition as it is now and the rebel arm was never weaker or more demoralized that it is at the present time…You ask me if I can’t get a furlough. I suppose I could if I could make a good excuse, but to tell the truth I don’t care about coming home till I can come to stay. Going home on a 20 or 30 day furlough from hear would only serve to make me homesick and discontented. I have become accustomed to the country and the method of living and doing business connected with my position and I have no desire to accustom myself to any other method till I can do so for good. I would be as glad to come home to see my friends as any soldier being as there are those who are as dear to me as any other person’s friends and relations are to them. Rest assured that I have not forgotten the comforts and pleasures of home yet and never will. Col Lucy says that there is a prospect of our leaving here in a short time. If we do farewell to comfort and easy duty for a time. When we leave here we will probably go to the front where bullets whistle and cannons roar, but I would not have you or any of my friends feel bad about it as I consider that there will be just as good a chance for me to go through it alive as there would be for me to live through my term of service doing garrison duty. I don’t believe a man will die till his time comes and when it does come there is no power that can save him and in that belief, I am prepared to meet danger in any form and to meet it cheerfully. I have always had a desire to see a battle and until that curiosity is gratified I shall not be satisfied…

Source: **Robert P and Jeanette K Bishop- The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Levi Barker Boody, Company C, 115th OVI and Family- Peninsula Historical Society, 2008**