

EDITED TRANSCRIPTION – Original file: "Letter Oct. 2nd 1863.tif"  
Edited to enhance readability. Added notes are *{italicized-bracketed}*.

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Headquarters 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Michigan Volunteer Infantry  
near Loudon, Tennessee, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1863

Dear Wife,

As I promised to write again soon I now make my word good. The mail goes out tomorrow and I know you want to hear from me as often as you can, so I will spend this evening writing to you and I will write you a good long letter if I am not interrupted by visitors or by business. I have been very busy today and in fact I find my time pretty well occupied all of the time. It being the first of the month again I have my reports to make. I have more to do then than any other time, and as we have done a great deal of marching lately my writing gets behind and when we are in camp I have to bring it up so I can tell where we are and what we have done or got to do. Yesterday and last night we had some rain, the first we have seen since we left Kentucky, and it was welcome to us you may believe, for we have had dust all of the time, enough to suffocate us. Well, Susan, we have been out in line of battle three times since I wrote and have not yet fired a gun. The rebels came within a few miles of us but did not dare venture an attack. They drove in our cavalry, which skirmished with them for three or four days, that being all the fighting we know anything about. We could hear the firing, which was music for some and death to some. I have not heard from them today and the chances are good for a nights sleep tonight. We are so used to being

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ordered out in the middle of the night and marched until we are most hungry enough to eat a pickled elephant, that we consider a fall night's rest a luxury. Last week we had reveille at three o'clock, marched all day until night, halted and eat our supper, turned around and marched all night, and camped the next morning on the same ground we started from. We are now on the same campground we camped on when we first come to Loudon, being the third time we have camped on it. I have heard it said three times and out, but it is not so with us and it does not work that way at all with us. We have marched out to fight five times since we have been here and have not seen a reb. We expect a mail tomorrow and I hope we will not be disappointed, for we are in great need of news. We have all sorts of rumors, but nothing reliable. For instance, today it is reported that Richmond *{VA}* is taken and *{General Robert E.}* Lee killed. How true it is I can't tell, but hope it is. So when it happened report don't say. Peace might be declared a long time before we would know anything about or you might have winter up there and we not hear a word of it. We are the nearest to getting out of the world we could be as for knowing what is going on outside of our own

observation. Well, I had not ought to complain for there were a lot of good loyal people in this region who have for two years been subject to the mercies of a lot of unprincipled villains who have persecuted them to extremes and even beyond that. We have come to relieve them and help the most loyal portion of South sustain the government.

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One little town we marched through last week, at every house the stars & stripes were waving with only two or three exceptions. Deserters from the rebel army are numerous and if it keeps on so much longer there will be no rebels to fight. I heard Captain *{George W.}* Buckingham say that he had administered the oath to as many as fifty rebel deserters in one day while he was in command of the Provost Guard. Things look cheering enough in this region and if no drawbacks have been had in other places prospects are good as far as I know anything about it. Keep up your spirits and you will soon, I hope, have no reason to regret my absence. If this war closes in any reasonable length of time I shall not complain. I can go home ~~with~~ and know how a war is carried out, which is worth something. I tell you I have learned more in the army than I ever expected to know and I have accomplished more in the army than I ever could in Saginaw *{M}*. A soldier that does his duty well and lives up to the regulations is a gentleman and can be accepted into any society. The rules that governs a soldier are strict, but no more so than is necessary, and by living up to them he has it easier than he would to half do it. There is hard duty to perform, but what soldier does not expect that if he does his duty well. I like the service well and if it was not for being away from my family I would stick to it for the rest of my life, but you need not worry and trouble yourself about the hardships we have to endure, for they are easy to what we would have stood if we would let the rebels have their way.

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It is now tattoo and drums and bugles are sounding in every direction for roll call, and soon will come taps and all must be still in camp and lights must be out. I suppose you get my letters regular now as a mail goes out now every two days, but has not come this way yet but we expect soon to get it then we will be all right once more. I am well and the health of the regiment is very good at present, only from 5 to 7 are off duty on account of sickness; that is, with the regiment when we go out expecting a fight sick men are scarce. I know that to be a fact for I have been left behind every time to bring out all the stragglers and men that accidentally get left and I could hardly find sick men enough to take care of the camp, some companies not having any, so you see it is very healthy here. We have had but four men die in the last three months while last winter we lost a great many during the last there month. We have been continually on the move and have done as hard marching as is on record and the men are in the best of spirits and ready for duty all of the while. I hope you are as well as myself and nothing has happened to you and sis since I last heard from you. As it take some time for a letter to reach you from here you must not think that I am hurt or

anything for I apprehend no danger. Keep up your spirits and I will and time will go faster than it would to worry about it. Over one year has gone by since I enlisted and to look back does not seem so long and less than two years more will end the war or fill the time I enlisted for. If I had a letter to answer I probably would have wrote a more interesting one this time. So take good care of sis and remember me to all inquiring friends and believe me ever.

Your Affectionate Husband,

D. D. Keeler

W. D. 2<sup>d</sup> Regt of Michigan Vol Inftry  
Near Loudon Tenn Oct 20<sup>th</sup> 1863

Dear Wife

As I promised to write again soon I now make my word good the mail goes out tomorrow and I know you want to hear from me as often as you can so I will spend this evening writing to you and I will write you a good long letter if I am not interrupted by visitors or by business. I have been very busy to day and in fact I find my time pretty well occupied all of the time, it being the first of the month again I have my reports to make I have more to do then than any other time, and as we have done a great deal of marching lately my writing gets behind and when you are in camp I have to bring it up so I can tell where we are and what we have done or got to do. Yesterday and last night we had some rain the first we have seen since we left Kentucky and it was welcome to us you may believe for we have had dust all of the time, enough to suffocate us. Well Susan we have been out in line of battle three times since I wrote and have not yet fired a gun. The rebels came within a few miles of us but did not dare venture an attack they drove in our Cavalry which skirmished with them for three or four day. What being all the fighting we know any thing about we could hear the firing which was music for some and death to some. I have not heard from them to day and the chances are good for a nights sleep to night. We are so used to being

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and marched all night and camped the next morning  
on the same ground we started from. We are now on the  
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to Loudon being the third time we have camped on it.  
I have heard it said three times and out but it is not so with  
us and it does not work that way at all with us we have  
marched out to fight five times since we have been here  
and have not seen a rat. We expect a mail to morrow and  
I hop we will not be disappointed for we are in great need  
of news, we have all sorts of rumors but nothing reliable  
for instance to day it is reported that Richmond is taken  
and Lee killed. How true it is I cant tell but hope it is so  
when it hapened report dont say. Peace might be declared a long  
time before we would know any thing about it, or you might  
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Affectionate Husband

A. Wheeler

Jusam M. Wheeler  
East Saginaw Mich