

Walter Weener Records and Letters

Discharge Certificate

CERTIFICATE.

TO BE GIVEN TO VOLUNTEERS AT THE TIME OF THEIR DISCHARGE TO ENABLE THEM TO RECEIVE THEIR PAY, etc.

I CERTIFY, on honor, that Walter Weener, a Corporal of Captain W. G. Eaton, Company (I) of the 13th Regiment of Michigan Inftry [sic] Volunteers, of the State of Michigan, born in Holland, State of [blank], aged 26 years; 6 feet 4 inches high; Light complexion, Grey eyes, Brown hair, and by occupation a Farmer, having joined the company on its original organization at Olive Michigan Dec. 7, 1861, and enrolled in it at the muster into the service of the United States at Kalamazoo Mich, on the 17th day of January, 1862, (or was mustered in service as a recruit, by [blank], at [blank], on the [blank] day of [blank], 186 [blank], to serve in the Regiment) for the term of three years: and having served honestly and faithfully with his Company in [blank], to [crossed out: the present date, is now entitled to a discharge by reason of] the 31st day of Dec, 1862 at which time he was killed in Battle at Stone [sic] River Tenn.

The said Copl. [sic] Walter Weener was last paid by Paymaster Neal [illegible] to include the 31st day of August, 1862, and has pay due him from that time to the present date, and also pay for the use of his horse, (having been mounted during the time,) and he is entitled to pay and subsistence for traveling to place of enrolment and whatever other allowances are authorized to volunteer soldiers, or militia, so discharged. He has received \$79.06 dollars advanced by the United States on account of clothing.

There is to be stopped from him, on account of the State of [blank], or other authorities, for clothing, etc., received on entering service, [blank] dollars; also, for expenses of subsistence for traveling from place of enrolment to the place of rendezvous, amounting to [blank] dollars: and on account of the United States for extra clothing received in kind from [blank] and for other stoppages, viz: [blank] amounting to [blank] dollars; and he has been subsisted for traveling to his place of enrolment, up to the [blank] 186 [blank].

He is indebted to G. H. Yate, Sutler, \$1.00 dollars.

GIVEN in duplicate, at Murfreesboro, Tenn this March [crossed out] 31st day of March, 1863.

[signed] W. G. Eatno [sic] Capt [sic] Commanding Company.

NOTE. – Two of these certificates, (or duplicates,) are to be given to each volunteer soldier who may be discharged previously to the discharge of his company, that he may at once receive from the Paymaster the pay, etc., due him, and the captain or other officer commanding the company, will certify to the act of the delivery of the duplicate certificates; on those certificates the Soldier is “entitled to” his discharge, and should also present his discharge to the Paymaster to have the payment endorsed on it. The discharge is to be given back to the Soldier, by the Paymaster; the latter only retaining as his voucher the duplicate certificates.

Camp 5 or 6 miles South of Pittsburg Landing, Tenn.

May 2, 1862

Dear Friend P. Den Bleyker,

I am thanks to The Lord’s goodness in reasonable shape. My coughing persists and is sometimes better and sometimes worse and I have not been really healthy ever since leaving Kalamazoo. Always the stomach and sometimes my blood, but that is now better and I hope you receive my letter in good health. From Kalamazoo we went by train to Jeffersonville in Southern Indiana. Where we slept in our cars a second night, the next day we marched for several miles to New Albany where for the first time we slept in tents. About 3 inches of snow, but we found a haystack. So we carried hay into our tents and we slept that night and still not too warm. After 2 days we went by steamship into the Ohio River to West Point, Kentucky. In the morning we went South several miles and camped again for some days. After that we went through the following cities: Elizabethtown, Mumfordsville [sic], Bowling Green, Nashville in Tennessee, Columbia, Savannah on the Tennessee River. Now we were 8 miles from the war. For 40 miles we could hear cannons fire as our Colonel related. Those 40 miles we covered in 2 days and nights leaving our back packs behind in Savannah.

From Savannah we immediately went by steamboat 8 miles up river to Pittsburg Landing where the battle continued that had lasted for 2 days and a night. You can imagine how we all had our ears wide open when we met a steamboat with news who of the two armies was gaining the upper hand. When we landed we were delighted to hear that the Rebels were in full retreat. As soon as we left the ship we doubletimed [sic] to the place of battle where the cannon roared and several shells whistled overhead, but the firing stopped. We slept in the woods and it rained all night, so that we all were soaked in the morning and cold too. We had not slept in 48 hours. We now slept as soon as we laid down. I found in the morning that I laid in a pool of water. I was stiff, and an officer of a different company woke me up and gave me a shot of brandy which picked me up. We stayed there a week without tents, which was a tough time because it

rained most of the time. A day later we chased The Rebels and our First Brigade fought a battle against the Texas Rangers. They were driven back by our Cavalry and chased for 8 miles. Tomorrow early we will move again, but I don't think we'll fight. Yorktown is captured with 42,000 troops captured. Also they say Corinth has been evacuated. Now I don't have more to write. Greetings and I hope God will grant that we meet in health. Regards to your family.

Your friend Walter Weener

Camp in the Valley of the Mississippi – near Corinth May 22, 1862

Dear Respected Friend P. Den Bleyker,

At the moment we are on picket duty. That is why I write on dirty paper. Through God's grace I have been in reasonably good condition the last few weeks and we hope you'll receive this letter in good health. I have been coughing all the time, sometimes more and sometimes less. I think we have done most of our marching. We have the enemy at no more than 1 mile distance and day and night the firing at each other of the pickets goes on. Most of the bullets are fired without the gunners seeing a target and everyday some of the Rebel side desert to us. They all agree that they are short of rations. Also if we don't attack them, they are under orders to attack us. We are in position in a woods on the north side of a clearing behind our breastworks. The pickets of both armies are in woods South from where our big cannons can (according to our officers), throw bombs into Corinth. Our six and twelve pounders are sometimes used when the pickets of the Rebels grow too many and they make inroads into our lines. Two days ago three of the enemy surrendered, one was a young man from Detroit. He had worked in the South on the railroad. When the South rebelled he was pressed into service. Today 4 surrendered. Our bunkers and batteries are placed that wherever the Rebels attack, we are able to offer a crossfire to open up upon them. The woods on the south side prevent them to play their big cannon on the breastworks, they could otherwise do much damage. I hear that we have orders, from the Secretary of War to act only defensively. For the truth of this order I cannot confirm it. Last night Governor Blair of Michigan arrived and he spoke morning to the soldiers. He will take back money for many of us in our Regiment because we were paid today. He will take it along to Kalamazoo, or if he stays in Jackson, he can send it express to Kalamazoo. I'd very much like to send \$25.00 to my parents and because we are in enemy territory and I don't regard the mail as very safe. So I send it with him and I request that you mail it there or to send the money or a Certificate of Deposit with your approval. You'll do me a real favor, I know no safer way. You may be curious to know how under the present circumstances our mood is. Well like all things, it is becoming a habit. In reality we are in mortal danger all the time, but slowly on we are prepared. I'm fearful that we rely on our big army instead of the Lord, so I'm afraid we will be punished. Now my dear friend, my paper is full. I also wrote a letter to Mr. Leenhouts, I have not received a reply as yet. From my parents I

receive letters regularly. Now in hope that we will see each other in health, I remain sincerely your friend.

Walter Weener

Captain owed me some money and he wants to pay me. That is why I'm sending \$5.00 more or \$30.00.

Camp nearby Corinth, May 23, 1862

Dear Friend P. Den Bleyker,

Yesterday I wrote you a letter to tell you more about war news and I sent this with a 2nd Lieutenant of Company C. of our regiment with \$30.00 in U. S. Treasury notes. I request you when the money arrives to place it in Certificates of Deposit or whatever you think best to give to father. Not all letters from here arrive safely and I thought it unwise to use the mail. This man is going to Grand Rapids via Kalamazoo and he states that he would visit these friends to bring the letter. It is now May 24 and we stood guard for 24 hours but no enemy showed up, although they were only 40 feet away from us. We learned this from two rebel guards who came over to our side! It rained almost the entire 24 hours so it was no fun and is now 2 days since I wrote you, and nothing of importance took place. So I end this letter wishing you God's blessing.

Your servant and friend,
Walter Weener

Headquarters, Mich. 13th

Camp near Athens, Ala.

July 6th 1862.

Mr. P. den [sic] Bleyker.

Esteemed friend.

Thanks to the Lord's goodnes [sic] I am reasonable wel [sic] and hope that this letter may find you in good health. Good [sic] health is indeed a treasure. Experience thought [sic] me that to be sick in the army is a terrible thing. Not the best Doctors, very little care and no easy place were [sic] to rest. We are at present encamped in the neighborhood of the Memphis and Charleston railroad a few miles east from where the Nashville railroad joins the Memphis and Charleston railroad about three-fourth mile from Athens. We are in a beautiful valley with shade-trees and in the vicinity of a creek giving us the opportunity to take a bath frequently which is necessary because of dust and the hot weather. We celebrated the 4th of July. In the neighborhood of our camp in a shady place we were assembled with a couple brigades. To be joined with other brigades was nothing new for us. After the reading of the Declaration of Independence

[sic] we listened to several speeches by General Garfield, Captain Swain and Col's [sic] Blake 64th Ohio and Furgeson 65th Ohio. The speeches dealt with the condition of the Country. General Garfield expressed his hope we soon may have peace. He is very eloquent. I have seldom heard a better speaker and is not ashamed to mention the name of God and confess Him.

In the daytime we have from 1 to 2 hours company drill and one hour Battilion [sic] drill but it is every day the same thing over and over, we learn nothing new, I can dream the whole thing. Lutenant [sic] Moore is the only one of our Staf-officers [sic] who understand the art of warfare. But our Colonel makes him feel very plainly that he (the Colonel) has command of the Regiment. And it seems to me that the Major and Adjutant [sic] are not in favor of him. The entire regiment would like to see those three (Colonel, Major and Adudant [sic]) were removed instead of our Luitenant [sic] Colonel. It seems that this makes them jealous [sic]. He (Moore) is called back to his own regiment (before he joined us he was a Captain of the 6th Regulars) and will undoubtedly depart in a few days.

Since a few weeks we did not receive any letters but yesterday I received half a dozen. My father told me in his letter that you received the \$ 30.- and that you had sent him a Certificate of Deposit for the money. My brother wrote me that it was not like the previous one. It did not have on it "with interrest". [sic] If it was not for this father could have left it where it was and I could take it when I come back. Do not think that I am dissatisfied, I am thankful for your trouble.

There is in this part of the country (n the heart of the sescesion [sic]) no expectancy of battles. For which I am happy because so much blood has been shed already. I hope we soon be tru [sic]. Not that I am homesick; I can stand it here. My paper is filled. Wishing [sic] Gods [sic] blessings and kind greetings to your family and the Family Leenhouts and the Widow Hoek and her family I remain your servant and friend.

Signed: Walter Weener.

September 28, 1862

Dear Mr. P. Den Bleyker

Your letter of September 16 has been received in good health and hope that you have received ours in good health as well. From your letter we have observed that the money has arrived and that you desired that I myself had been able to come to receive it there. Now I would ask you kindly if circumstances permit to invest the funds at a good interest rate. I myself do not like to travel back there since I don't know the English language and I just as soon have it lay around then [sic] to put it out at low interest. Maybe I get rid of it around here also, so I will send a letter. So if you have not received it please invest it when it arrives. I don't have much faith in investing it here. Now cordial greetings from me with high regards.

Your friend Walter Weener

Our family is also in good health and A. Siersema has recovered and I give compliments of the family to you.

Louisville, Kentucky

September 30, 1862

Dear Friend P. Den Bleyker,

We are in Louisville already for several days. Last August we departed from Stevenson, Alabama. Since then our First Officer estimated we walked 360 miles. Sometimes we marched day and night. I'm not well at present. I have stomach cramps. I am weak and I have little appetite. When I am healthy, I enjoy soldiering. When you're sick you don't count. You are a burden to yourself and for others. Today we were paid and I am sending you \$30.00 which I request kindly you invest for me. Tomorrow we will probably travel again. We don't know yet where to. Probably to the Cumberland Gap. I hope you receive my letter in good health and wishing you God's blessings then I hope that after He has heavily punished our land. May He give us peace soon, although here I see no kneeling for Him and no humility. And as long as that doesn't happen we cannot expect that God will bring peace. Greetings to your family. We remain respectfully your devoted friend.

Walter Weener

Thirteenth Infantry

The Thirteenth was organized at Kalamazoo under the direction of Colonel Charles E. Stuart of that city, and was mustered into service January 17, 1862, with an enrollment of 935 officers and men.

The field, staff, and line officers at organization were as follows:

Charles E. Stuart, Kalamazoo, Colonel. Orlando H. Moore, Schoolcraft (Captain U. S. Army), Lieutenant Colonel. Frederick W. Worden, Grand Rapids, Major. Alexander Ewing, Dexter, Surgeon. Foster Pratt, Kalamazoo, Assistant Surgeon. John B. Culver, Paw Paw, Adjutant. George F. Kidder, Kalamazoo, Quartermaster.

The regiment was made up of the following companies, and was recruited in the western portion of the State:

A. Captain, Bernard Vosburg, Galesburg. First Lieutenant, Ezekiel B. Van Vleet, Ridgeway. Second Lieutenant, Abram Pelham, Galesburg.

B. Captain, George B. Force, Gun Plain. First Lieutenant, William B. McLaughlin, Sturgis. Second Lieutenant, Jacob G. Fry, Ganges.

C. Captain, Theodor R. Palmer, Kalamazoo. First Lieutenant, Samuel Tower, Oakfield., Second Lieutenant, Silas E. Yerkes, Lowell.

D. Captain, Loren Chadwick, Battle Creek. First Lieutenant, Henry C. Hall, Battle Creek. Second Lieutenant, Jerome S. Bigelow, Battle Creek.

E. Captain, Clement C. Webb, Kalamazoo. First Lieutenant, Ashael G. Hopkins, Comstock. Second Lieutenant, Benjamin F. Broadwell, Comstock.

F. Captain, Van Rensselaer W. Sunderlin, Pewamo. First Lieutenant, Joshua Slayton, Jackson. Second Lieutenant, James R. Slayton, Jackson.

G. Captain, Arad C. Balch, Kalamazoo. First Lieutenant, James E. White, Kalamazoo. Second Lieutenant, John E. Woodruff, Jackson.

H. Captain, Ezra Carpenter, Portage. First Lieutenant, Horace Phelps, Kalamazoo. Second Lieutenant, Daniel Jones, Kalamazoo.

I. Captain, Henry C. Stoughton, Otsego. First Lieutenant, Willard G. Eaton, Otsego. Second Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant, Peter Van Arsdale, Saugatuck.

K. Captain, DeWitt C. Fitch, Mattawan. First Lieutenant, Joseph Barton, Battle Creek. Second Lieutenant, Harrison Balfour, Mattawan..

The regiment left the state Feb. 12, under command of Colonel Michael Shoemaker, who was commissioned in place of Colonel Stuart, resigned, and proceeded to Nashville, Tenn. It was assigned to Wood's division of General Buell's army, and marched to Pittsburg Landing to reinforce General Grant, and arrived at the close of the two days' battle.

After the occupation of Corinth, Miss., General Buell's army marched east along the Memphis and Charleston R. R., to repair it. The Thirteenth arrived at Stevenson, Ala., the 18th of July, where it helped to build strong fortifications, as that place was then a depot of supplies and contained vast stores for the army.

General Buell moved his headquarters to Dechard, north of Stevenson, on the line of the Nashville and Chattanooga R. R., and left the Thirteenth with a small garrison to hold Stevenson. Here Colonel Shoemaker received a series of orders, one day to evacuate the post and fall back to Dechard, and the next to remain and defend the place to the last extremity. Bridgeport, Ala., south of Stevenson, was abandoned on the 25th and the small force there joined the garrison at Stevenson.

Huntsville, Ala., was also abandoned, and upon the arrival of the trains containing the stores from that place and the Tenth Wisconsin Infantry the whole command was ordered to withdraw and proceed to join the army at Dechard.

The enemy attacked before the Union forces left Stevenson, but were repulsed, and then a long march continued night and day over horrible roads across the mountains until Cowan was reached, where Colonel Shoemaker learned the army had left Dechard. He pressed forward and reached Tullahoma September 2nd, where he joined General Smith's division of Buell's army. Colonel Shoemaker was highly complimented by the commanding General for bringing in all his forces, artillery, and baggage without loss of either men or equipment. The Thirteenth, with the balance of the army, then fell back to Nashville and joined in the pursuit of General Bragg's army to Louisville, Ky. In December the regiment belonged to the Third Brigade, First Division, General Thomas' corps, and joined the army commanded by General Rosecrans on his advance upon Murfreesboro, Tenn.

The regiment was engaged at Stone [sic] River the 30th and 31st of December, 1862, and in January, 1863, where it distinguished itself by its desperate valor and was most warmly commended for the heroic work that checked the onward rush of the confederate forces.

The brigade of which the Thirteenth formed a part was commanded by Colonel Charles G. Harker, and was detached from its division and sent to the extreme right of the Union line, where the enemy had crushed that wing, when it formed a line in the immediate front of the confederates and a desperate conflict commenced. The Union forces were steadily pressed back by the enemy, but the Thirteenth held its position until nearly surrounded, when it fell back a short distance and reformed, continually showing a bold front to the enemy. Colonel Shoemaker ordered a bayonet charge and the Thirteenth sprang forward with a yell, driving the enemy from the field in confusion and capturing a large number of prisoners. The regiment lost nearly one third of its strength in killed and wounded in the action on this part of the field. It recaptured two pieces of artillery of the Sixth Ohio Battery, which had been abandoned when the Union forces were driven back by the furious onslaught of the enemy.

The Thirteenth commenced its advance toward Chattanooga in August and marched over the Cumberland Mountains, crossed the Tennessee River at Shell Mound and was one of the first regiments to march into Chattanooga on the morning of the 13th of September. It proceeded almost at once to Chickamauga, where it was engaged the 19th and 20th of September, coming in contact with the enemy near Lee and Gordon's Mills, and before the close of the battle, lost 107 killed, wounded and missing out of a total of 217, the number of officers and men the regiment carried into action. Such a record tells how the Thirteenth sustained its part in this historic engagement far more eloquently than words can describe.

After the battle of Chickamauga the regiment was in the trenches about Chattanooga and took part in the movements about Lookout Mountain and Mission Ridge.

In November, 1863, the Thirteenth was organized with other regiments into a brigade of Engineers and was attached to the headquarters of the Army of the Cumberland.

In January, 1864, the regiment veteranized, 173 re-enlisting, and returned to Kalamazoo, where it arrived the 12th and was furloughed for thirty days.

It returned to Chattanooga the 20th of April with a large number of recruits, and was soon actively engaged in the construction of military hospitals on Lookout Mountain, and in the pursuit of General Forest [sic], until November, when it joined the army under General Sherman and was assigned to the Second Brigade, First Division, Fourteenth corps. It marched with Sherman to the sea and reached Savannah the 16th of December. After the city surrendered, the Thirteenth marched with Sherman's army through South and North Carolina, meeting the enemy at several points and fighting a pitched battle with General Johnson and Hardee's forces at Bentonville, N. C., the 19th of March, where the regiment sustained heavy loss, the last battle of importance fought by Sherman's army.

After General Johnson's surrender the Thirteenth marched to Richmond, Va., and thence to Washington, D. C., where it took part in the grand review the 24th.

On the 9th of June the regiment proceeded to Louisville, Ky., where it was mustered out of service July 25, and arrived in Jackson, Mich., July 27, 1865, where it was paid off and disbanded.

The engagements of the 13th were at Shiloh, Tenn., April 7, 1862; Farmington, Miss., May 9, 1862; Owl Creek, Miss., May 17, 1862; Corinth, Miss., May 27, 1862; siege of Corinth, Miss., May 10 to 31, 1862; Stevenson, Ala., Aug. 31, 1862; Munfordsville, Ky., September 14, 1862; Perryville, Ky., October 8, 1862; Danville, Ky., October 17, 1862; Gallatin, Tenn., December 5, 1862; Mill Creek, Tenn., December 15, 1862; Lavergne, Tenn., December 27, 1862; Stewart's Creek, Tenn., December 29, 1862; Stone [sic] River, Tenn., December 29, 31, 1862, January 2, 3, 1863; Eagleville, Tenn., January 20, 1863; Pelham, Tenn., July 2, 1863; Lookout Valley, Tenn., September 7, 1863; Lookout Mountain, Tenn., September 10, 1863; Chickamauga, Ga., September 12, 18, 19, 1863; Chattanooga, Tenn., October 6, 1863; Mission Ridge, Tenn., November 26, 1863; Florence, Ala., October 8, 1864; Savannah, Ga., December 17, 18, 20, 21, 1864; Catawba River, S. C., February 28, 1865; Averysboro, N. C., March 16, 1865; Bentonville, N. C., March 19, 1865.

Total enrollment 2092

Killed in action 47

Died of wounds 33

Died in confederate prisons 7

Died of disease 253

Discharged for disability (wounds and disease) 216