

Frederick Bartlett Doten



Copy of CvD courtesy of: History of the Fourteenth Regiment, Connecticut Vol. Infantry, Charles D. Page, The Horton Printing Co., Meriden, 1906, p. 223

Letter of Capt. Frederick Doten, written from winter
Quarters at Falmouth, VA on January 26, 1863 to his sweetheart

Courtesy of Blaine and Diane Moore

No better introduction to the Frederick B. Doten letter, are the words of Blaine Moore, the letter's owner who generously shared it with all of us,

"I have read three letters written by Captain Doten; I know of eight that exist, the one owned by me and the other two in private hands. He writes in one, dated August 4, 1863, *"Gettysburg, though a day of which I am proud, was enough to last me a lifetime. I lost my horse at the battle for he was always afraid of the musketry and cannonading. I was dismounted and had just given my horse to an orderly, when a shell burst near him and away he went."*

I have great admiration for the character of the men of that era, honor, loyalty, truth and a dedication for cause and country. When I came across and read Captain Doten's letter to his sweetheart, Georgiana Wells, it was as if I was family, a kindred soul who could glimpse his compassion and pain, his suffering of witnessing the horrors of battle, his loneliness...as well. There is a line in the letter, which sums up what I believe to be the most difficult aspect of war, "loneliness"... *"No letters for you, sir,"* and tells Georgie, *"would it be weak if he is hardly able to repress a tear then."*

In the other, he is in a tent with three other officers, writing a letter to her as bullets and shells pass overhead, and asks, *"have you ever heard the whistle of bullets and shells, intensely fiendish sound they have"...* Would you sit down and write this with what's going on? I wouldn't. In this letter he talks of so many lives lost and *"yet nothing gained."* I believe most enlisted, as cowardice was the worst kind to be perceived. Captain Doten is driven and kept sane by Georgiana, lonesome and wanting to go home and to be with her, fighting and surviving for her. You see this time and time again in the content of these letters. I think the "central theme" is LOVE and its ability to keep you going, fighting and surviving. This letter that you are about to read is special as it shows the beginning of this intensely strong emotion that keeps him alive for her. As he says, *"nothing gained"*; it's not for Abraham Lincoln and the cause of Union, now it's for her."

Blaine Moore
February 22, 2014
Pocatello, Idaho



Scanned copy of envelope and letter on following page, courtesy of Blaine and Diane Moore

to see you 'before many months.

Do not give Mr. Harlow all your thanks for that photograph, for I was extremely anxious to be called to your remembrance once in a while, and was more than willing that you should get it. No thanks are due any one from ^{me} either. I thank you for being kind enough to receive it, and him for giving it to you.

You ask how my time is occupied. When in camp, this life is very monotonous after the novelty wears off. "Roll Calls" Drills and Dress parades, day after day, and a great deal of writing for me. It is a very uncertain life. We are never sure of a day's rest in one place, but constant anxiety, expecting at any moment the order to march and fight, but it must end some time. This is a very unworthy reply to your kind letter, but please do not give me up. But let me hear from you again soon - Very truly your friend
Fred. B. Doten

Head Quarters, 14th Regt. C.V.
Camp near Pulmonth Va. Jan. 26,

You can not imagine, Miss Georgie the surprise and delight with which your kind letter of the 15th was received. To a soldier, letters from home, (and all the north is home to us,) are almost the only pleasure or comfort that he has. And great is his disappointment when he hears "No letters for you Sir" Should it be weak if he is hardly able to repress a tear then?

Undoubtedly I was surprised to receive a letter from you, but not, as you suggest, because I had forgotten you. I have a most vivid and pleasing remembrance of my short acquaintance with you. I remember well our anxious search

for the lost Mrs. Stearns and Mr. Smith, one evening. And how sorry I was not to be able to find them. And do you remember my bringing that package to you from your father, and the invitation, that was written on the cover? I hope I may be forgiven, when I confess to putting that on myself. Perhaps you have heard of that.

I believe I surprised every one by enlisting, but I had been seriously thinking of it for a long time, and though our regiment has had an unusually hard time, for a new regt. yet I do not regret the step, but still, most heartily wish that the war would end. Fighting is not at all to my taste. It is very discouraging to see so many lives lost, so much sacrificed, and yet nothing gained, and to look at our poor regiment, cut

down in so short a time, from over one thousand men, to less than two hundred, effective. We were sent fresh from Connecticut, into the battle of Antietam, as fast as we could get there, and have been pushed along with the "Army of the Potomac" ever since. At Red Bank our Division (French's) was selected to take the advance, and storm these batteries. We advanced, and came back with a loss of one half our regiment. But excuse me this cannot be interesting to you. And it does not become me to complain. I have been remarkably fortunate, not a wound, and most excellent health.

Mr. Harlow tantalized me, with an account of his recent visit to Chicopee, and last summer too. I fully intended to have made a call there last summer, but we left, rather unexpectedly and I was prevented, greatly



**Head Quarters. 14th REGT. C.V.
Camp Near Falmouth VA. January 26, 1863**

You can not imagine Miss Georgie, the surprise and delight with which your kind letter of the 18th was received. To a soldier, letters from home, (and all the north is home to us) are almost the only pleasure or comfort that he has, and great is his disappointment when he hears "No letters for you sir". Would it be weak if he is hardly able to repress a tear then?

Undoubtedly I was surprised to receive a letter from you, but not, as you suggest, because I had forgotten you. I have a most vivid and pleasing remembrance of my short acquaintance with you. I remember well our anxious search for the lost Mrs. Stearns and Mr. Smith one evening, and how sorry I was not to be able to find them. And do you remember my bringing that package to you from your father, and the invitation, that was written on the cover? I hope I may be forgiven when I confess to putting that on myself. Perhaps you have heard of that.

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Mr. Harlow tantalized me with an account of his recent visit to Chicopee, and last summer too. I fully intended to have made a call there last summer, but we left rather unexpectedly and I was prevented, greatly to my disappointment. I hope though to see you before many months.

Do not give Mr. Harlow all your thanks for that photograph, for I was extremely anxious to be called to your remembrance once in a while, and was more than willing that you should get it. No thanks are due any one from you. Rather I thank you for being kind enough to receive it, and him for giving it to you.

You ask how my time is occupied when in camp. This life is very monotonous after the novelty wears off. "Roll calls", drills, and dress parades, day after day, and a great deal of writing for me. It is a very uncertain life. We are never sure of a day's rest in one place, but constant anxiety. Expecting at any moment the order to march and fight. But it must end some time. This is a very unworthy reply to your kind letter. But please do not give me up, but let me hear from you again soon.

-Very truly your friend,
Fred. B. Doten



Ad. Gns. 3^d Brigade
July 25. 1864

My own loved Georgie

I have been very busy nearly all day, and began to think that I should have no time to write to my darling, but I finished at last, much to the delight of my poor horse I expect as well as myself. I don't think I neglected anything of my duty but really my thoughts were often away from trenches, gations and abattis, and where do you think they were? I leave you to guess.

I can never thank you enough for so many long, loving letters. Saddy I feel quite disappointed if I do not get a letter by every



Miss Georgie L. Welles
Chicopee
Mass

715114000051

will though I know I have
no right to expect so many,
particularly while you are away
from home, with so much business
to occupy your attention.

I am glad you are so free
from those troublesome headaches,
don't you think your sister had
them sometimes too?

My father is in Sheffield, and
I hope Berkshire air will do
him good also. Though she accounts
from him are not encouraging. I
believe I was you that he was
quite unwell. Yes and Mr. Fisher are
both very anxious to see you

my darling. They always love
you, for they love anyone that
loves me.

You visited me pleasant dreams
the other night, will soon enough
I had a pleasant dream that

night and it was of you. I
thought I was sitting around me
some day, and suddenly I found
myself gazing through the streets
of Quebec towards your home, and
you may believe I was not riding
slow. Well I found you there

and right glad you seemed to see
me, it was a dream and too pleasant
to last, for we had hardly met
before I was called up to turn
out the Brigades winter camp. The

Army is quiet as far as fighting
is concerned, but our horse command
work on the borders, building fortifications
and mounting heavy guns. We
expect a big move some of these
days, I feel quite nervous now

we have such pleasant quarters, all
that have work that I have
now taking you of is done by
the soldiers directed by the officers.

So for me it is not so very
hard to ride about the line and
tell the men what is to be done.
Then when not on duty, if you
could see us, you would think
us the most indolent class of
people in the world, without
a care. We hardly wash our
own hands and faces, but sit still
and make some one do every thing
for us. So you need not be anxious
about me at all, but be happy
Enjoy yourself, and love me
as much as you can. I love
you dearly, my darling, and
long for the time to come when
I can see you, and have you
always near me.

With much love and a good
night kiss - Fredy.

Letter of Captain Frederick B. Doten to Georgiana Wells

Copies of letter, envelope and transcription courtesy of Carolyn Ivanoff

At the time this letter was written the 14th Connecticut had left siege operations along the Petersburg front and was involved in demonstrations against the Confederate Army on the north side of the James River.

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Hdqrs. 3d Brigade

July 25, 1864

My own loved Georgie,

I have been very busy nearly all day and began to think that I should have no time to write to my darling, but I finished at last, much to the delight of my poor horse I expect as well as myself. I don't think I neglected anything of my duty but really my thoughts were often away from trenches, gabions, and abatises, and where do you think they were? I leave it up to you to guess. I can never thank you enough for so many long, loving letters. Lately, I feel quite disappointed if I do not get a letter by every

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mail though I have no right to expect so many, particularly while you are away from home, with so much besides to occupy your attention. I am glad you are so free from those headaches. Don't you think your visit had been beneficial to you? My Father is in Sheffield, and I hope Berkshire air will do him good also. Though the accounts from him are not encouraging. I believe I wrote you that he was quite unwell. He and Mother are both very anxious to see you, my darling. They already love you, for they love anyone that loves me. You wished me pleasant dreams the other night. Well sure enough I had a pleasant dream that

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night and it was of you. I thought I was riding around on some duty and suddenly found myself galloping through the streets of Chicopee towards your home, and you may believe I was not riding slow. Well I found you there and right glad you seemed to see me. It was a dream and too pleasant to last for we had hardly met before I was called up to turn the Brigade under arms. The Army is quiet as far as fighting is concerned, but we have constant work in the trenches, building redoubts and mounting heavy guns. We expect a big noise some of these days. I feel quite rested now, we have such pleasant quarters. All this hard work that I have been telling you of is done by the soldiers directed by the officers.

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So far for me it is not so very hard to ride about the line and tell the men what is to be done. Then when not on duty if you could see us you would think us the most indolent class of people in the world without a care. We hardly wash our own hands and faces but sit still and make someone do everything for us. So you need not be anxious about me and all, but enjoy yourself and love me as much as you can. I love you dearly, my darling and long for the time to come when I can see you and have you always near me.

With much love and a good night kiss----- Fred

Frederick Barlett Doten

1841- 1903

Captain Frederick B. Doten, eldest son of Bartlett and Augusta (Mason) Doten, was born in Sheffield, MA, December 9, 1841, and died in Chicopee, MA on April 9, 1903. He was educated in the public schools of Sheffield, MA and Bridgeport, CT. As a young man he went to New York, where he took a position as clerk in a carriage manufacturing concern. He remained there until the outbreak of the Civil War, when he returned to Bridgeport and enlisted as a corporal in the 14th Connecticut Regiment on August 1, 1862 with Co. A. For his bravery and excellent service he was promoted to 2nd lieutenant and transferred to Co. F on March 3, 1863. Promotions occurred in rapid succession to 1st lieutenant & Adjutant on the Field & Staff on April 14th, where he served by detail on the staffs of General Hayes and General Barlow. On October 20th of the same year he was promoted captain, returning to Co. F. He participated in various of the most bloody battles of the war. At the Battle of Fredericksburg the state flag borne by his regiment was picked up by Captain Doten and Major Hincks, after the color bearer had been shot down. It remained in their keeping all day and was brought back safely from the field at the close of the engagement. At Morton's Ford he was captured, and sent to Libby Prison. This was the most trying experience of all, but by his uncomplaining submission he won the respect of his keepers, and was consequently trusted beyond his other comrades. After three months, he was exchanged on March 15, 1864, through the intervention of Secretary Stephen Mallory, of the Confederate cabinet, who knew his friends in Connecticut.

The war over, after being mustered out on May 1, 1865, he returned to his old Bridgeport home and settled down to the pursuits of peace as a matter of course, as if nothing extraordinary had happened. He never boasted of what he did. He then returned to New York and entered the employment of Wood Brothers, carriage manufacturers. On October 4, 1866, he married Georgiana L. Wells, daughter of Jerome and Louise (Rice) Wells of Chicopee. In 1871 the couple went to Chicopee where he entered the firm of Jerome Wells & Co. About this time he took the position of cashier of the First National Bank. He cared little for politics, less to office, and was in no sense a politician. He discharged his duties as a citizen at the polls. Twice he was induced to hold minor offices in the municipality- alderman and school committeeman- and he brought to the discharge of these duties his varied business experience and uncompromising honesty. He was a consistent member of the Unitarian church; also a charter member of the Nayasset Club and a companion of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, Massachusetts Commandery. He was a lover of music, and sang in the Unitarian choir, and was a member of the Orpheus Club, and a musical atmosphere pervaded the home circles. He was conservative in business affairs, and was frequently consulted by those in need of advice and his judgment was rarely wrong. He was intimately connected with the business growth and life of Chicopee and saw it grow to a large manufacturing city and he grew with it. Somewhat reticent of nature, he was at his best in his home, among those he loved.

A comrade-in-arms said of him at his death, "It is with a sad heart that I note in 'The Republican' of the 10th, the news of the death of Captain Fred. B. Doten, of Chicopee. He was a fellow-officer with me in the old Fourteenth Connecticut Infantry during the Civil War, and was one of the best and bravest of the remarkable and dashing young fellows who worked their way up from the ranks to a commission. Death got its work very frequently in the ranks of the Fourteenth, and hence promotions were quick and recurring; but in Captain Doten's case, at least, it was well deserved and acceptable to all concerned. At the Battle of Morton's Ford in 1864, when a staff officer of the old Second Corps, and engaged in carrying orders, I stopped for a chat with the old regiment. I, especially, noted his gallant bearing and pleasant greeting. Our ranks are thinning fast of late years, bur Fred Doten will be one of the most missed, for he was not only a brave and efficient soldier, but in those days and since, ever and always a gentleman."

His wife, Georgiana, is a member of the Unitarian church, and served on its parish committee. She belongs to the Cosmopolitan Club, a woman's club of Springfield; the Chicopee Falls Woman's Club, and the Travelers' Club of Chicopee. She has served on the committee on aids and charities of the Springfield Hospital.





Residence: Bridgeport CT;
Enlisted on 8/1/1862 as a Corporal.

On 8/20/1862 he mustered into "A" Co. CT 14th Infantry
He was discharged on 5/1/1865



He was listed as:

- * POW 2/6/1864 Morton's Ford, VA (Confined at Macon, GA)
- * Paroled 3/15/1864 Macon, GA

Promotions:

- * 2nd Lieut 3/3/1863 (As of Co. F)
- * 1st Lieut 4/14/1863 (1st Lieut & Adjutant)
- * Capt 10/20/1863 (As of Co. F)

Intra Regimental Company Transfers:

- * 3/3/1863 from company A to company F
- * 4/14/1863 from company F to Field & Staff
- * 10/20/1863 from Field & Staff to company F

Other Information:

born in 1841
died 4/9/1903 in Chicopee, MA

After the War he lived in Chicopee, MA

Data provided by Historical Data Systems, Inc.:

- *Connecticut: Record of Service of Men during War of Rebellion*
 - *Register of the Commandery of the State of Massachusetts MOLLUS*
 - *Union Blue: History of MOLLUS*
 - *Research by Jack Lundquist*
- (c) Historical Data Systems, Inc. @ www.civilwardata.com