

**CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF
CHAPLAIN WILLIAM W. NORTON,
154th NEW YORK VOLUNTEERS,
TO HIS DAUGHTER FRANKIE
(LATER MRS. ORAMEL G. BEACH),
OTTO, CATTARAUGUS COUNTY, NEW YORK**

Transcribed from the originals in his collection by:
Mark H. Dunkelman

Atlanta Nov 3d 64

Dear Frankie

We are upon the point of starting upon a long march. Soon it will be impossible for me to communicate with you & I thought I would write you now before we go hoping that it will reach you. My health is very good & I have had much of kindness & favor shown me since I left you, & yet my heart is with you at home. I have received no letter from home excepting the first one, your note on the 19th two days after I left home

If I could return home now, I should feel that I had been well repaid for all my time & expense, & if I should be spared as I hope, I shall ever after have to rejoice in the part I shall have been permitted to take in this rebellion

Ormal just arrived here to day. he has had a long & rather hard time of it He is far from well, & I have been down to the city & got from the Christian Commission a bottle of Blackberry cordial for him. The probability is that he will go to the hospital to morrow & be sent back to the rear. most of the new men have the diarrhoea. The change of living & climate & all the habits & ways of living is so different from home life. That is his trouble, & he is poor in flesh, even for him. I have done all I can for his comfort, got him into good quarters & I shall continue to do so as long as we are within reach of each other.

Now Dearest Daughter I can but commit you & all my loved ones to our kind heavenly Father. Take as good care of your health as you can

Help Mother. be a second Mother to the younger children. be a faithful Christian & strive to win others to Christ.

give my love to all the young friends. ask them to pray for me. Try & keep up the Tuesday evening prayer meetings. be faithful in attendance as far as possible to the church meetings & live in short for Christ & heaven, & he will be with you.

be assured my heart is with you, & I hope my Chaplaincy will eventuate in good to you all

for the present good by Write me often, as if I ____ your letters will reach you sometime

Your affectionate father
W. W. Norton

Atlanta Nov 4th 64

Dearest Daughter

I wrote you last evening. But as I have a good prospect of sending this to morrow by Surgeon Van Aernam, I thought I would write you again. I had supposed Ormal was before me, but when I arrived I found that he was still back. he came yesterday. Had had a hard time. been much exposed without sufficient protection been sick with diarrhoea & nothing done for it, until it is chronic in character & he is rather weak.

he will go back to Chattanooga & thence to Nashville, starting as soon as the Hospital train arrives which is expected to night. if so he will leave to morrow. He will have an easy ride, compared to what he had down here.

I write this to you not to alarm you, but to let you know the real situation of one you love best. He tells me that he has had increasing trust & confidence in his Savior. He was glad very glad to see me & receive your & other letters

I hope & trust that he will mend now that he is under medical treatment.

But dearest I will not disguise from you, that many are taken off with this disease

It is incident & unavoidable in Army life. Some escape entirely. the great damage is neglect. Dearest commit all into the hands of God & may he bless you both may your lives & health be precious in his sight, & you permitted to see each other again & be a blessing to each other

I have written this also as he will be absent from the Regiment & I shall not probably hear from him again till I hear through you, & this as the prospect is, as we are upon the point of starting upon a long campaign, & shall probably receive our letters by way of New York & the ocean after a few days

But it will be long long time even if we are successful & have a prosperous march before we come out so as to be in communication with home.

I think of you all, & try to commit you to God daily in prayer, hoping of his having mercy that we may meet after a few months, all meet & all in health. Love one another. help Mother, help Willie & Alfred & Stephan & Eddie & Bell, & God give you his richest blessings. give my love to all. tell our young friends that I of course cannot correspond with them weekly after we commence the march for which we are undoubtedly preparing, but they must remember me in prayer that I may be restored to them

Your affectionate Father
W. W. Norton

Before Savannah Ga
Dec 17, 1864

Dearest Frankie

To day for the first time in a month we had the pleasure of hearing that a large mail had come & was being distributed to the various Regiments. only part of it could be distributed to night. I received 6 letters. put them in my pocket untill I had carried some letters over to the Hospital, & distributed them. then I went back to my Tent & opened them--the first I opened was from Bro E. I put it up, opened another from Lydia--put it by unread opened one from Mr Cox laid that aside, & next opened yours. Tried the other Two one from Mary Vosburgh for my dear friends of the Tuesday evening prayer meeting, & another one from Bro E. was disappointed in not finding any from Wife. Then I commenced reading them, commencing with yours of course. Was glad to hear of your good health. O how I do long to see you all. Imagine me surrounded by waggons & Tents & Teams, with Hospital Tents off about 40 rods right in the Woods, pine Woods with here & there an Oak. I sat down by the fire before our Tent just at Sunset. The Rebs who have not fired much To day had just opened a cannonade along their lines in front of us & then I read those peaceful home letters amid the very din of War.

I have been working hard in the Hospital all day. have written quite a number of letters for the sick soldiers, distributed paper & envelopes among them & attended the funeral of one who died last night

My health is very good, & In answer to your prayers I hope to be preserved from all the perils that are around me & be permitted to return to you again. My heart is at home I long after you all, & my prayer is that an unbroken band we may meet in a few months at farthest I have written from here twice, & sent by private conveyance. We shall have regular mail arrangements soon, when I will write Providence permitting every day or two.

I hope Tomorrow in the mail which yet remains to be to receive several letters from home do write often, Directing now as before, excepting to Savannah Ga, instead of Nashville Tenn

5 of our boys, Two of them officers from the 134 N.Y. who were captured at Gettesburgh came in last night. they escaped from Columbia S.C. Had been 21 days on the road. They report that Mr Pool & the other officers of the 154th now in prison are well

I hope soon to write you from the city of Savannah, but fear that many brave boys must fall ere we enter it.

With a heart ful of love to you all, & wishing to be remembered to all the friends, I remain

your affectionate Father
W. W. Norton

I want Willie to write, & Alfred also Tell me all about home, & your affairs with love to all

Savannah Ga
Jan 4th 1865

Dearest Frankie

I must keep up the habit of writing you although I have not yet received any thing from home later than your Thanksgiving Letter. it seems a long time to wait as we have here, with communications open, sending out mail daily but no mail arriving

I am very well, & very busy Let me give you an idea of my work yesterday I first went & got a Team started after a load of wood That took me untill 9 o clock & then walked nearly a mile to the Hospital _____ my armfull of reading which I had obtained of Rev Mr Alvord agent of the Boston Tract Soc. Saw a few of the men & got some of the boys to distribute the Reading through the wards. I then went back 3/4 mile or so to a chaplains meeting at the head Quarters of Gen Howard. We had a good meeting lasting until noon. Then went over to camp & got dinner & was around among the men untill 2 o clock when I rode about a mile out to the cemetery & assisted in the burial of 3 who had died in the Hospital. The rode back to camp Took a lunch as I could not wait for supper & did not wish to return to camp again last night & then walked again a full mile to Hospital & went with the Confederate Chaplain to a Dr _____, who is teaching a Young Ladies Seminary, & was introduced & visited a while then went to try & find _____ Rooms of Christian Commission & _____ & returned to my lodgings very tired, so much so that I have not entirely recovered from it this morning. We (the Christian Com chaplains) have arranged for services at one of the city churches every evening commencing this evening. the Preaching will be by chaplains & I shall probably take a part in it after a while We hope in this way to do good Well how do you all do. What news from Ormal. I felt afraid that he might not recover Let me know about him.

I wrote to Mary Beach from Atlanta giving her information about him. did she receive my letter. If so tell her I shall expect an answer immediately Do write me & tell me all about affairs at Home

Col Jones starts for home to day. I wish I could do the same, but I must be content. I do not know when I shall get any pay will write to you all about what you may have to do in a few days

from your affectionate Father
W. W. Norton

When is Willie & Alf & all home & little Bell is she well & good

Savannah Ga
Sabbath Jan 15 1865

Dearest Frankie

Your kind letter was received to day, & it gives me great pleasure I do assure you to hear from you, & to feel that you are a christian, & trying to live for Christ & heaven.

I wish to caution you Dear Frankie about one thing. _____ I fear to wound your feelings if not offend you. it is this--I have some fear from what you write that you may let your interest & love for Ormal lead you to spend to much time there, & the negglect of home duties & thus burden your Mother (who you know is not very well) with cares she should be relieved of for my sake & especially for your Mothers sake be careful upon this point. As to the letter you inquire after I cannot say whether I received the one you intended as an answer to mine in relation to Ormal or not. I have received one in which you thank me for my care of him &c

I will now say that I wrote you & also to Mary Beach to prepare you for the worst. When Ormal left Atlanta I thought it very doubtful whether he recovered. I knew his only chance was rest & good treatment I trusted he would get this at Nashville, but advised him to get a furlough & return home if possible

The account you gave of his condition is not very encouraging & yet he may gradually regain strength, & his disease assume a more favorable appearance But I dont think he will be able to do any military _____ during the term of his enlistment Give him my best regards also remember me to Mary & the rest of the family

I am very well & very comfortably situated, & yet are rather expecting to be compelled to leave here for another campaign. I rather dread it. 1st because we cannot expect as good weather as we had on the former, 2nd We must expect to meet with more opposition. yet if such is the order of our leaders, I am ready to go forward trusting all in the hands of that God who has been merciful to me & mine in the past

I hope you will correspond with Willie regularly & frequently I have written two letters to him directed to Randolph please mention this to him in your next, so he will be sure to get them from the office

Give my best regards to all the young friends, & believe me your

affectionate Father
W. W. Norton

P.S. please excuse my bad writing as this is the 4th letter written this evening & it is late & I am very sleepy & tired but I thought I must write you tonight

Camp near Raleigh N.C.
April 28, 1865

Dear Frankie

Our mail closes at 1/4 past 10 o'clock & it is now past 9. But I will try & pen a few hasty lines by this our last mail ere we take up the line of march
Homeward

Well Thanks be unto God whose right hand & whose holy arm hath gotten him the victory. during my connection with the army I have seen much of hard marching & yet I am very grateful that I have not been compelled to witness much of actual warfare. I have seen no battle field, strewn with the dead & dying. I have seen something of suffering in Hospitals I endured enough of hardness to make me long for home. a few weeks now & if I am spared, as I hope in answer to prayer which I know is being offered for me, & I shall once more be with you

I would like to write this morning to the Tuesday evening meeting, but cannot possibly find time, as I see. remember me to them. I have received nothing from Miss Vosburgh of late, perhaps because she is away

Remember me personally to all the friends as you see them.

As to the time you may expect me, do not look to soon, as I expect delays, & it will probably be July or there abouts before we can be mustered out.

I shall not probably see Ormal before I reach home as he will hardly get around so as to join us at Washington, though he may. remember me to him

The Weather here has been almost as warm as summer for some time, though not quite perhaps. yet it gives earnest of being disagreeably hot here soon I rejoice that we are northward bound.

We start to morrow morning at 4 o'clock.

I hope for a pleasant journey as we will not have to forage, even for our animals, & it is pleasant to see so much of our now united country.

Mr John Meloy has just called at my tent. He is connected with the Railroad transportation from the coast up for the Government.

That intended to write a letter to Ally to send with this but I must close & cannot do it. tell him Pa will remember him as soon as I find time to write

Love to all

In great haste

Yours Truly
W. W. Norton

But it will be long - long time
even if we are successful & have
a prosperous march before
we shall ~~reach~~ come out so
as to be in communication
with home -

I think of you all, & try
to commit you to God daily
in prayer: hoping of his
plenty mercy that we may
meet after a few months
- all meet & all in health
: Love one another: help
Mother: help Phillis & Alfred
& Stephen & Eddie & Belle
I God give you his richest
blessings: give my love to
all - tell our young friends that
I of course cannot correspond
with them weekly: after the common
the March for which we are evidently
preparing - but they must remember
we in prayer that I may be restored
to them your affectionate Father
W. M. Weston

Atlanta Nov 4th 64
Dearest Daughter

I wrote you
last evening. But as I
have a good prospect of seeing
this Dr. Morrison & Surgeon Van
Der name - I thought I would
write you again - I had supposed
Dr. Arnold was before me - but
when I arrived I found that
he was still back: he came
yesterday: had had a hard
time: been much exposed
without sufficient protection
been sick with diarrhoea
& nothing done for it - until
it is shown in character
& he is rather well -
he will go back to Chattanooga
& thence to Nashville: starting

he soon as the Hospital
train arrives which is expected
to night. If so he will leave
to Morrow. He will have an
easy ride - Compared to what
he had down here.

I write this to you: Not to
Alarm you: but to let you
know the real situation of
our young love best -

He tells me that he has
had increasing trust & confidence
in his favor: He was glad
very glad to see me & receive
your & other letters

I hope & trust that he will
mend now that he is under
Medical treatment:

but dearest I will not
inquire from you, that
Mary is taken off with
this disease

It is incident & innumerable
in any life - some escape
entirely. The great danger is
neglect: Dearest Commit
all into the hands of God
: & may he bless you both
my young loves & health be preserved
in his fight: & you permitted
to see each other again & be
a blessing to each other

I have written this also
as he will be absent from
the Regiment & I shall not
probably hear from him
~~again~~ again till I hear through
you: & this as the prospect
is. we are on upon the
point of starting upon a long
Campaign. I shall probably
receive our letters, & my
of New York & the ocean
after a few days

others to Christ:
give my love to all the
young friends: ask them
to pray for me: try & keep
up the Wesley evening prayer
meetings: be faithful in
attendance as far as possible
to the Church meetings & a
love in short for Christ
& heaven: & he will be
with you.

be assured: My heart is
with you: & I hope my
Chaplain will eventuate
in good to you all
for the present I need
write me often: as if I saw
your letters will reach you
sometimes
Your affectionate father
M. B. Barton

Atlanta Nov 3^d 64

Dear Grandma
I had upon the
point of starting upon a
long March: from it will
be impossible for me to
communicate with you.
& I thought I would write
you - before me go hoping
that it will reach you.
My health is very good
& I have had much of kindness
& favor shown me since I
left you: & yet my heart
is with you at home.
I have received no
letter from home - excepting
the first one - your Mother
on the 14th I was down at the

left hand

If I could return home
now. I feel that I had been
well repaid for all my
time & expense" & if I should
be spared as I hope: I shall
ever after have to rejoice in
the part I shall have been
permitted to take in this
rebellion

Osmeal just arrived here
to day: he has had a long
I rather hard time of it

He is far from well: I have
been down to the city & got
from the Christian Comm-
ission a bottle of Bloodbury
ordered for him: the probability
is that he will go to
the hospital to Morrow
& be sent back to the scene
of most of the new men

have the Wormwood: The
change of living & climate &
all the habits & ways of living
is so different from home life
" This is his trouble: & he
is poor in flesh: we must
" I have done all I can
for his comfort: got him
into good quarters & we shall
continue to do so as long
as we are within reach of
each other:

Now dearest daughter
I can but commit you &
all my loved ones to our
kind heavenly Father =
" Take a good care of your
health as you can
Believe Mother: be a good
Mother to the younger
children: be a faithful
Christian & strive to win

With Providence permitting every
day or two.

I hope tomorrow in the
mail which yet remains to be
to receive several letters from home
do write often. Directing now
as before - excepting to Savannah
Ga - instead of Wartwell Tenn

5 of our boys - 70 of them officers
from the 134 N.Y. who were
captured at Peter Gettysburgh.
Came in last night: they expect
from Columbus, S. C. Had been
24 days on the road - they report
that Mr Pool & the other officers
of the 154th now in prison are well.
I hope soon to write you from
the city of Savannah - but fear that
many brave boys must fall
ere we enter it.

With a heart full of love to
you all. I wish to be remem-
bered to all the friends. I remain
your affectionate friend
W. M. Norton
I want Milli to write & Alfred also.
Tell me all about home & your affairs
how ever you can & all

Ga
Before Atlanta Savannah
Dec 17, 1864

Dearest Frankie,

To day for the
first time in a month we
had the pleasure of hearing that
a large mail had come & was
being distributed to the various
Regiments. Only part of it
could be distributed to night
I received 6 letters. put them
in my pocket until I had
carried ^{letters} some over to the
Hospital. I distributed them
then I went back to my
tent I opened them the first
I opened was from Bro C
& put it up. opened another
from Lydia - put it by & would
opened one from Mr Cop

laid that aside. & next opened
yours: read the other two
~~one~~ from Mary Warburgh. &
My dear friends of the Tuesday
evening prayer meeting: & another
one from Bro E: was disappoint-
ed in not finding any from
Nife: then I commenced
reading them. Commencing with yours
of course: Was glad to hear
of your good health: O how
I do long to see you all:

I imagine the surround of
Maggon & tents & staves. with
Hospital tents off about 40 rods
right in the woods. pine woods
with here & there an oak-

I sat ^{just at sunset} down by the fire. before
our tent. The Rebs who have
not fired much to day had
just opened a command
along their lines in front
of us & there I read those

peaceful home letters amidst
the very din of war =
I have been working hard in
the Hospital all day. have written
quite a number of letters
for the sick soldiers. distributed
paper & envelopes among them
& attended the funeral of one
who died last night

My health is very good
& in answer to your prayer
I hope to be preserved from all
the perils that are around me
& be permitted to return to you
again. My heart is at home
& long after you all. & my
prayer is that an unbroken
band we may meet in a
few months at furthest
I have written from here
twice. & sent by private conveyance
I shall have regular mail
arrangements soon. When I will

this evening. At Breachin will
be the Disputes & I shall probably
take a part in it after a while
The hope in this may do good
Well how long all do. Much
news from Ormond: I felt
affairs that he might not recover
Let me know about him.

I wrote to Mary Beach of
Atlanta, giving her information
about him. did she receive
my letter. If so tell her I shall
expect an answer immediately

Do write me & tell me all
about affairs at home

Col Jones starts for home
to day. I wish I could do the
same. but I must be
content. I do not know
when I shall get any pay
and write to you all about what
you may have to do in a few days

From your affectionate friend
D. B. Boston

When Mills & I see call on
& like full well & soon

Savannah Ga
Jan 4th 1865

Dear + Frankie
I must

Keep up the habit of writing
you although I have not
yet received any thing from
home later than you

Thanking sister. It seems
a long time. A week or so have
been with communications
open: landing and mail day
has no mail coming

I am very well. & very busy
Let me give you an idea of
my work yesterday

I first went & got a team
started after a load of wood
that took me until 9 o'clock
& then walked nearly a mile.

to the Hospital my my compass
of reading which I had obtained
of Rev. Mr. Alford agent
of the Boston Tract Socy

I saw a few of the men & got
some of the boys to distribute
the Reading through the words.

I then went back 9/4 miles
or so to a Chaplains meeting
at the head Quarters of
Gen. Davenport - He had
a good meeting last night
noon. Then went over

to camp & got dinner
& was around among the
men until 2 o'clock
When I rode about
a mile out to the
Cemetery & assisted in
the burial of 3 who had
died in Hospital.

Then rode back to camp

Took a lunch, as I could
not wait for supper & did
not wish to return to camp
again last night & then
walked again a full mile
to Hospital & went with
the Confederate Chaplain
to a Dr. Miss - who is
teaching a young Ladies
Seminary - & was introduced
& visited a while.

then went to try & find
the Rooms of Christian
Commission & failed
& returned to my lodgings
& rested so much so
that I have not entirely
recovered from it this morning.
The (the Christian Com. Chaplain)
Room arranged for services
at one of the city Churches
even evenings.

All in the hands of that
God who has been so merciful
to me & mine in the past

I hope you will be acquainted
with Miller's regulations & frequently
I have written two letters
to him directed to Randolph
I have mentioned this to him
in your next - so he will be
sure to get them from the office -
Give my best regards to all
the young friends.

I believe all your
affectionate Mother
W. H. W. T. C.

I please to say I had
written as there is the 4th letter
written there every & it is
let it be in my hands & I will
let it be in my hands & I must
trust you

Savannah Ga
Saturday Jan 13 1865

Dear Mother

Your kind letter
was received today, & it gives
me great pleasure & I do assure
you to hear from you & to feel that
you are a Christian & trying to live
for Christ's sake -

I wish to caution you & Ca. Prankie
about one thing. I shall I fear be around
you telling if not offend you - this
thing & none can see from what you
write that you may let your interest
& love for Christ be your to spend
& much time there. & the neglect
of home duties & thus burden your
Mother - (I hope you know is not really well)
with this she should be relieved of

for Mr. Galt especially for your
Mr. Galt's letter - he is upset after the
point is - he is the letter you
inquire after I cannot say where
I received the one you intended
as an answer to mine as relation
to General is not - I have received
one in which you thank ~~me~~ for
my letter of the 10th

You will now say that I sent
you & also to Mary Beach - to
pardon you for the worst when
General left - Atlanta I
thought it very doubtful whether
he returned - I knew his only
chance was not of good treatment
I trusted he would get this
at Nashville - but advised
him to get a passport &
return home if possible

The 1st ~~army~~ ^{army} you give of his
condition is not very encouraging

yet he may gradually regain
strength - his dream is to
be more favorable officer
but I do not think he will be able
to do any military service during
the term of his enlistment
Give him my best regards
& also remember me to Mary
& the rest of the family

I am very well & very
comfortably situated - I get
no rest but expect to be
compelled to leave here for
some time - I rather
dread it - 1st because we
General expect us good with
as we had on the former
2nd the more expect to meet
with more opposition -
yet if such is the order
of our leaders I am
willing to go forward trusting

Country:

Mr John Meloy has just
called at my tent. He is
connected with Railroad trans-
portation from the Coast up
for the Government.

I had intended to write a
letter to Ally. I send with
this but I must close
& cannot do it. Tell him
I will remember
him as soon as I find
time to write

Love to all

in great haste

Yours truly
M. W. Norton

Camp Mac Kalligh N. Co
April 28, 1865

Dear Franklin

Our mail closes
at about 10 O'clock & I send
part of it. But I will try for a
few hasty lines by this our last
mail ere we talk of the line
of March Homeward

Well thanks be unto God
whose right hand & whose
left arm hath gotten him
the victory. During my connection
with the Army I have seen
much of hard marching & yet
I am very grateful that I
have not been compelled to
witness much of actual
warfare. I have seen no battle
field strewn with the dead
& dying. I have seen something
of suffering in Hospitals
& endured enough of hardships

To make me long for home
; a few weeks now if I am
permitted. as I hope in answer
to prayer which I know is being
offered for me. & I shall
once more be with you
I would like to write this
morning to the weekly evening
meeting but cannot possibly
find time. as I see. Remember
me to them. I have received
nothing from Miss Washburn
of late. perhaps because
she is away.

Remember me personally
to all the friends as you see
them.

As to the time your may expect
me: do not look to soon
; as I expect delays. It
will probably be just or

be mustered and
I shall put probably get
Ormond. before I reach
them as he will hardly get
around here to join us
at Washington. though he
may. I remember me
to him.

The weather here has been
almost as warm as summer
for some time. though not
quite perfect. yet it gives
earnest of being disagreeably
hot here soon. I rejoice
that we are northward
bound.

We start to morrow morning
at 4 o'clock.

I hope for a pleasant journey
as we will not have to
forage, even for our animals
& it is better + "