

Camp near Fairfax C. H. Va. Dec. 18th 1862,

Dear Sister

I will write you to night tho' it is only a day or two since I wrote, but I have rec^d a letter from you just now & I can answer a letter much better if I do it just after reading it. When I last wrote you we were doing picket duty near Manassas. We went down there last Saturday & came back yesterday (Wednesday) while the rest went on picket at a time, so you see we had to go on every other day. We (the Commissioned Officers) only had to go on once in 3 days, consequently I was only on once while there. You enquire what I have to do while on picket. I will explain as well as possible. It depends upon the nature of the ground & the nearness of the enemy how pickets are posted, ours have generally been two on a post & from 5 to 10 rods apart, some other Brigades meet the right & left of our line so they extend in that way sometimes for miles. Our Brigade while at Camp Wmarr had a line of 8 miles, at Bull Run a line about half as long. If there are 300 men go out at once they will be divided in 3 reliefs of 100 men each, now a Lieut will take 50.