

Prologue by Moyra Bannister (Wife of Sir Roger Bannister, consultant neurologist, former master of Pembroke college Oxford, world record holder, 1st man to run a mile in under 4 minutes.)

I was galvanised into looking at these letters by a request from "The Great War Archive" opened at Oxford University. These letters have lain in a draw of mine for more than half a century and before that they were in my mothers keeping. Her maiden name was Vi (Violet) Mary Nye. She was the eldest child of Charles Nye, Regimental Sergeant Major of the Oxfordshire and Bucks Light Infantry and of May (Mary Elizabeth Nye (née Sexton))

He was an English protestant, and she an Irish catholic. Violet's father was born in 1860 and died in 1930 many biographies have erroneously stated his death was 1906. This was an error I had corrected in the Dictionary of National Biography having sent them his death certificate.

The Nye's had six remarkably able children. However till I re-read these and other letters I did not realise how very straitened the family circumstances were after my Grandfather had left the army. Which makes the subsequent careers of these Nye's all the more unusual?

Queen Alexandras Auxiliary Corps.

My mother, when she left the Army, having resigned as a Deputy Administrator, a Captain in QAAC, she joined the League of Nations Secretariat, then still in London and met my father, a young Swedish economist, Per Jacobsson. He worked in the disarmament section of the League of Nations till 1928, subsequently joined the Bank of International Settlements as Chief Economist in 1931 and finally became Chairman and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

Charles in his brief life was full of patriotism as his letters from the Front attest. He was a good mathematician, born in Dublin within the sound of bugles and military marches. He was willing to turn his hand to any honourable work. He emigrated to Canada near Toronto and worked on a farm in very harsh conditions. Returning to England to join the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Gladys Nye trained as a teacher, married a man who was an editor of a Liverpool newspaper. As a port, Liverpool was severely bombed and after World War Two her husband James Mooney became an invalid. Glad already had high teaching qualifications, became Headmistress of a preparatory school. When widowed she became a much loved guest in our London house.

Harold Nye studied for the Priesthood in Portugal during World War One, so was exempt from the army. He did noble work for ten years in Parkhurst Prison and in often harrowing circumstances during World War Two in the east end of London, surviving severe bombing. In our family he was known as the "wicked uncle" who appreciated a glass of wine and was full of laughter. He visited our family every Christmas in Switzerland before the 1939 war, as did his brother, Uncle Arch, then still a bachelor, known as "The good uncle." As he was a teetotaler and very fit. He had seen young Captains, drunk, leading their men out of trenches in World War One

and swore then to eschew all alcohol. His career is in the public domain so I will not enlarge upon it.

He too wrote to my mother Vi, from the Front, in the First World War, but once visiting our home, my mother showed these letters to him and he tore them all up. My mother was very upset. She asked him after the Second World War why did he not write his memoirs? His answer was succinct "Ah, Vi...I would have to write the truth – and I could not do that." He had, if not a certain contempt, certainly a mistrust for Generals who wrote and sometimes re-wrote old battles for self aggrandisement. I never heard a boastful word fall from his lips. It explains perhaps why apart from a few Military historians, his name is unknown but many of his colleagues truly loved him. As is recorded Churchill was so taken with him that for a brief moment Churchill toyed with the idea of making Archie Chief of the Army. His youth and lack of command experience made it out of the question, but Alanbrooke in his memoirs writes of Arch, his VCIGS, in a brief paragraph with outright praise.

Eily (Eileen) sometimes known as "Pixie" learnt typing and short hand and became a secretary in a government office where she met and married John Turnbull who had fought and been severely wounded in World War One. He became a high official in the Coal Board and was honoured with a CBE for his work during World War Two. Eily lectured in schools round the country on PSHE.

For all of them their hallmark was courage, patriotism, and a certain generosity of spirit – laced with laughter, undimmed despite some of the terrible years through which they had all lived.

Violet Nye – 1889 – 1979
Charles Nye – 1891 – 1916
Gladys Nye – 1894 – 1974
Harold Nye - 1895 – 1968
Archie Nye - 1896 – 1967
Eileen Nye - 1898 - 1974

*There were two other children
one died as a baby and the
other, Lionel died of croup
at 18 months.*



Debt of Honour Register

In Memory of

CHARLES NYE

Lieutenant
8th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment

who died on
Wednesday 16 August 1916 . Age 25 .

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Additional Information: Son of Charles Edward and M. E. Nye, of "Cranford," Cranmore Lane, Aldershot.

Cemetery: CERISY-GAILLY FRENCH NATIONAL CEMETERY Somme, France

Grave or Reference Panel Number: I. G. 17.

Location: Cerisy is a village 10 kilometres south-west of Albert. From Albert take the D42 in the direction of Morlancourt and Moreuil. After passing Morlancourt you arrive at Sailly-Laurette. Continue until reaching a crossroads where you turn left onto the D71 in the direction of Cerisy. Continue on the D71 until you approach a group of bungalows on your left. Turn left at the end of this group of bungalows when you will then approach Cerisy-Gailly French National Cemetery. The Commonwealth war graves will be found at the rear of the cemetery.

Historical Information: Gailly was the site of the 39th and 13th Casualty Clearing Stations during the early part of 1917, and of the 41st Stationary Hospital from May, 1917, to March, 1918; the villages were then captured by the enemy, but they were retaken by the Australian Corps in August, 1918. Cerisy-Gailly French National Cemetery was begun by a Clearing Hospital of the French Tenth Army in February, 1916. The British plots are on the Western side of it, and they were made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields of the Somme and from Buire Communal Cemetery Extension. The great majority of these soldiers fell in the Battles of the Somme, 1916. There are now nearly 400, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, three-quarters are unidentified. The British plots cover an area of 1,127 square metres and are enclosed on the North, West and South sides by a rubble wall.

[Display Record of Commemoration](#)

Background and Information.

Where I have put question marks in brackets (?) It is where I have not been able to make out the word Charles has written in his original letters.

I have formatted these paragraphs myself. The actual letters included no paragraphs or proper spacing's as Charles wanted to fit as much as possible onto a small amount of paper.

In one letter (16th December 1915) A page has been lost. I have continued straight onwards to page three.



Charles Nye in Uniform, the Photo is in a Northamptonshire frame.

OUR GOVERNMENT.

DREADNOUGHTS and OLD-AGE PENSIONS

The mess of pottage is set before us all-, individuals, nations, and governments; we have to choose- there is no middle course, no opportunity for compromise, we must accept or reject it.

Recent events go to prove that history has still its old affection for repetition. In the year 1908 the trustees of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen passed through just such a crisis. They had to choose between the postponement or abandonment of their pet theories of social reform, and the risk of temporary unpopularity amongst their followers, which the work of placing beyond question the security of their trust would have meant on the one hand, and on the other, the fulfilment of a hasty promise in the shape of Old-Age Pensions and the curtailment of the clear necessity for imperial defence. In a word the choice was between Dreadnoughts and Old-Age Pensions. In the one scale was the birthright in the shape of the British Empire; in the other was a mess of pottage in the shape of a five shilling piece and the sweets of office. We all know the choice which was made in the early days of history. They decided for the meal, the present luxury of office, the immediate popularity.

Had the four ships been commenced in 1908 or the beginning of 1909, we should have had security in 1911; as it is, the £8,000,000. has been squandered, metaphorically, on a savoury dish. There you have it exactly the price of the four ships. Now, had the position been ~~reversed~~ put fairly and squarely before the country, there cannot be the least doubt but that a far different selection would have been made. Fortunately the heart of England still rings true, it has not yet become besotted with riches so that it cares not what its fate may be. It is true that the burden of the Empire has often pressed heavily upon the shoulders of her sons, but there has been no complaint, nor would there be, no matter what the sacrifice may be, if ministers would but recognise their plain duty and act.

Surely if ever there was a time for action it is to-day. Never since the days of the Armada has England been faced with such a menace as is being prepared for her across the North Sea. Let Englishmen look at ^{it} soberly, fearlessly, and without hysteria. Separated from them by only a few hours steam there is a nation of sixty million souls- a nation with ambition, traditions of conquest, and above all, dreams of worldpower.

Measured in accumulated wealth they are not as rich as we are, they have practically no outlet for their increasing population; the borders of their Empire are set beyond the hope of expansion. They feel they want of breathing space; they want, they must have, elbow room. Looking at the converse side, they have an island nation of forty four million souls, - a nation that has acquired with a glorious heritage, enormous accumulated wealth, satisfied ambitions; a nation that has acquired by right of conquest all the fairest and most productive regions of the globe; a nation that enjoys in her over-sea dominions numberless outlets for surplus population, in fact, more than she needs, and, in addition, administers the affairs of two great populous and fertile Empires.

When the German surveys the British Empire, how he must rebel in his own heart against the fate that decreed him a younger son's portion.

Is it a matter for wonder that he, like Jacob, looks with envious eyes on Esau's birthright?

Until recent years these national desires, these visions of Empire have held in check, almost dissipated in fact at birth by one great overwhelming barrier. That barrier was the British Navy. Its tremendous force was the one obstacle that stood in the way of the realisation of that dream.

OUR GOVERNMENT.

Dreadnoughts and Old-Age Pensions.

By one of these ironies which fate deals out to men and nations alike a new factor appears on the scene in the shape of the Dreadnought. Here is a ship which concentrates in a single hull the power of a squadron. The astute German mind trained to think things out, sees the opportunity chance puts in its reach, and grasps it. They would build Dreadnoughts, build unceasingly, build night and day, until they had secured supremacy.

How will England take it? The burden is going to press very heavily upon us, but other shoulders, and strong ones, too, are going to help us to support it. There is to be no rest until there is security.

Ministers have consumed their mess of pottage; the tempting dish is before the nation. Will it partake think you, or reject it? We shall see.

CHARLES NYE. 12th, Dec. 1909.

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enclosing battalion orders for Xmas eve and Xmas day. May interest you. I hope you enjoyed Christmas. Write and let me know what you did.

Weather has been rotten here. Let me know the news.

Battalion Orders for Christmas Eve 1915

P A R T 1.

Issue No. 305.

BATTALION ORDERS

by

Brevet Colonel D. R. Hartigan,

Commanding 8th (2nd Reserve) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Colchester.

Saturday.

25th December 1915.

No. 1. SPECIAL ORDER.

The following extract from Colchester Garrison Orders is published for information :-

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS from their MAJESTIES THE KING & QUEEN

The following Gracious Message from His Majesty the King is published for information,
Begins :-

Another Christmas finds all the resources of the Empire still engaged in war and I desire to convey on my own behalf and on behalf of the Queen a heartfelt Christmas Greeting and our Good Wishes for the New Year to all who on the sea and land are upholding the honour of the British name. In the Officers and Men of my Navy on whom the security of the Empire depends I repose in common with all my subjects a trust that is absolute, on the Officers and Men of my Armies whether now in France, in the East or in other fields I rely with equal faith, confident that their devotion, their valour and their self sacrifice will under God's guidance lead to Victory and an honourable Peace. There are many of their comrades now alas in hospital and to these brave men also I desire with the Queen to express our deep gratitude and Our earnest prayers for their recovery ; Officers and men of the Navy and Army another year is drawing to a close as it began in toil, bloodshed & suffering but I rejoice to know that the Goal to which you are striving draws nearer into sight. May God bless you & all your undertakings.

(Authority :- War Office telegram 66541 A.G.4).

(Signed) C. Nye, Lieut Act/Adjutant,
8th (2nd Reserve) Battalion,
Northamptonshire Regiment.

Could this be made better?

Bustard Camp
Salisbury Plain
30th December 1914

Dear Vi,

Your letter received OK, intended to answer but kept putting it off. I've just come back from 6 days at home. Everybody OK. Dad in his element and looking fine, Mam in best of health and happy. Eil and Glad looking fine. Arch is trying for a permanent commission and may be sent to divisional headquarters in France. We are still under canvass and the conditions are rotten. A sea of mud – alternate rain and snow storms and hurricane gales.

We've have been at the front long ago only our officers are no good. We will probably leave here for a base in France between the 15th January and the end of the month. By that time I hope to have a commission in the new army. If I get in the first 300,000 I shall be at the front before the end of February. In any case I'll be there by the end of March. So when next I write I'll probably be Second Lieutenant in one of the regular regiments.

My application has been signed Educational by Lieutenant White, Army schools. Moral character by dad's friend General Anderson and my colonel has recommended me and Brigadier endorsed it. In about two weeks I ought to get my appointment. You can see by "The Times" what our troops are experiencing. Still I'm anxious to get there and do my best.

Byrne (?) has turned out to be a total skunk. He's a fellow of absolutely no principle. He had his leave stopped for a couple of breaches of discipline and got away on a faked telegram. The captain wouldn't have let him go; only happened to be away. The lieutenant in charge, a decent sport asked him to give his word of honour, he'd come back on time. He did (give his word of honour) and turned up two days late, looking an awful wreck. The lieutenant got into trouble for letting him go.

His next exploit was to swipe a hat badge from a fellow in our tent. We nabbed him and he had to give it back. Next he was on a fatigue party that went to Salisbury. When the work was done the sergeant major of ordinance corps, who was in charge gave them three hours leave, on there giving their word that they would be back at the appointed time. Byrne stayed behind and the SM nearly lost his stripes over it. Byrne stayed away six days sitting in a pretty disreputable house drinking all the time.

He dared not go on the streets as the piquet would have got him. When his money was gone he came back looking a disgrace to the regiment, buttons gone, hat smashed etc. He got ten days in the guard tent. Everybody got six days here in December. And he got away with the first twenty. They were told that if they didn't get back on time another fellow would be kept back till they did. Byrne didn't turn up so another fellow didn't get any leave. He's not back yet and has been away nearly three weeks. Our fellows have no use for him. He goes to Coventry if he comes back. Besides in many ways he's a pretty low skunk. I am on a weeks guard at headquarters.

Dashwood is with me and he's a fine fellow. Does everything cheerfully and one of the best fellows in the company. Dashwood told me Morris couldn't make the

second contingent. We did our shooting course a couple of weeks ago and I did pretty well. Dashwood did well up to 600 yards. Then a grey mist came over the targets and you could only see the number plate. I took an imaginary spot below it and got a bull and four inners. Dashwood got no hits, signalled at all, conditions were rotten for shooting all the time, you know we have little facilities for writing. It's raining like blazes and I've got to go on duty now. Will drop you a line when I get my appointment. Write often and keep in touch,

Best wishes for new year, with love, Charlie.



Home
14th January 1915

Priv. Pats has been in action
And has been badly cut up.

Dear Vi,

Hope you got my cablegram announcing that I had left the 3rd Battalion floundering in the mud on Salisbury plain. Contrary to the usual practice, I have been granted a Lieutenancy. Second lieutenant is the general run. I'm appointed to the 8th battalion Northants Regt. Stationed at Weymouth. I'm home getting my outfit and will join during the week. This is a new battalion and it hasn't got its true compliment of Captains so with a bit of luck may get a Captaincy in a few weeks.

Am allowed £50 for outfit and pay and allowances come to 13/3 a day. On my way from Salisbury I dropped off at Basingstoke and spent the evening with Archie. He hopes to go any day as a Sergeant with a draw to one of the old regular regiments. This means he goes straight to the firing line. With the recommendation he takes with him he should get a commission almost at once. The won't give School masters commissions as all will want them if they give it to one and this is the way they are going to work it for Arch. [Arch entered the army as already a qualified army schoolmaster.]

I'm going down next week as if I owned the regiment and will put up sufficient bluff to give me command of the whole outfit. I'll get my photo taken in uniform in a couple of days and send it along, also a set of the regimental badges.

Hope you are having a good time in Toronto, its nothing but rain here. May is supposed to be the month that fireworks will start at the Front. The first lot of Canadian troops will go to France shortly, but will be held at the base for training purposes for a couple of months. The 48th are a joke here. And will probably be left behind till the second contingent is ready to go. I hope to have a good position before I finish with this. Dad was "tickled to death" when I went down and showed him the commission.

Saw general Anderson today who also congratulated me. By the way Byrne turned up just before I left. He had a couple of faked medical certificates and as the regiment was soon to leave they didn't give him quod but stopped a months pay. Our colonel asked me to come and see him and the regiment if ever I am stationed near

Connaught and our Captain was falling over himself. When I get to the regiment I'll write a detailed account of prospects etc.

Dad's looking fine and as happy as a sand boy. Arch will be home tonight and we are both going up to London tomorrow to see about my togs etc.

Will write later, thanks for cup. Will be very useful. Dad's afraid to use his. Doesn't want to dirty it, Charl.



8th Service Battalion
The Northamptonshire Regiment
Cornwall
1st March 1915

Dear Vi,

Your letter to hand Ok. Glad to hear you are having a good time and hope it will continue. The (?) contingents are certainly in France but won't see any fighting for a few months to come. MY commission in temporary, for the duration of the war. You see I was posted straight to First Lieutenant instead of Second Lieutenant. This regiment is destined for Egypt and of course I don't want to go there. I met here at the home of a big country family, a lieutenant of the First Berkshire regiment. He was shot through the lung at the Aisne after going through Mons and the Marne. His father is at the war office and is going to try and get me to the reserve battalion of the Berks. I will then have permanent commission; will go to the front with a draft the first of second battalion. To do this I will have to revert to second lieutenant, but don't mind that.

Arch will be going out to the 43rd any day now. He had his last leave last weekend. I wish I was going with him. I had my photo taken on Saturday and as soon as I get them will send a couple along. I ordered a couple of hatpins with our regimental button on the end. There is such a rush on these things you have to order weeks ahead. I intended to send you a couple for your birthday, but to my surprise, got them in a couple of days so will send them during the week.

The Northampton's are losing heavily at the Front. One thousand killed, wounded in less than this month. In yesterday's role of honour, six officers of the 16th lancers appeared killed and five wounded all on February 22nd. When this thing will end the Lord only knows. But I want to do my part before the finish. You might send me the Sunday World [from Toronto] now and again if you think of it.

Give my regards to the Richardson's. If I go out to the front and come back wounded I'll take a trip to Canada and look you up. Mean time, all energies concentrated on getting to the Berks. I'll send Smith a line when I get a chance. Does Miss Hill still make those vile seed cakes? I'll have to close now. But will let you know if anything happens. Anyway you may? Arch and I are keeping our ends up,

Dear Charl

Address me:
Mount Bay Hotel
Penzance
Cornwall



1 Morat Road
Penzance
2nd May 1915

Dear Vi,

Your letter and papers received OK. haven't time to write much now, but will later. The Canadians have done well but would have been wiped out only three brigades of regulars came up and saved them. They've been terribly cut up.

The Queen's own suffered less than any. I am now under orders to be prepared to proceed to the Front at any moment. Maybe France or Turkey. Hope I go soon, only four officers out of our 72 are under orders.

Arch is under observation for a commission on April 20th. Thanks for Sunday World. Hope you got my photo. Write me a long letter of Toronto gossip. More later, hope you have been having a good time.



Alexandria
18th May 1915

Get me in Tropical helmet
And Drill khaki!

Dear Vi,

You'll note by above that I'm home again but the reason is that I am under orders for abroad. Dardanelles, and by the time you get this, will probably be there, or on my way. Our battalion moved from Penzance to Colchester on the 15th. and as I was Acting Adjutant had all the work in commission with some.

The Sunday world has been arriving regularly and I wish that now I am going out you would continue to send it home as they are all very anxious to have it. There are ninety officers in our regt. and I have been picked out first for the front. And we will probably go to regular regts. We don't know what regts. we are going to yet, but as soon as I find out I'll write and let you know.

Arch must have been in some very heavy fighting lately. But he was alright up to May 14th as we received a postcard dated 14th. Don't you think its funny me being sent to Turkey. I'll only be 100 miles from Suchrew kale [He and Vi were in Russia at the same time.]

I've seen something of the world in the last few years haven't I? How's things in Toronto? Keep me supplied with the news. It's always welcome. Hope the B.N.A is still on its feet. Is there much poverty this year? Are the woodbine races on this month? Do you remember your success last year? Are you going to the island this year? I can just picture the evenings on the island.

It's a year ago today that I went into camp at Balmy beach [in Canada] a lot has passed since then and it seems years since then. I suppose the weather is getting rather nicer now. You'll be thinking of trips to the Falls. [Niagara] Mam says your letters to herself and Dad received today will be answered shortly.

Well, have to switch off now, and will advise my address when I get final orders. Anyway, if anything happens you'll know I did my duty

Dear Charl.



Royal Devonport Hotel
23rd May 1915

My Dear Vi,

You probably have received wire from home saying that I have sailed for the Dardanelles. Well we were ordered to Liverpool and our boat was The Aquitania but she went aground in the Mersey and we were sent down hereto embark. We will embark on the 25th. What boat I don't know, or what regiment I am going to. It maybe the first battalion Dublin fusiliers, I hope so, but I have no idea yet. Also the 43rd will be there now, and it may be that. Think of Dad's chest expansion if I went to them! [his father had been in the army all his life] however a few days and I'll be in action. There are much fears of fighting against the Turks just now and also prospects of our efforts accomplishing something without this lengthy trench are a farce.

I received my orders by wire ten minutes after I posted my letter to you from home. I think Mam [his mother, Mary Nye] was a bit cut up, but all the same she wouldn't have us hang back. When I came up to Liverpool I met a very ice lady on the train. Do you remember the discussion about the Earl of Aberdeen taking the title up Tara? Well her son was Tara and although she's a great friend of the Aberdeen's she wouldn't allow them to outrage Irish sentiment. She is a cousin of the earl of Meath. I got her a place in a crowded train at Euston. Also some coffee and sandwiches. This made a great hit with her. A young pretty girl, about 18, was seeing her off (going to Dublin to see her brother in the Royal Irish regiment.) and she introduced me to the girl who is Victoria, the youngest sister of Lord Wendover, who died from wounds a few days before.

He was only 22, and the girl was very much cut up. When she saw all we fellows boarding the train it seem to hurt, so I took her off and put her in a taxi and sent her home. The other lady and I discussed all kind of topics till we got Crewe and I had to change. She insisted on knowing my name, and was most sincere in wishing me the

best of luck. She told me that after the war I must give up wandering and try to make a fortune and marry on of the nice young girls she knew. Get Charl marrying an heiress!

We have had to stay at hotels at our own expense for the last few days. So it was lucky I had a little cash still I can claim 15 shillings a day so will be alright. The information about embarking etc. is strictly confidential, but by the time you get this, I'll be there. I was just thinking Vi, this time last year the Woodbine races were on. No thought of war or war clouds and think of it today. Still I'm glad I joined at once and hope shortly to be in a sphere where my training will prove valuable. You may be sure that whatever happens I have tried to do my best. Arch [his brother] must have taken part in some terrific fighting lately. I'll send you my address as soon as I know it and hope you send a few long letters with any news of Toronto you may have.

Dear Charl.



ANCHOR LINE
Twin Crew Steamer, Transylvania
"off Gib"
29th May 1915

Dear Vi,

Just to advise I've got this far, bound for Alexandria and then the real thing I believe. Don't know what Regiment or my address yet. Archie's regiment has suffered heavily. But I hope he is alright. Just heard of loss of Majestic and Princess Irene. Lovely weather so far. More from Malta, got your book ok, thanks.

Charlie.



Malta
3rd June 1915

Dear Vi,

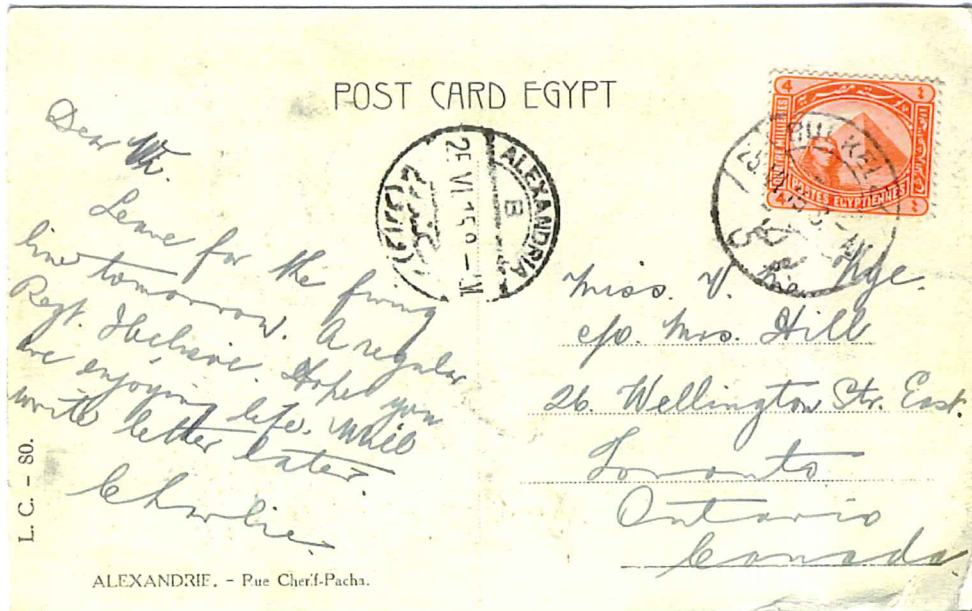
We have just left Malta and its now fading away in the distance, and if you get this you will know I have arrived at Alexandria. We only stayed two hours at Gib. [Gibraltar] as three submarines were supposed to be on our trail so we slipped off in a hurry. On the night of June the first when we raced for Malta at full speed with all lights out and arrived about noon yesterday. The usual flotilla of small craft buzzed round including driving boys and hawkers. Officers were allowed on shore from 2pm till 11pm.

There were a lot of French war craft in the harbour, including a submarine. A French battleship went out as we came in and so they passed us. The men all stood to their posts at attention. Our men did the same and gave them a cheer which they replied. It presented a very fine sight.

I went on shore and had a good look round. It's rather a nice place; most of the larger buildings have been converted into hospitals. I went a shore with a rising Scots surgeon, who of course is now in the RAMC. He spent months in France, is now billed for the Dardanelles. We went to the largest hospital and first met some Australian nurses and found out that there were ten Canadian nurses there. Several being from Toronto, but they were all on night duty. Any amount of English, Irish and Scotch and I met one from a New York hospital. The wounded were Australian, Munsters, Dubliners and Lancashire fusiliers. Some that had fought in the retreat from Mons said it was child's play compared to the landing at Gallipoli.

I didn't get a chance to buy any souvenirs as the shops closed remarkably early. In the visitors book at Government house I saw six names of officers of the 2nd North Hants. Who had entered them when coming home from Egypt. Fiver were killed in France and one wounded. Is America still too proud to fight? What do the yanks in Toronto say about it? I hope now the summer is coming and that you are taking advantage of any enjoyment that's going. Italy is going to be a big factor I think.

With Love, Charlie.



Alexandria
13th June 1915

Dear Vi,

Hope you got my note, saying that I had got this far. We expect to be sent to the firing line any minute. Its very tough fighting up there and casualties come in here on hospital ships at the rate of 2,000 a day. Alexandria is one of the last places on earth. The English colonies are a lot of snobs – too high and mighty to associate with British officers. The sons of threes people haven't joined but constitute the runt of the place.

The Greeks are the wealthiest and best people here. They have a large hospital for British wounded and many Greek ladies are serving as nurses. I've met a couple of very nice Greek families and they help me to relieve the tedium of this place. I'm in camp on the sea shore and get a swim every day. Something like Balamy Beach last year.

Hope you are enjoying yourself. Will let you know anything of importance.
Dear Charl.

Address: Lieutenant C.NYE
8th Northampton's
Mediterranean Exped. Force.



Alexandria
20th June 1915

Dear Vi,

Just a note to let you know I am under orders to leave for the Dardanelles and will go in a couple of days. A regular regiment I believe and probably the Dublin fusiliers – hope so. Am feeling quite fit and anxious to get there.

It is as bad there if not worse than France. The 43rd are in the Persian Gulf and have lost a few officers. Haven't heard anything about Arch since I left England. His regiment have suffered heavily. More later, append an address that will always find me.

Lt. C. Nye
8th Northants.
Mediterranean Exped. Force
Base. PO Alexandria
Egypt.



Imbros
1st July 1915

Dear Vi,

Am just writing to advise that we go into the thick of it tomorrow. And am posted to the 1st Battalion, Royal Inniskilling fusiliers. We are only about eleven miles from the scene of operations and yet this island seems very peaceful. Its hills are very much like those in Cornwall. I haven't heard anything about Arch. But have seen most of the casualties of the Oxford and Bucks, but he isn't in it.

The 43rd are fighting in the Persian Gulf. I suppose Toronto is looking its best now and picnics and trips to Niagara are to the fore. I hope you retain your interest in baseball.

I haven't had a letter from anywhere since I left England. You might drop me a line and give me Canadian news. When you write Address to Roy. Inn Fusiliers, M.E.D. well can't let you have any more news,

Love Charles.



Gallipoli
3rd July 1915

Dear Vi,

I'm writing while in the trenches. We are now in support. This trench belonged to the enemy a couple of days ago but our regt. took it with the bayonet. When we landed a Howitzer from the Asiatic shore was dropping shells all over the beach. As two of us went along to join our unit, one burst about ten yards away. Only a shower of stones over us and no actual harm.

A pretty warm time, but held on earning the thanks of the divisional general who wired up "Well done Inniskillings!" one gets very little sleep at night. Its like an inferno an incessant rattle of rifle and machine gun from heavy howitzers and field guns, booming behind an in front of you. Star shells hissing, bombs and trench mortars, exploding mines raising blazes. Then try and sleep.

The Turks do all their fighting by night. Have had no letters yet but live in hopes. It is humorous to think of this time last year and Balmy beach. Still I'll enjoy it all the more if I get back. I was begging to like Alexandria when we left. The ships guns here make an awful din. We get no news of the armies here but expect things are going well.

Our shell supply here appears to be good, but wish they would send a few more men. How is Canada doing now? Is the third and forth contingent ready? How's business and yourself? Write me a long letter when you can. Love Charlie.

Address: Lieut. C. Nye
1st Royal Inniskillings fusiliers

87 Brigade
29th Division
Mediterranean
EX. Force



Gallipoli
8th July 1915

Dear Vi,

Have been in the firing line for a week. This business means more than people think and regular regiments bear the brunt of it. You hear what they say about others giving them all the praise – the difference is chalk and cheese – can't say more on account of the censor. Had no sleep for three nights, landed at 6pm on the first, left just after I wrote you and believe me I will never forget the night of that "Dominion Day".

Just after I landed a Howitzer shell – Jack J – burst within ten metres of me, god knows how I escaped. This is a gun on the Asiatic shore which shells the beaches. I was sent straight to my regiment. They were in the trenches. I got there about 9pm – pitch dark. About midnight the Ghurkhas on our left were bombed out of their positions. You can't imagine the demoralising noise of a bomb bursting on the narrow confines of a trench. Its the worst noise known. It was on the right of our regiment, the left proceeded to gain the trenches lost by the Ghurkas. Bombs flew about in all directions and the fighting lasted till two am. We lost four officers and 30 odd men.

One corporal in my corps (?) has been promoted to sergeant and recommended for the VC. He amused himself slinging back bombs the Turks heaved at him. That trench was s sight when dawn broke. I wasn't sorry when it was over. Still its fine to be with this regiment. The real regulars. We have been holding the extreme left of the line for the last few days. It's the object of most attacks.

You've probably heard about the big attack they launched by order on Enver Pasha. They employed the finest divisions of their army, first and second Asiatic Corps. At 2am a heavy bombardment started – the heaviest known here. I was in support, but was called to the firing line as soon as the shells began to sing. Just before 3am it stopped and the enemy began to advance. We opened rapid fire. The machine guns started to rattle and then the artillery took a hand – never heard such a racket in all your life. When I saw that my men were firing steadily I took a hand myself. Made good practice I believe. No troops could face that fire. And the enemy baulked and lay down.

As dawn broke about 4 am they commenced retiring then wholesale slaughter began. The artillery whipped them out in hundreds. Every rifle shot told and machine guns swept along them. When the sun came up the dead lay in thousands across our front. They won't try that again. During the attack I saw a German officer on our left, running up and down the parapet of a trench, trying to rally the Turks. Shells were bursting all around him, also a perfect hail of bullets yet he kept on giving directions, as though on parade. We all admired his pluck and none of the Inniskilling's fired at him. With the Turks broken and his efforts were useless, he jumped into the trench and disappeared. I'm glad he escaped. In front of my trench five German officers were

among the dead. There is absolutely no doubt about the finish of this affair. A matter of time only – but we are going to loose a good many men yet.

I've had some narrow squeaks, I was amusing myself snipping the sniper, got four and wounded one. The last fellow nearly got me. He hit a tin in line with my head. About half an hour later a shrapnel shell burst on our parapet. One of the bullets hit me in the shoulder, but only bruised it. I have both bullets.

One night I had one of the worst jobs you can get. Sapping (trench digging) in the open. W had to build a new front(?) trench in front of our own and we started at 9pm and finished at 3am. I don't know how I escaped. Was considered very lucky only losing two men, one killed and the other wounded, I have seen nobody here who is callous with their own dead. Our men take all the kinds of risk to bring in dead comrades. Our regiment bury all their dead in the same place. On the slope of a gully – looks impressive, with the sun setting behind Imbross, and shining on the wooden crosses all the crosses here “Sacred to the memory of – rank – name – R. Inniskillen fusiliers. Killed on October – date – R.I.P”

After the war it will be easy to find the body of a Lancashire fusilier, apparently dead sometime, instead of digging a hole and putting him in, they carried him two and a half miles to our burying grounds and buried him with ours. I rather liked that. All the accents in Ireland are heard here. Two of my sergeants are Rooney and Maloney. Kearney brings me coffee and rum in the morning. We are resting at present, had no sleep for three nights and then going on to Lemnos for a rest. I have an idea that our division is going to be re-organised as owing to loses it only amounts to a brigade, we may go one to France then. Will let you know when I know. I haven't had many letters yet. Am hoping Arch is well. I hope you are enjoying your life. I am quite fit and anxious for more. Will write love from Lemnos, Charlie.

This letter, sent on the 8th of July, reached his sister on the 29th July, and was censored.



Monday 10th July 1915

Your letter together with the first from home received today. Many thanks I hope your future missives will be as long and interesting. You will probably be surprised to hear that I have been elevated to the position of MACHINE GUN OFFICER. Quite an honour in a regular battalion.

We are still resting (in Lemnos) and preparing for something big I think. I have an idea they intend to finish this business shortly, cost what it may. We got a rumour yesterday to the effect that Enver Pasha has been assassinated, rather hard luck on Reddoclo (?) Hope Dymond is not hard hit. I am glad Arch (Charles' brother) is alright to date. You can't understand Vi, how easily one may get knocked over on the peninsula, you are not safe anywhere.

A fellow that joined the Dublin's came up with me, sat down to breakfast in view of the firing line and was killed by shrapnel in five minutes. On officer (?) came into our trenches to have a look round as they were to relieve us. He was shot dead

through the head. I passed the time of day to one of the Royal Scots I knew at 5pm, and at 6pm he was snipped through the head coming round a dangerous corner from the firing line, still you must take these chances.

I suppose Toronto is wide awake now and realises what it is going to cost. I think a lot of the twentieth regiment (?) and forth have been captured. If so, some will come back anyhow. Have you had any wounded back yet? I'll bet the first lot back will be treated like princes. just before leaving the peninsula I watched the Turks shell a trawler that was taking off wounded. She eventually hit her (?) a destroyer that had been observing, opened up with a growl and knocked the enemy gun out with a second shot. Excessive but you see what we are contending with now, wondering whether Greece and Bulgaria are coming in. If they do it will shorten this affair. Then we will be shipped off to France. We sailed on the Fran-Sylvania but our only stops were Gibraltar and Malta.

I think if Italy can invade Germany through Bavaria it will help a lot. The peace party in Constantinople are busy I understand. The Germans will take some beating yet. I would have no difficulty in getting a permanent commission after the war. But it's absolutely impossible to insist on (?) I should prefer to return to Canada if the war office gives me a bonus and try and make headway there.

Arch, if he gets promoted from the ranks will get £150 for kit and three shillings a day more than I would. I should like to see this business through and then off to France. I'll have some trotting round before I finish. I'll write to AB Smith today. Glad you are knocking across some nice friends, tell any women that care to write, I'll be delighted to receive their missives. The night before we left the Pen. I was reconnoitring in front of our lines, they spotted me but all shots were high. The top of my helmet was blown in. Drop me a line frequently, Love Charlie.

He enclosed two copies of "The Penninsula Press" dated 6th July 1915.



Dardenelles
16th July 1915

Dear Vi,

Just to advise that I am still in the land of the living and resting. I have been appointed machine gun operator to the battalion. This is an honour and one that will give me opportunity for displaying initiative, also to wipe out more of the enemy than the other fellows.

Since we left the firing line our fellows have mad more progress consolidating our centre which was a bit ragged. This was done at half the cost anticipated, There is one satisfaction about this campaign, we never retire. Once we take a position, we hold it, although the enemy makes desperate efforts to regain it. they haven't a snowballs chance of getting it back. When our left has advanced another thousand yards we will be on the spur of Acti Baba (?) that runs into the sea.

There are (?) and then we can work up that and the end is in sight. People who think that the campaign is a picnic will pause to think when they hear that 25% of Britons total casualties had occurred here. If you saw the steep cliffs, the deep ascent covered, almost un-scalable, gullies and ravines, you would wonder how troops ever got through in face of rifles – snipers – concealed machine guns – and artillery. Also you must remember barbed wire abounded all over the place.

The beach at Sed and Bale is alive with activity although sometimes as many as a hundred. “J.J’s” are flaring on it. The village – a quaint place – is in ruins. In one of the forts, a huge 9.6 gun is knocked off its mountings by a ships shell. If re-mounted it is quite serviceable. Near this beach the remains of barbed wire and hits are all over the place. Also Huge holes made by our ships shells. Pieces of (?) were four inches thick.

One peculiar thing I observed just off the road near the village, there is a house which I believe used to ply between Krithia and Sed – Al Babor. Its on quite good repair and undamaged yet, all around it marks of shells. The country is very barren. Nothing much low scrub and sand. It looks very desolate and its quite a relief to see a fir tree here and there at intervals.

Its terribly hot but the sunsets are wonderful. Ten miles away the island on Imbros, very mountainous, with other similar islands nearer. The sun sets behind it and the effect is beautiful. It reminds me of the Caucasian sunsets. At night, just off the peninsula, you may see a hospital ship. You know what Hanlans point or Scarborough beach looks like at night – well the hospital ships are lit up like that – all different coloured lights all over. The hull masts and rigging you can see it from the firing line and once when I dosed and woke suddenly and thought of Hanlans point it make me smile.

Have you taken your holidays yet? – if not when are you going to? How are things in Toronto? Do you still visit Miss Richardson regularly? I hacked a ten mile gallop on a staff horse today and I’m quite stiff. Have had no letters yet but posses my soul in patience. I shall be glad when we finish this business and I have a shot at France, it won’t be long now. Our division, the 29th, is a name to juggle with here. Remember me to Mrs Hill and tell her I hope to return and sample her bread pudding. You never told me whether you got my photos. Is Miss Little still in existence? This time last year I think we were discussing Niagara,

dear Charl, 1st royal Inniskillen’s





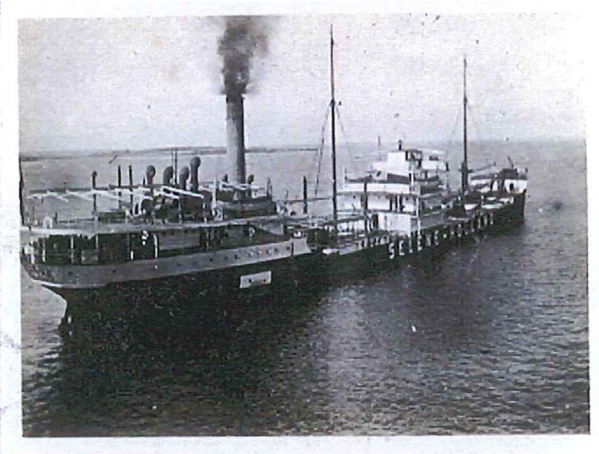
Hospital Ship at Malta



Malta



Malta



Dutch Boat at Malta



Last line reserve trench, men have moved back to give photographer clear view.



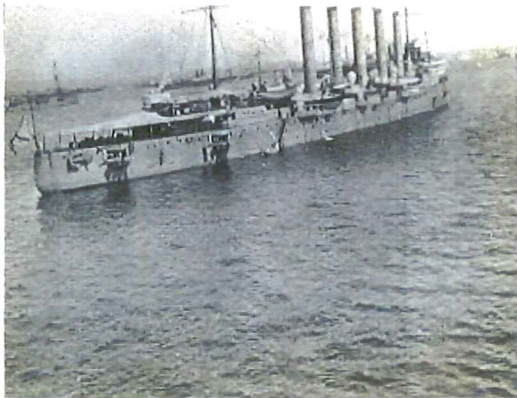
Engineer's "dug out"



Gurkhas on fatigue improving communication trench. This lot were wiped out by J.J 5 mins after this was taken. This is only 20 yards from firing line where I was.



On H.M.S Hospital ship "Dongola"



Russian cruiser at Lemnos. Known to the men as HMS "Woodbine" owing to its five funnels.



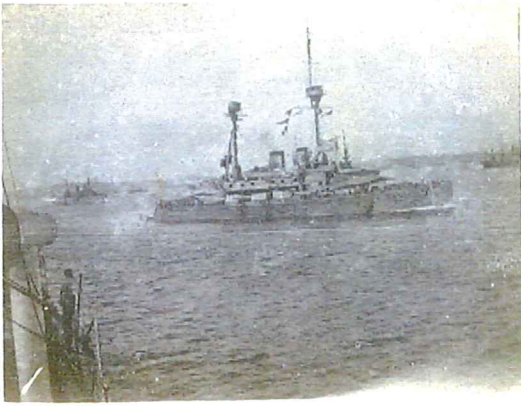
Officer (not me) On his way to The Dardanelles.



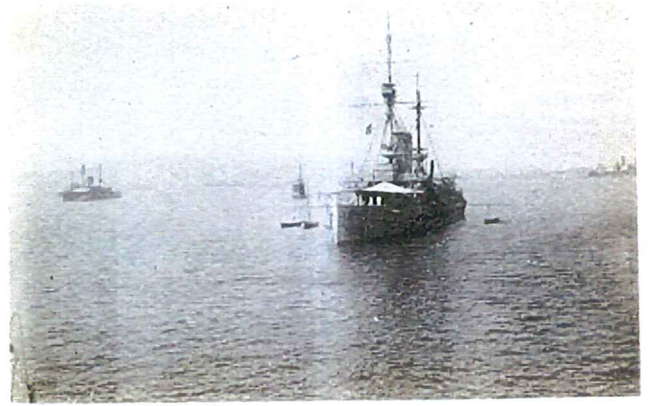
Troops on Mine sweeper, going to "W" Beach



Gully Beach



Battleship "Lord Nelson" at Lemnos



Cruiser at Lemnos



Men in reserve trench



Grand Harbour, Malta



87th Brigade headquarters



Church service in a gully. They had 140 casualties from shell fire and it broke up the meeting.

21st July 1915
Dardanelles

Dear Vi,

Have just received two lots of Sunday Worlds and a letter from home dated July 9th. We go back to the firing line tomorrow for a fairly long spell. Our friends the Turks have again announced their intention of driving us into the sea. And are said to have massed troops for this purpose. Invited all the notabilities of Constantinople to watch us topple over the cliffs into the sea. Can you see us toppling?

They have an idea that because the 29th div. have been under fire day and night since the landing that they no longer exist as a fighting force. There in their (?) will prove their undoing as it has before. When they come forward in mass and stop to invoke the aid of Allah (they always do that) it will be the rifles, machine guns, bayonets of the 29th div that will drive them back to Marmara.

Our men were never more sanguine or full of spirits than they are today and are simply delighted at the prospect of another heavy bag [prison] to keep the others company. They have made some feeble efforts to use poison gas and liquid fire but we are ready for them and hope they use it as they'll be under the impression that we are out of business. When they advance we'll deal with them.

I'm very glad that the heavy Canadian losses haven't deterred Toronto and that the youth still comes forward to make good the casualties. Are Canadians enlisting more freely now? I wrote to Smith, tell Mr Morris I could send home much news, detail and maps of military interest only the censor forbids it and if we have any luck in the trenches, I'll send him a not describing the manner in which we dealt with them.

The too proud land won't fight, making too much money out of Neutrality, won't the Canadians crow over them now. If that youth in the bank has to stay and look after his mothers its all to his credit. I suppose they blame German agents for the press.

Sorry the Princess and Children's home went. Don't be too anxious to get back to England Vi, when this war's over the Government will give business to regular officers and with that I'll return to Toronto and put so much cash on a nice house.

Arch will probably remain in the army. With you, Eily and I doing something this ought to make some money between us. We wouldn't stay in Aldershot five minutes longer than I could help. I wish the last word I know you are a bit lonely and homesick but you'll be OK when Eily and I get back. Get me strolling back in uniform. Keep sending me a weekly budget

Will write regularly, I have so far and hope you are getting my letters.

With love Dear, Charl. 1st batt.

Royal Inniskillings fusiliers
87th Brigade, 29th Division

Enclosed copy of Peninsula Press.



Dardanelles,
28th July 1915

Dardanelles,
28th July 1915

Dear Vi,

Have read your letter through several times and have now had time to digest it. I'll write as often as I get an opportunity (?) I heard something about "Jitneys" but didn't quite understand the term. I think it a good move. It will remove a certain amount of congestion. I only wish I had those Methodist youths here for a few days – they'd wake up. Its maddening to think of labour disputes and other petty disagreements when we face death every minute, day and night to ensure the safety of those same dissenters.

I'm glad you got rid of some of my old clothes in such a useful way. I told Eily to take up short hand and typing as she had no taste for the other thing and I thought that the best idea. You'll remember how anxious I was to get back to England, well I was very glad to spend a few days at home but apart from that I have no taste for life in England and would be far happier in Toronto.

As far as staying in the Army – no. Things would be very dull in peace time and routine would be monotonous. Also financially it can't be done. I'd much sooner go back and make another bid for independence. And I think with a little luck it can be done.

My position at present will be to give me a certain standing when I return and I hope to have a little cash. If I am here for another two months my bank balance will be about £50 and although I may have to make inroads into it, I hope to have that amount in hand at the finish. Also I think I can get my passage back through the Canadian government. That will help and the government are certain to give about 100 pound bonus to K's officers at the finish.

Also it is possible the Ontario or (?) government may make a land grant - British Columbia is, all this will help. You may be sure I'm going carefully, not spending any more than I could help. You'd be (?) to get back after about a week at home and if I get back and bring Eily out, you'll be quite happy.

I know you are endeavouring to make useful friends and that may help a bit. When I get back I'll glad to get the S.W.S. I don't think there are many others here and don't think Canada is represented here by more than half a dozen if that. I only know two others and they are both born Canadians. Their fines must have been pretty bad. I hope all aliens here were interned.

What is the attitude regarding them in Canada? What Regiment is Dashwood in? I believe he got a commission. We are now back in the firing line and find that the snipers have got quite impertinent and we have spent the morning reminding them the Inniskillings are not to be trifled with.

They have sobered down considerably, your office have certainly done well. Have you heard anything of Tom Byrne? The expected attack has not come off yet. If they don't hurry up we'll take the initiative.

I can't get any snap shops here. You don't find anybody carrying cameras. You have enough to carry without that. Arch was OK on the 30th June, I'm glad to say. He is due for his commission and a trip home. When is the 3rd Contingent to leave? I don't think the 2nd has left for the Front yet. Bill English goes with the 3rd. I know a few more youths at the C.N.B who ought to join. I don't want to get pessimistic. But if anything happens to me get Mam [His mother] to claim my balance at Cox and Co.

I could tell you a lot of the military operations but the censor forbids. When I get back I can tell you all about it. Germany is sticking it out well. Have you been to Niagara this year? Have you visited the baseball ground? Glad you went to dances. Keep me informed of local affairs.

Love Charlie Lt.

1st bat. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
87th Brigade
29th division
Mediterranean Expeditionary force

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Dardanelles  
3<sup>rd</sup> August 1915

Dear Vi,

Just a note to advise that I'm still on the job. We go back into the firing line again tomorrow early morning. By the way I am sitting on a box labelled Universal dairies and Co Limited, Toronto. Canned meats.

There are a couple of war ships making an awful din, firing broad side after broad side at something. They must have located something to be firing so rapidly. If so I pity the Turks. In on trench we found forty eight dead Turks and some shell (six inch) had ploughed through the lot. Imagine what a fifteen inch shell could do.

I have just had the luxury of a bath and feel much better after it. Its very hot still but chilly at night. We get perfect sunsets but I believe about the middle of September heavy rains start. Our general staff of course know this and you can bet your life they'll be something big doing before then.

The anniversary of the outbreak of course is tomorrow. A year ago today I think we were having tea, wondering when England would come in. It seems a long time ago. Due I fancy to the different phases I've passed through.

A mail came in today, but turned out to be only a Malta one. I got a field PC from Arch dated 5<sup>th</sup> July, showing he was OK up to that date. The enemy have not replied to our ships and at present not a shot is being fired in the firing line. Everything looks beautiful and peaceful except the ships suddenly start growling. These little destroyers also open up now and again and do some fearful damage.

As the Turks don't seem disposed to attempt to carry out their boast to drive us into the sea I fancy we'll take the initiative shortly and make a big offensive. We all hope so as everyone is quite confident. It takes an awful lot to shake that. I see they are doing something in the Munitions line. If they can only send Russia enough to make a big offensive and simultaneously assault the western front I think the Kaisers boast that the war will be over in October will be nearer the truth.

I don't think that they can keep it up much longer. They are waning in strength while we grow stronger. At this point I stopped writing in order to visit the firing line and see what ships were firing at. Through glasses saw Turks being flung up into the air wholesale. They have just put up a white flag in front of our left centre, but I can't find out what they want.

It's a beautiful evening. Sun setting on placid waters with destroyers silhouetted in black. Not a shot being fired, merely calm before the storm. They do all their fighting at night. Hope everything is OK. Am going back to the trenches I was in when I first got here. Let me know the news.

With love, Yours, Charlie.



Dardanelles  
7<sup>th</sup> August 1915

Dear Vi,

As advised in my last am now back in the firing line. Yesterday was a pretty big day. A new landing of the 11<sup>th</sup> division had been arranged to take place between us and the Australians who are eleven miles distant. In order to facilitate the landing and allow it to be effected with little or no opposition. Steps had to be taken to keep the Turks engaged and prevent them from withdrawing troops to oppose the landing.

Our guns opened a bombardment of the whole line at two thirty pm and finished at 3.30 am. Our idea was to pretend that the whole line was about to advance. Our artillery paid particular attention to our right centre as we really intended to advance there.

At four pm we all cheered and opened rapid fire while our right centre advanced and took two lines of trenches. The French also taking a couple of lines. Meanwhile the eleventh division was landing also the Australians made a successful advance as per enclosed message. Just received by us.

The French "75s" are really splendid and their guns very marvellous. Moreover they have unlimited supplies of ammunition. I hope you are ok.



The First London General Hospital  
Camberwell S.E  
7<sup>th</sup> September 1915

Dear Vi,

I supposed you were surprised to get my cable to say I was back. Well I left the firing line on August the 13<sup>th</sup> after staying there for six days trying to cure it with pills and living on tea only. I had to leave however with a temperature of 104. I had a pretty bad dose and was sent home. Am now almost convalescent. I shall be given six weeks sick leave and will then return to the 8<sup>th</sup> North Hants. At Colchester for light duty. And as soon as I'm fit I'll take a draft to France, if I want to.

They won't send me back to the Dardanelles having bad dysentery. Its very bad out there just now. Also enteric and they fear cholera any day now. A week after I left the Inniskilling lost eleven officers. All my co. officers were killed or missing. (means killed out there)

In a scrap just before I left we got messed up with a crowd of Turks in the dark. I was glad I had my automatic. Got 8 with that and two with a Ghurkha "Kateri" (knife) I always carried. We were lucky to get out of it alive. I was doubled up with dysentery

at the time but had no scruple in driving my knife into two big Turks. Our fellows used the bayonet pretty freely too.

Kitchener's much vaunted army is a supreme failure out here. They came out and thought they knew everything and would take no advice. Result they were sent away from our front as they couldn't be trusted to hold the line. When they made the new landing they (?) a handful of Turks held them up and consequently the New Zealanders and Australians who had achieved their objective were left in the lurch. Also there are ugly tales of Regts. bolting whole sale. The Indians, Australians, Ne Zealanders, and our division, have nothing but contempt for them. This is due the arrogance of the senior officers. Major and Captains of about 25 / 26, with one years training to their credit. Glad you enjoyed yourself up Perry Sound Way.

Write to me at home, giving all the news, write again soon, Charlie.

See Record Connaught Rangers overleaf



Home  
27<sup>th</sup> September 1915

Am now home on two months sick leave and go before a medical board who will decide whether I am fit for duty again on November 17<sup>th</sup>. I am glad to say we saw Mam (his mother) off on her long deferred trip to Shrewsbury today. She looked well and I think will enjoy the trip. I insisted that she went via London and supplied a mount of taxi cab fares so that she could do things in style.

We expect to see Arch gazetted 2nd Lt. in the Regular Army any day now. I hope he got safely through this last big attack. We have made ground – but I know what it is. You've got to hold it and then take the second and third lines otherwise the line is still unbroken. I got a piece of stent shell in contact with my left knee and it troubled me for a few days in the firing line and since I've been weak it causes me to limp a little. The doctor told me it was only weakness and would be OK when I got my strength back.

We had a pretty lively time of it on the Peninsular I can tell you. In France if a Regiment gets a gruelling it's taken out of the firing line and given a complete rest. Well out of range of shells. With us we got no rest. If your regiment got smashed up you had to wait, hang on till a new draft came out. We had no shells. The guns were idle most of the time and when they did fire it was only shrapnel – no high explosive. The medical arrangements were damnable. Thousands died of wounds. Those who have had some of both say France is a picnic to it – that's men who went through Mons.

I'm going to apply for service in France when I'm fit. I don't want to go to a depot and train recruits. We expect Arch to get leave when he is promoted. Drop me a line and let me know how things are. Am going down to Penzance for a week. Have been invited by old friends I met when I was stationed there. The cold here bothers me a bit at present.

Hope you are enjoying life and making the best of things. You may think Toronto dull – but Aldershot is the last word I don't know how to waste time.

Yours,  
Charlie



Home  
9<sup>th</sup> November 1915

You will note by enclosed cutting  
What it means to have served  
With the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

Your two letters received OK. Also two long ones that were returned from the Dardanelles. Arch has got his commission at last. And is doing a month's course at general headquarters, France. After which he will be posted to his new regiment and then come home for three days. We will cable his new regiment but not to be used as an address. As we won't know where or what battalion he will go to for duty.

I go up before a medical board shortly. But I am nothing like fit, yet will try to get a little more leave. You asked me about Ester, late of your firm. He was a sergeant in the 20<sup>th</sup> Regiment and got a commission in the 9<sup>th</sup> Queens (Roy. West. Surrey Regiment) I met him at Euston station en route for Dardanelles. We went over together in the same cabin. He was attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Essex regt. 88<sup>th</sup> brig. 29<sup>th</sup> division. I saw him several times in the firing line. On August 6<sup>th</sup> his regiment, in fact brigade, was practically wiped out. We were on their left and suffered also. Ester went forward in face of terrible fire and when all other officers had fallen rallied and lead his company. He fell riddled on the enemy's parapet. He died magnificently.

I note your new address is in a very nice part. Hope you find it congenial and not too expensive. I wrote to A.B Smith care of ENR. While I was in the trenches but got no reply. I don't know whether he received it. you say you would rather me stay at home now, well you must remember Vi that the War Office have something to say about that and an officer that has served with the 29<sup>th</sup> division has a very high standing in the army and War Office know their value. Furthermore the monotonous training at home is repugnant to me. Also you don't know how badly England wants trained officers and I would rather be back in the trenches than skulking at home.

I know when I get there I'll wonder why I was so anxious to get back. But I'm not going to join the large army of "slackers in khaki" had K's (Kitchener's) army been better officered Loos would have been a bigger success. Two divisions (24 regiments) bolted like hares. If they had had officers that knew how to lead and rally men this would have not have occurred.

I'd like to go to France, or preferably the Balkans. There is going to be some tough fighting in Serbia. I am enclosing an article on the 29<sup>th</sup> Div to show you what respect the country has for them and also list of Regiments comprising the division. They have made History and performed the impossible.



Everybody is OK at home. I will write you again after the medical board. I want this to catch a mail. I didn't send that cable I was in hospital at the time and the telegram came back and said regulations would not allow him to send a cable for me.

Have had a Northants and Inniskilling brooch made in silver and will send it to you soon.

Love Charles.



77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
18<sup>th</sup> November 1915

Don't forget to read carefully  
About parcel and the customs  
You can show them my list.

Dear Vi,

Have received no further letter from you since one I answered. Hope you are happy in your new surroundings. I went before a medical board here at the Cambridge hospital and the President of the Board (Regular RAMC colonel) gave me another month's sick leave, and told me I should not be fit for active service for about four months.

War office advises that when I return to duty I go to the 8<sup>th</sup> Northants which is now a reserve Rgt. That's rather hard luck as I can't get any promotion as I belong to a reserve regiment. Therefore when I return I'm going to apply for an Adjutancy of a new unit and as Capt as Adj will get about £360 a year.

I think I told you Arch is at a training centre and hopes to be home for a few days at the beginning of December. I am sending by this mail a couple of photo's I had taken recently.

Also I sent by this mail a parcel containing odds and ends. Its not registered as they won't register parcels for Canada now. Before they told me this they gave me a form to fill in. Address of sender and value of goods. Well, thinking at the moment it meant this amount of registration I put £5. it dawned on me after it had gone that it was a customs declaration. So you will be charged. Now when you get the advice go down to the customs station and let them open it in your presence and assess duty. That's quite easy and I am enclosing a list of the goods.

Things look pretty black in Serbia, same old thing, England too slow and sending a handful of troops instead of having a War Council of Soldiers and Sailors they have one of politicians. That's what's hampering us. If I get an Adj's job I'll have a few pounds in hand if I pull through.

We are getting the Toronto papers OK and you know I read them right through and enjoy them. On my way back from Penzance I went to a tea shop in Regents street (Fullers) and who should I see there but Tom Byrne. I only had a few minutes

conversation with him. He's back with nervous break down I understand. I think the drink had more to do with shattering his nerves than the shells. Still, he's done his bit like a man and was out for 6 months.

Eily is now a regular sorter at the PO on one pound, one shilling per week. She is getting on with her short hand and typing and should be fairly handy at it by the time the wars over. I am feeling much better but it left me very weak. Still, I'll hope to go out again one of these days.

I found Mam looking much better and happier after her trip to Shrewsbury. I want her to take a little place near Shrewsbury after Xmas and settle there. Its her one ambition. I don't see why she shouldn't. Glad and Eily ought to be able to look after themselves. My leave expires December the 16<sup>th</sup> so wont be home for Xmas. Drop me a line and let me know how things are. Will send you two "snaffles" pictures for Christmas, Inniskillings and Northampton's.

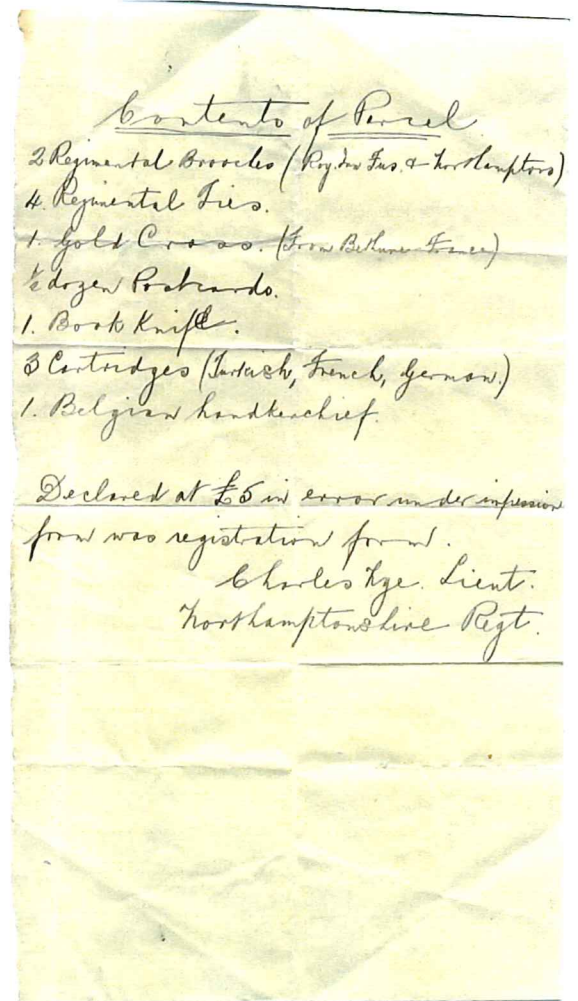
Yours, Charlie.

P.S Father Finn – Munster fusiliers, killed in the landing at Gallipoli. Was hit while coming ashore – refused to go back – staying out under heavy fire, bandaging wounded – hit again and refused to go back – hit a third time and still continued – hit a fourth time and killed. When relic of Munsters heard next morning they made a furious bayonet charge and finished innumerable Turks.

PPS. By the way they have some very good "Slacker" postcards out here. One a civilian kid smoking a cigarette, looking round the corner at some soldiers marching by labelled "and this little pig stayed at home". Another kind I have enclosed in parcel. I sent out the (?) postcards to slackers I know at the C.N.R. mam says if you can get for yourself the music of "Mother Macree" and "When the boys come home." Both very popular here. **[Note: Vi had a very fine voice and was having singing lessons in Toronto. She stopped them,telling her singing master that she had put the money for the lessons into war bonds. He was so upset he said he would continue to give her lessons for free.]**



One of the "Slacker" postcards sent to Vi



The contents list of the Parcel sent to Vi from Charles.



Home  
21<sup>st</sup> November 1915

Have not heard from you since yours dated October 15<sup>th</sup>. We have just heard from Arch. He being at the training school in France. And expects to finish there and come home for three days about December 6<sup>th</sup>. Arch says they can apply for any regiment except Guards. Arch is going to apply for the Connaught Rangers if you please. Regiment record enclosed. Arch will only have about three days at home and will then return to the front to his new regiment.

Of course he'll be second lieutenant in the regular army. The commission is permanent. He'll get £150 outfit allowance, 11/6 a day pay, (owing to being promoted from the ranks), and while in the field, 2/6 a day field allowance and 2/3 Ldg. allowance making in all 16/3 a day. Not bad is it.

Everything is going on OK here. Am looking forward to another budget from you. Yours, Charlie.

THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS

88<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> foot Depot Galway.

BADGE: Harp and Crown MOTTO: "Quis separavit" (who will separate us?) CREST: as above with the elephant and sphinx

Honours: Seringapatan, Talevera, Busaco, Fuentes d'Onor, [All the battles, Peninsula, etc.]

Known as the "Devil's own" and called so by General Pickton in the Peninsula owing to their undaunted bravery in the face of the enemy.



77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
9<sup>th</sup> December 1915

Dear Vi,

Your letter received last night, also official notification of the forwarding of a box of apples. Archie arrived in London at 1.15am yesterday morning. I went up the previous afternoon and engaged a room at the Charing Cross Hotel and met every train from the front until he finally arrived, having been held up at Bologne for seven hours, waiting for a boat. He looked very fit and we taxied to a hotel and discussed things all night.

He's been very lucky to escape. Yesterday morning we went round and got various things he required and got home about 6 in the evening. After something to eat and went up to see dad who had a cold and on our way back brought Eily up from the post office.

Arch has to go back by the 9.50am train from London on Saturday so you see, it only gives him two days at home. He is taken Mam to the theatre tonight to see "Dollar Princess" I am sending you for Xmas (?) tonight two military sketches of Subalterns, one of the Northampton's and one of the Inniskillings. I didn't get them framed as the glass may have been smashed in Transit.

Arch and the others have sent you two photo frames in khaki bronze. One Northampton of me, and Arch will send you his photo in uniform of the Leinsters. He was specially picked to go to the Leinsters (Royal Canadians) and Arch was told that their record in France is second to none. It is considered one of the regiments.

I shall probably go back to the 8<sup>th</sup> Northants on the 15<sup>th</sup> for a couple of months light duty. As I'm unfit for active service at present. Am going to try and get a position as "Draft Conducting Officer" taking drafts out to various regiments in France. You rank for pay and allowances as a staff lieutenant on this job. I'd rather do that than stay at a depot and I've done my bit in the trenches for the time being.

By the way I heard from a girl, Kitty Smith, who had phoned you up and got my address. This creature was the bane of my life in Toronto. I didn't want to have anything to do with her but she persisted in phoning me up all day long, although I showed her very plainly I didn't want her. She must have got your address from the directory. You of course weren't to know, but if she bothers you again hint that I'm engaged. Glad is going to drop her a line, passing as my fiancée. (Get that) and you might keep up the bluff.

Hope you get my parcel I mentioned in the last letter. Everything is going ok at present. Arch will do well in the Leinsters. Will send you later the cap badge of the Northants that I wore in Gallipoli and was rescued from two helmets that were battered from shell and bullets. Its in perfect condition and will send you one of the Leinsters at the same time.

Drop me a line and let me know about the people in your digs and how you get on. Hoping you have an enjoyable Christmas and new year.



77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
16<sup>th</sup> December 1915

Dear Vi,

Your letter with notes to us all received last night. Arch has gone back as he only had three day leave. We knew he would arrive last Tuesday week so I went up to London in the morning and booked rooms for us at the Charing Cross hotel. I met trains at Victoria at 3.30, 4.30 and 9pm. it was then announced that no further leave trains would arrive till after midnight. So off I went to the second house at the palladium. Returned at midnight and found trains arrived at 12.55am and 2.30am. the former carrying 1,407 troops.

As Arch didn't know I was going to meet him, and the station darkened on account of Zepps and the crowd of troops, I was afraid I'd miss him, however the first train rolled in at 1.15am. I saw a crowd of fellows that looked as though they'd just got commissioned and asked if Arch was on the train. They said yes and all knew him as he had been in charge of eighty of them. They unearthed Arch who was quite surprised to see me and we taxied off to the hotel. Had a long chat with him and a smoke. Then Arch went to bed for an hour and a half, rose at 7am and had a hot bath. Quite a luxury to Arch, dressed and had breakfast in the coffee room in front of a roaring fire.

Then he spent the rest of the morning getting kit. Had lunch at Hatchetts on Piccadilly, got a few more things and then took the 4.13 from Waterloo and got home about 5.40pm. Had something to eat and went up to see Dad who couldn't come down owing to a bad cold. Well there was only Thursday and Friday as Arch had to leave Victoria at 9am on the Saturday. Mam, Arch and I stayed up all night Friday and took the 7.57 from Aldershot. Mam bore up surprisingly and has been quite chirpy since. Arch got a seat in a Pullman and went off quite contented. He is going to a regt. with a splendid reputation and will do well. He was looking and feeling very well. We heard from him today and he said he was staying at a Hotel in Boulogne for the night before proceeding to join his unit.

The proofs of his photo arrived today and are splendid. When you write you must not put the number of brigade or division. But for your private information he's in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Bdge. 24<sup>th</sup> Div. at Loos this Div. was all K's [kitchener] army but as it didn't exactly distinguish itself they have put some regular regiments in it to stiffen it up and give it "morale" re Mrs Saunders, [Vi's employer in St. Petersburg.] you must realise that we can't invite anybody to our place. Its far from elaborate and lacks even decent light, lavatory or bathroom. As for inviting officers here, how could we entertain them, and besides, whatever they are otherwise, their people generally have sufficient hard cash to have a nice home.

I'm going back to the 8<sup>th</sup> Northants on Saturday for light duty and an officer only gets 5 days leave in 3 months. If however I have a chance I'll go down to Petersfield to see those boys. **[i.e The Sanders boys. The Sanders family had escaped from St Petersburg before the Revolution. The Sanders boys, George and Tom were taught English by Vi. They grew up to be Hollywood stars, George Sanders starring as "The Bad Man" in films like Rebecca, and he was always distinguished for his very clear English.]** I can't understand your anxiety to come back here Vi. Aldershot is the last hole in earth I'd ever stay in if I could help it. we will try and get a place in **PAGE MISSING**

The day Arch went Eily [Eileen Nye, their sister] took the 10.01 am from Aldershot and after seeing Arch off I met her at Waterloo, took her to Selfridges and had a look round. Then lunch at Hatchett's and then to the Royalty theatre to see the hit of the season "The Man Who Stayed At Home" we went home in the evening, Eily enjoyed herself. It was a change. I don't think Archie's address is plain enough on the other sheet so will put it here.

A.E Nye esq. Second Battalion  
Leicester Regt. B.E.F  
[British expeditionary force]  
France

Mam is looking very well and the trip to Shrewsbury did her the world of good, she has the cash banked for another trip to look for a house.



Reed Hall Camp  
Colchester  
27<sup>th</sup> December 1915

Dear Vi,

Your letter of December 9<sup>th</sup> received. Hope you got several of mine that followed the box. I have been back since the 18<sup>th</sup> and am adjutant all the time as the other fellow is away on leave. I've been very busy and Xmas day was just the same to me as any other day. I had dinner at the Colonels house and stayed there till 1am. That is the only evening I've had to myself.

Archie's division went up to the trenches on Xmas eve I think. I'm going to get back to the Front as soon as I can as you can get no promotion in a reserve battalion and I don't like home service, its too tame and I'll try to get back to the Inniskillings if it can be worked. These people here will do it for me. When I get out to the Front I'll transfer to the regiment, The regiment I go to will then get a chance. Am enclosing battalion orders for Xmas eve and Xmas day. May interest you. I hope you enjoyed Christmas. Write and let me know what you did.

Weather has been rotten here. Let me know the news.

# Battalion Orders for Christmas Eve 1915

P A R T 1.

Issue No. 305.

## BATTALION ORDERS

by

Brevet Colonel E. R. Hartigan,

Commanding 8th (2nd Reserve) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Colchester. Saturday. 25th December 1915.

### No. 1. SPECIAL ORDER.

The following extract from Colchester Garrison Orders is published for information :-

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS from their MAJESTIES THE KING & QUEEN

The following Gracious Message from His Majesty the King is published for information, Begins :-

Another Christmas finds all the resources of the Empire still engaged in war and I desire to convey on my own behalf and on behalf of the Queen a heartfelt Christmas Greeting and our Good Wishes for the New Year to all who on the sea and land are upholding the honour of the British name. In the Officers and Men of my Navy on whom the security of the Empire depends I repose in common with all my subjects a trust that is absolute, on the Officers and Men of my Armies whether now in France, in the East or in other fields I rely with equal faith, confident that their devotion, their valour and their self sacrifice will under God's guidance lead to Victory and an honourable Peace. There are many of their comrades now alas in hospital and to these brave men also I desire with the Queen to express our deep gratitude and Our earnest prayers for their recovery ; Officers and men of the Navy and Army another year is drawing to a close as it began in toil, bloodshed & suffering but I rejoice to know that the Goal to which you are striving draws nearer into sight. May God bless you in all your undertakings.

(Authority :- War Office telegram 66541 A.G.4).

(Signed) C. Nye, Lieut Act/Adjutant,  
8th (2nd Reserve) Battalion,  
Northamptonshire Regiment.





77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
25<sup>th</sup> January 1916

My Dear Vi,

Your letters received OK. Glad you liked the sketches and photo frames. I am going to send you a book of cartoons of life at the front by Captain. Bairnsfather 1<sup>st</sup> Roy. Warwick regiment. These portray life and incidents at the front that only those who have been there can appreciate. I'm glad you had a good time at Xmas. On 17<sup>th</sup> January I was shown in the Gazette as transferred to the regular army as a temporary officer. This merely means that I belong to either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Northants. And will go to one or the other at the front when I'm fit. Also that I leave the 8<sup>th</sup> Bat. at Colchester and go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion at Stroud in Kent.

The only advantage is that at the end of the war I shall probably be given a permanent commission in the rank I hold. I shall not get any promotion anyway. Before I left on January the 20<sup>th</sup> to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> the Colonel of the 8<sup>th</sup> I found had already recommended me for a Captaincy in the 8<sup>th</sup>. and the recommendation had gone through to the war office. Also the day I left I was taken up in front of the General and he recommended me for appointment as staff officer on probation. This means if after six weeks training I prove satisfactory, I am a staff officer at £300 per annum. My transfer may knock all this on the head. I hope not but must trust in luck.

I was given 14 days sick leave on joining the 3<sup>rd</sup> as I wasn't anything like fit. [still suffering from the effects of dysentery picked up from service in Gallipoli] they are all regular officers there. I should prefer to be a Captain in the 8<sup>th</sup> because I believe if I wanted to keep on after the war I know a couple of Generals who recommend me.

The Toronto papers are very welcome. And I enjoy reading them. I see you practically have moral conscription. I should like to get a staff job and then come over to Toronto and shoot a little hot air. If I get the opportunity you can be sure I will make the most of it.

Arch appears to be doing splendidly in his regiment and his CO appears to think quite a lot of him. If he has any luck he ought to be home for a few days in a couple of week's time. I suppose you have Archie's photos by now. They are very good I think. You'll have quite a number of war curio's before the finish. I should like to get on the staff and go to Serbia. I should not be on general staff but on brigade or divisional staff, right in the firing line.

Dad is much better and looking very fit, so is Mam, Glad and Eily. I'm progressing slowly but you can't recover from dysentery in five minutes. Everywhere is darkened, no light anywhere and screens over all windows to prevent light showing. Ridiculous I think, unless the idea is to make every man which he was back in the firing line. S

So glad you have met a fair number of nice people. It will help to pass the time away. I have no friends in England, except of course a few officers of the regiment, now all fighting in France and Serbia. By the way would you mind asking that Russian

❦❦❦❦❦❦



**Violet Nye in Uniform**



Violet Nye  
in the centre of her troop.  
1917.

Captain Violet Nye in the centre. 1917.

77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
13<sup>th</sup> February 1916

Dear Vi,

Mam and Dad got your notes OK yesterday and will answer shortly. Am enclosing some photos taken on the Peninsula. I haven't any copies of these but though you might care to get some enlarged. Anyway, keep them as they are interesting mementos.

Re: your coming home in peace time, fare from Toronto, second class boat, first rail was \$125 return, London and back. Enquires at White Star offices for definite charges. You may be able to get six weeks leave of absence in August if the charges for the fare are anyway reasonable. We will probably be able to fix you up.

Drop me a line and let me know how things are. I'm improving and hope to be OK shortly. Shall be glad to get the papers.



77 Alison Road  
Aldershot  
5<sup>th</sup> March 1916

Dear Vi,

Letter received OK, am home till the twentieth and have seen a specialist and will get proper treatment so expect to get fit shortly. Am literally fed up with England and Aldershot in Particular. You can imagine how cheerful it is for me here not knowing anybody. Programme: get up late, go for a walk, Farnham or Farnboro', come home. Monday night Hippodrome, Tuesday theatre – finished for the week.

I'd far sooner be in the trenches. I am quite at home there and there is comradeship and excitement. I am anxious to get back as soon as possible. I haven't much hope for a staff job as it is practically essential that you have political or social influence. Merit counts nothing, which is why the higher commands in the British Army are held by incompetents.

I only wish they had given me sufficient sick leave straight off so that I could have gone to Toronto. I am sure I'd have had a much better time there. In England they fawn on the wounded or sick officers that are eligible's with money or social position – the rest can go to the wall. It was most noticeable in hospital.

You do not say if you get the Aldershot news. This week you will be amused at the account of (Name of play?) on the whole it was pretty good but some where awful. You will note two fellows in uniform, one in khaki – both are eligible slackers. Have the nerve to wear uniform on the stage.

Am feeling much better in myself and am picking up weight. Thanks for address of Russian officer. Will drop him a line. Ignore any communications from Miss K. Smith. Mam is going to write this week in answer to yours.

Drop me a line when convenient, have had a foot of snow here lasted a few days. Will let you know any new developments. Heard from Arch yesterday,  
Yours Dear Charl



3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. Northamptonshire Regiment  
Gillingham West  
Kent  
7 April 1916

Dear Vi

Many thanks for your letter received today. I'm afraid this will be rather late to wish you many happy returns of the day but I do just the same. I went before a medical board yesterday and was given a months light duty and am waiting instructions to rejoin so by the time you get this I'll probably be at the above address.

Arch returned to the front after seven days leave yesterday. He's quite fit and I believe regarded as a first class officer in his regiment. You can't realise the difference in status of an officer of the Regular Army and the new army's of colonial contingence. They are a class apart and regular troops are universally respected by the others. Of the others the Territorial's are far and away superior to any. For my service in Gallipoli I have been transferred to the Regular Army for the duration of the war.

The Canadians have had quite a holiday for the last nine months. They have been in a very quiet part of the line and have been able to do practically what they like as they only had Saxons opposing them and they are very slack. Archie has been up on the Salient at Hooge where the water is up to the waist. It's the most dangerous part and they have been there all the winter. Now the weather is getting better the Canadians are up there and Archie's division has taken their place.

It's got livelier down there as the Bavarians have taken the place of Saxons. The Guards are also on the Salient. You are quite right about the first contingent being the (?) The Canadian division of mounted rifles are pretty poor I believe. Anybody seems to be able to get a majority in Canada. I'm glad I'm with a regular regiment. You don't know what it means in action. You can always depend on your men standing by you whatever happens. Although there are only about one fifth of the decorations given as are given to the new lot. What regulars do as a matter of course the others think worth a military cross. As an officer of Archie's regiment aptly remarked "the old dog for the hard road and the puppy for the boreen? [Irish saying, boreen means narrow country lane.]

I'm feeling quite fit now and hope to get out again about the middle of May. Don't you believe what you read in Canadian papers about the war. They get very fantastic ideas at times and very misleading. This war is going to last some time yet and great pressure on all fronts will have to be made simultaneously in order to let someone break through. The Germans will fight every inch of the way and you must remember that it is still the greatest of all military nations. They are not cowards but the bravest of the brave. There is hard fighting and heavy losses before us before we are anywhere near the end. You must also remember that the new army's are not regulars. I'll get that book "Fragments from France" and send it on to the individual mentioned.

I would rather you didn't send anything about me to the papers. These things are not done in the Regular Army. If an officer is killed in action or obtains a decoration, a short sketch of his career may be inserted but not otherwise. Now I am fit I am anxious to get back to the front and fight with my own Regiment. Neither the first or second battalions have ever lost a trench. The first battalion went out at the (?) from Aldershot and are in the first division. They were in the retreat and lost heavily at the Aisne and at the first battle of Ypres. The second battalion were stationed in Alexandria and came home in time for the first battle of Ypres at the beginning of November 1914. They lost heavily at Neuve Chapelle being the centre of the attacking line. The first battalion were practically wiped out at Aubers Ridge (Festuber) last May. And also lost heavily at Loos. They have a splendid reputation and I should like to be with them.

As to coming home Vi I think you better leave it till later in the Autumn. You see Vi, this new budget that came out the other day has about put the tin hat on things. Matches originally tuppence a dozen are now 7.5 pence per dozen. Take that as a basis and you will find everything up in proportion. Unless I get promotion or go on service I shan't be able to save anything. Arch will want what he's got at the end of the war to get an outfit and keep going. We really need every ha'penny we can rake together. Living in Canada must be as cheap as dirt to what it is here. If we wait till later on and see how things are and how we are placed we can probably manage it. I think you can understand Vi. It would tax our resources to the utmost to raise fifty pounds and although we would only be too pleased to do it, it's hardly worth it as things are now. If I can possibly save anything I shall want every farthing as things will be very hard everywhere at the finish of this business.

I'm very glad you have had a chance to make a little overtime and hope you will be able to get a little on the right side. If I can only get out in the trenches for a couple of months I will have a few pounds on the right side. Even man admits I've recovered and am looking quite myself. Arch is looking very fit. I don't think you'd know him now. A year's active service makes a great difference and the experience has been invaluable to him. The type of person you mention also gets commissions here but know how to conduct themselves towards the regulars. The weather must be getting very nice in Toronto now. You are much better off where you are Vi - believe me. If I get put out of action again, I shall spend my sick leave in Toronto. I should like to have a little experience in the firing line in France and now not very disappointed at not getting on the staff. These staff people don't try any swanking to the regimental officer in the field. They know their worth too well.

I am now taking Sanatogen which is a German invention but is made in England and doctors admit that it is the best food. This has built me up wonderfully. All staff are now taken from the firing line in the British Army. Did you get the Richardson boy to enlarge that snap of Gallipoli? I haven't any with myself in it. Get them enlarged if you can. They are rather interesting. Especially as Gallipoli has been evacuated.

Hope you have some luck this year. Keep your eye open for anything that's going. Arch is now near Messines and his division are due for a months rest in about two week's time. Can't possibly find out anything about Byrne. Am in touch with the third battalion but they have no use for Byrne so wouldn't know where he is. Dad is rubbing along nicely. We have all done our best to get him get a move on and get a commission but he's quite content to plod along in the same old job. He could get a fine lucrative job if he only tried but he won't. Arch has done his best and so have I but he still procrastinates.

Keep me posted on how things are in Toronto. You can depend on me grabbing anything that's going. Arch will do well. Hope you will get a chance to make a bit (of money). The weather has brightened up considerably here and will make things a bit more comfortable in the trenches. I suppose the Yanks in Toronto are kidded about their being too proud to fight. They'll take any insults lying down as long as they can make money. Let me know how things are going. Will advise you of any further developments. Everybody here OK.

Yours  
Charlie



Home  
23<sup>rd</sup> June 1916

Dear Vi,

Am home for a few days and go back on Sunday. Weather is pretty rotten here just now. I shall be due to go out any time now and hope to go to the first battalion, it's the best battalion in the division. I suppose the papers are full of Canadian losses, heroism, etc. well between you and me the first contingent are the only ones worth anything. The others are absolute washouts. That's why they lost Hooge. They lost the trenches Archie was in, during January, February and March.

Archie is home and is quite OK. His arm is alright now. [Arch got a bullet in his arm near the elbow] How are you enjoying yourself? I see they are building a new theatre on the site of the old Majestic. I'm feeling quite fit now, everything at home is OK.

See the Russians are doing very well. I don't think we'll make a push till about September. We'll have to push all along the line to be of any use. This local attack business is no good. I get the papers OK. Write and let me know how things are in Toronto. I hope to be in France very shortly. Our division from Gallipoli has been in France for the past two months

Yours, Dear Charl.



France  
14<sup>th</sup> July 1916

Just to let you know I'm on the job again. Will let you know my address in a few days. Am quite happy and doing OK. How are things in Toronto? Still recruiting there I suppose. Arch will have a chance to get a good rest before coming out again. I'm far better of than I was this time last year in Gallipoli. The conditions here are so much better. I fancy another year will finish the business. Meanwhile we've got to carry on.

I only got about sixteen hours notice but managed to get home and see Mam, Dad, Glad and Eily. (who was at the PO) I called and saw her just to say goodbye. There is a second edition of "Fragments from France" out. I didn't get a chance to send one out but Mam will send one to you and that girlfriend of yours. Have you been down to Brantford lately? I hear the CNR people just had another increase in pay. Have your people loosened up yet?

The Russians are getting a move on and giving the Huns something to think about. The latest bulletin here is "every thing satisfactory." I saw B. Levitt, one of the fellows who was in my tent, in the Canadian contingent. He got his commission in the First Brigade last January and was on leave a couple of weeks ago. He wired me and I spent a day in London with him. He said there is only about two of the old battalion left serving with it.

Well will dry up and write when I can send my address,  
Yours Charlie.



B.E.F  
18<sup>th</sup> July 1916

Dear Vi,

Just a not to say I'm OK and doing well. Am with the best battalion in our regiment and best division in the army. Arch will tell you which div. Am in the thick of it. drop me a line and let me know how things are in Canada. Everybody is confident here and things are progressing well for us.

Its seems the tide is on the turn although it will take time. I think we have them now. Hope you are having a nice summer. Ours hasn't been exactly brilliant so far but we hope for the best. That girl I sent the fragments to wrote and thanked me. I've forgotten her name and never acknowledged her letter. Apologise for me, will you?

More later

Dear Charl

C.Nye Esq  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Northants Reg  
B.E.F France





France  
24<sup>th</sup> July 1916

Dear Vi,

Just to let you know I'm OK to date. Have seen my share since I've been out. The battles you read of in the papers are not child's play and our Regt. has sustained its reputation under many trying conditions. I removed my equipment while digging in under fire the other day and a big shell blew it to blazes. It was rather annoying losing shaving kit and revolver but I wasn't wearing my equipment and am alive to tell this tale.

We are having great weather just now. You must write and let me know how things are in Toronto. But don't send papers because I have little time to spare. Its not ordinary French warfare now, with regular reliefs. I could write volumes of the experiences of the last few days but the censor would delete it all.

Arch [His brother] wont be in it for a month or so anyway. More later. Yours,  
Charl.



Within 20 days of sending this postcard Charles was dead.

A.F.A. 2042  
114/Gen. No. 5/28

FIELD SERVICE  
POST CARD



The address only to be written on this side. If anything else is added, the post card will be destroyed.

*47 St. George Street  
Toronto  
Ontario  
Canada*

**NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.**

*I am quite well.*

*I have been admitted into hospital.*

*{ sick } and am going on well.  
{ wounded } and hope to be discharged soon.*

*I am being sent down to the base.*

*I have received your { letter dated \_\_\_\_\_  
telegram " \_\_\_\_\_  
parcel " \_\_\_\_\_*

*Letter follows at first opportunity.*

*I have received no letter from you*

*{ lately—  
for a long time.*

**Signature only.**

*21/7/16*

**Date** *21/7/16*

**[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]**

France  
27<sup>th</sup> July 1916

Just to let you know I am ok at present. We are resting. One can't expect much rest these days with the greatest battle in our history in progress. We are gaining the ascendancy now and have shown that we can smash any defences. This must surely shake the moral of the enemy. He has however still got men, guns and munitions in plenty and is by no means demoralised. The enemy is fighting with his back against the wall and to give him his due is fighting well. The knowledge that we have guns and munitions in plenty had inspired our troops and imparted a spirit that has proved irresistible in most attacks.

Papers give you the impression that things are at a standstill at times but that is a wrong impression. Day and night unceasingly the battle goes on. And when nothing is reported events of the greatest importance maybe taking place.

I don't see how the spirit of our troops could be better. And the fighting I have seen and taken part in is by no means the walk over correspondence would have you believe. In some of the trenches I have been in many Germans are buried in the (?) on parapets and dugouts. In some of the captures villages I have seen dead Germans lying about all turned black. The effects of Hun gas shells. Our men have not had time to bury them. In some of the woods the dead lie as thick as blackberries. It was one of the DG's that were in the cavalry action (?) Regiment.

Our Battalion has done well recently and has satisfied both the brigade and divisional commanders. I have seen several air combats and our people have complete command of the air in this part. You read of the Bosche bringing down one of our machines, well, I've seen how they do it. they wait till one of our machines is above and then attack it with about ten of theirs. They turn tail when the numbers are anything like even. With strong pressure on all fronts the Huns wont be able to last forever.

I don't like all this talk in England about war over in a few months. It is a gigantic business and these politicians have no right to belittle our task. It will give people a false impression. We are beating them and doing it thoroughly but you can't expect our men to march on Berlin in a couple of weeks. The pressure here is continuous – no cessation is bound to tell. The positions we have taken can never be duplicated behind as it takes months to build defences like those we have captured.

We are still in sound of the guns, but everything is peaceful here – a beautiful summer evening and my window looks out on a lovely flower garden and orchards. Tomorrow is "Talavera" day and we having sports. Talavera was the battle our battalion, the 48<sup>th</sup> won when the guards retired in confusion.

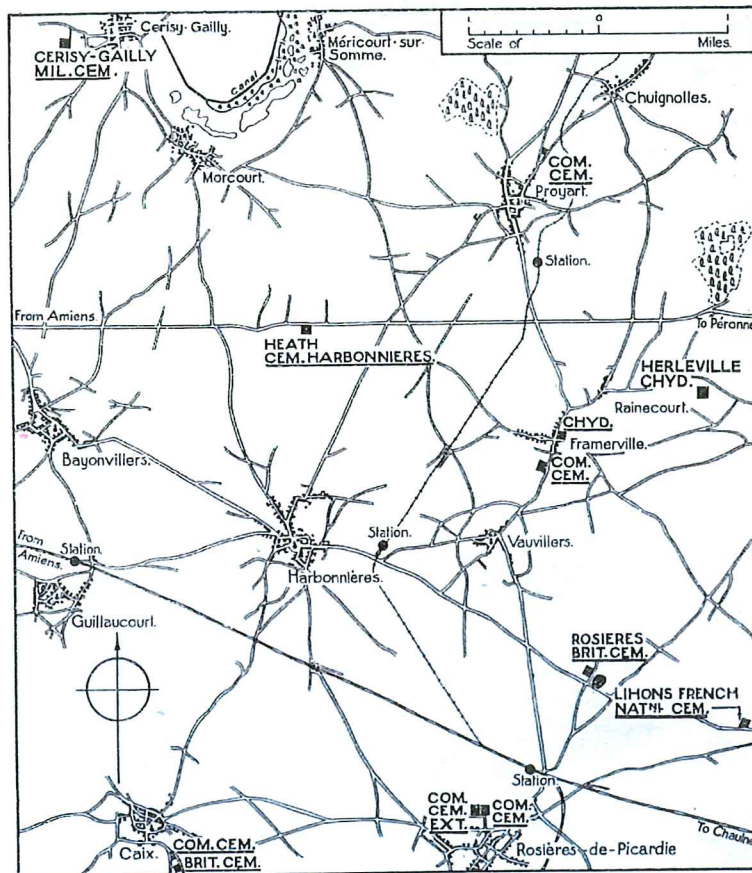
Write and give me what news you have from Toronto. We have a fellow named Manning from Toronto in our regiment and another in the Sussex in our brigade. I met another in the div RFA. Will write whenever I get the chance.

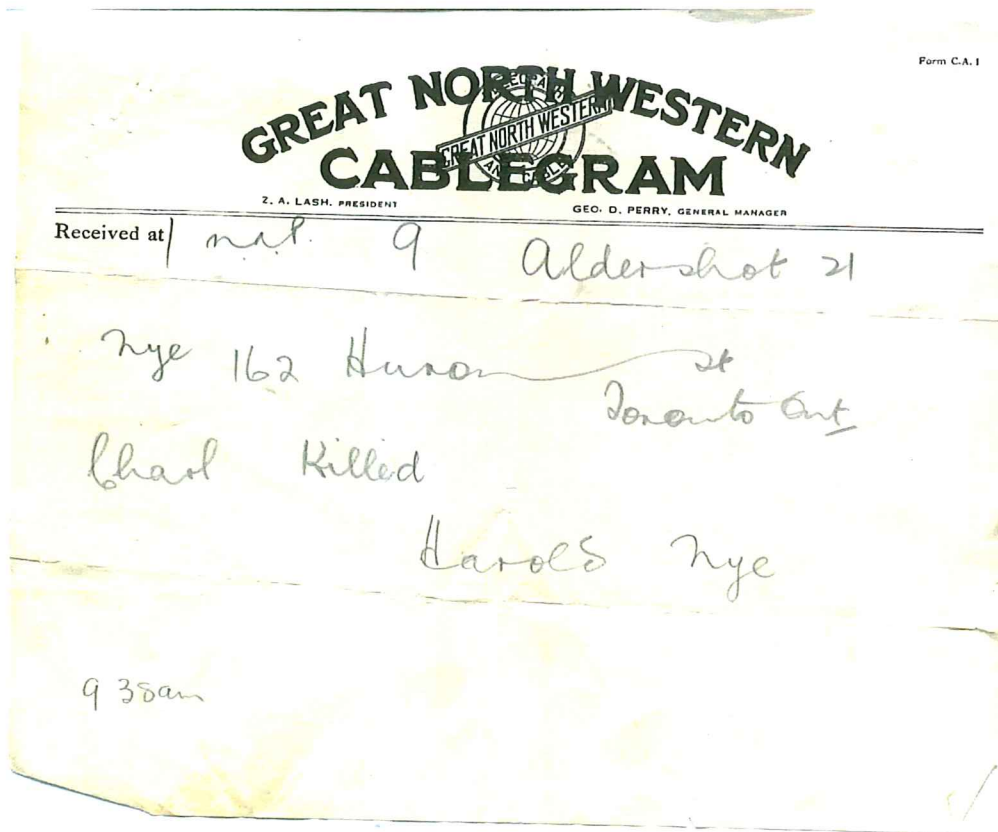
Yours, Dear Charl.



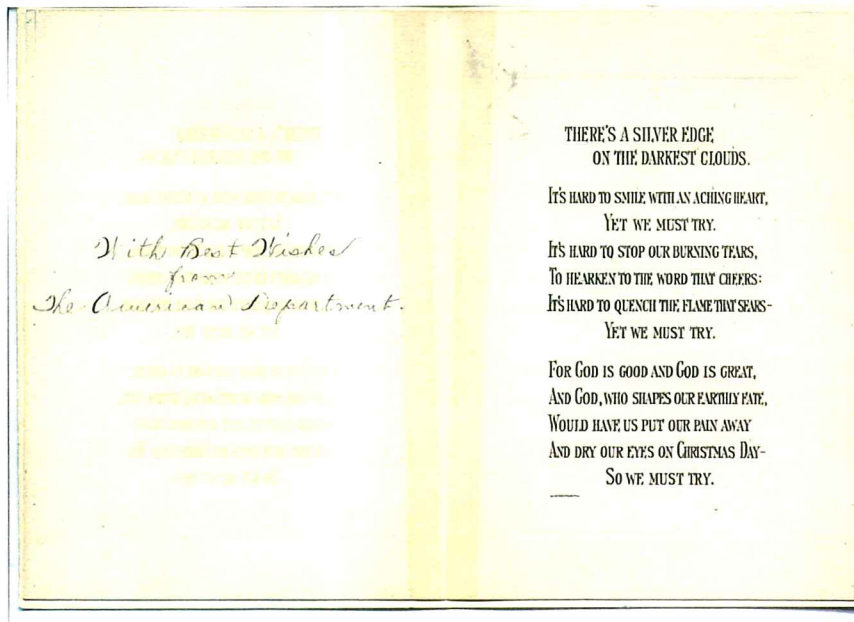
**Extract from "War Graves of the British Empire"**

**Graves were organised by roman numeral following the entry. The row by a capital letter and the Grave by a number. Charles Nye was buried at Cerisy -Gailly French National Cemetery. Plot 1, Row G, Grave 17.**





The Cabelgram Vi received from her brother Harold, a priest, telling her of Charles' death on the Somme.



A Christmas Card sent to Violet Nye from "the American department at her job" the year after Charles died.