



Transcript

Correspondence from Lieutenant Colonel George
Whitford Nelson to his sister, Mrs. William Kidd,
1914-1916, A994.058.008

A994.058.001 (1) postcard

Addressed to:

Mrs. W. Kidd

Elsinore, Ont., Bruce Co.

[Bnc 188?] West Toronto

Nov. 4, 14

Dear Sister,

You will see that I am still here. Haven't had any word but inferred to be with this contingent. Officers have not been picked yet to London. Have made enquiries about potatoes & cannot get more than 50 to 60 cents per bag here in Toronto. I think it would pay to hold until spring as they are usually \$1.10 then.

Bye, bye,

George

A994.058.001 (2) postcard

Addressed to:

Mrs. W. Kidd

Elsinore, P.O.

Ont.

Bruce Co

18th Batt. CE 7

Wolseley [Bonater]

London Nov. 15, 14

Dear Friend,

Just a line to let you know that everything is going well with me. Have been appointed Adj. of 18th Batt. Would like to hear how you all are. Miss Edna & the children very much.

Love to all,

George

A994.058.001 (3) postcard

Addressed to:
Mrs. William Kidd
Elsinore, Ont.
RR # 1, Allenford
Bruce Co.

Dear Sister,

Was glad to get your letters and hope you will write as often as possible. I enjoy your letters very much. Bobby is getting better very slowly. I think we will have to take her back to Toronto soon – no word of going yet. I haven't any promotion yet.

Love to all, fun all,
George

A994.058.008 (4) letter

Addressed to:
Mrs. Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ont.

London, Ont. Mar 7, 15

Dear Sister,

I received your two letters all OK and enjoyed your letters very much. I don't know any further when we go away but we are expecting the word every day. We are disappointed that we are not away before this but I guess all will come right soon. We have been here four months and all are very anxious to get away.

Willie Fenton is still here but they are trying still to get him out. Trying now to make out that his eyes are no good. I don't think that it will work though however. I am not putting anything in his way to get out. When anyone has cold feet why they are better away from here. We had a big parade down city yesterday and it was a great sight. There was about 1000 of our Battalion in Parade in full marching order, just the same as we go to the front and 67 Horses and 19 Wagons. It was a great sight I can tell you and won't be seen for some time in London.

I was home to Toronto over last Saturday and Sunday. I intend going down next Saturday if we are still here. I really don't expect to be here until the end of next week.

Sid is getting along fine and makes a real good Soldier and I could not get a better one for the work I have to do. My Saddlery and clothes are kept in first class shape and he is all in love with my horse. I have a dandy Horse. I call him Barney and would not trade him for any horse in the Batt. He cuts up a lot when we are parading.

I haven't got my Promotion yet but expect to get it soon. Col. Wigle wrote about it the other day. My pay will be \$1.25 per day more than I get now & it will be dated from December so it will mean a lot for me and if I don't come back Edna will get a real good pension & that is the main reason that I want it.

Must close now and hope you are all real well. Write as often as you can. Love to all,
Bye, bye,
George

A994.058.008 (5) postcard

Addressed to:
Mrs. Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1,
Allenford, Ont.

Wolseley Barracks
London, Ont. Mar 24, 15

Dear Sister,
You see we are still here. We will likely be here two or more weeks yet. I don't think that I can get up at Easter. I can only get away for a day & a half at a time. [?] even when I get back. I'll spend a [long time?.] All are well at home & wish you all the same [? ?].
Love to all,
George

A994.058.008 (6) letter

Addressed to:
Mrs. William Kidd
R.R. # 1

Allenford, Ontario
Bruce Co.

Train #2
18th Batt. C.E. 7
Just past Campbellton, N.B.

Apr. 17. 15

Dear Friends

We have just left Campbellton, N.B. and are skirting the Bay de Chaleurs. Everyone is real well and the best of behavior. We have the best men on earth. We expect to be in Halifax tonight at 12 o'clock. This will be only a short note to let you know where I am and that we are all well. It is hard to write with the train rocking.

The 18th left London Thursday night at 7:30 and 8:30 two trains. This train has 17 coaches and all are filled. Must close now will write aboard ship.

Love to all,
George

A994.058.008 (7) letter

Addressed to:
Mrs. William Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario
Canada

Canadian Pacific Railway Ocean Services
R.M.S. Grampian
Mid Ocean
April 25, 1915

Dear Friends,

I can't very well tell you where I am but will know better when I get a chance to post this. We left London Apr. 15 in two trains one at 7:30 and the other at 8:30. I was on the last one. We had a fine run through to Montreal making an average of 40 miles per hour arriving here about noon. Then we went over the Intercolonial to Halifax. The run from Montreal to Halifax is not

very interesting, mostly all woods at one place near Rimouski & Fallen Point the [seam] must have been 2 feet deep. You can think yourselves lucky in that you live in Ontario. Old Ontario looked very sunny to me when going through Quebec, New Brunswick & Nova Scotia.

When we were leaving London there must have been 1000 people out to see us off. There was some terrible scenes when the final Goodbye was said and I was glad when the train pulled out. It was heartrending to see the way they clung to each other. I must say that you people at home can never realize what some of these soldiers have given up.

We arrived in Halifax at 2:30 am Sunday morning and went aboard the Grampian about noon and then at 6:20 we set sail. I have just been thinking tonight that when we sang Tipperary back in Ontario, that we did not know that it was such a long way. We have been at sea one week and where we are we don't know. Today the Cruiser Cumberland joined us, that is the Northland & Grampian. This is the first Warship that we have had. She certainly looked as if she meant real business by the big Guns poking out here and there. We get the war news by Wireless & we got news today that the Canadians had won a victory in France.

Tell Russel & Gordon that I saw a whale yesterday. It passed between the Northland and us and every little piece he would come up and blow. I only got a look at him once. I will be able to tell you all about the trip when we get back. We hope to reach England next Wednesday. Well I must close now and will write again when I get to England. Write as often as you can. I will not have very much time for writing when I get new address. You mail to G.O.P. London Eng. I suppose Edna told you that I have been promoted to Major. Love to all, George

A994.058.008 (8) postcard

Addressed to:
Mrs. Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario
Canada

Sandling camp
Hythe England

May 4.15

Send all mail to me addressed to G.P.O. London, Engl. As we may move around some & that is the best, it will come there any way. All are well. Love to all. Write as often as you can.

George

A994.058.008 (9)

Addressed to:
Mrs. Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario
Canada

West Sandling Camp
Hythe Eng.

May 26.15

Dear Friends,

Will try and send you a few lines tonight. I received your letter, Edith, yesterday and also today got your third bundle of papers and of course you know that I am indeed grateful to you. Your papers today entertained the Beacon & Tara Leader and Mails. It is a treat to receive papers and letters over here. I don't think there are any Mail & Empires come here but the ones you send and all the Officers are very anxious to get a look at them.

We are in a beautiful spot down here in the South East of England and everyone has no kick coming of the way the English people have used us or the way everything has been provided by military Headquarters. I cannot begin to describe to you the beauty of the country here, roads winding here and there, hedges on both sides of road. Hedges for fences. Roads better than streets in our cities in Canada. All the roads are drained underneath, & every little piece you will see the sewer hole where the water empties into the drain. No ditches along the roads but there are some ditches in the fields along side the hedge. All the roads are made of cracked stone rolled with steam rollers. They are very narrow in fact lots of roads an ordinary wagon cannot pass but unlike Canada they can squeeze right up on the banks as there are no ditches. Most of the roads are sunken. This country has chalk after you dig down a few feet. France is the same way. A week ago Sunday I was down in Folkestone about several miles from here and I could see the white chalk cliffs of Calaise, France I couldn't help looking at them for a long time. It seemed to me that over there was the height of my ambition and I couldn't help but wonder what was in store for me over there. About 50 miles from here they are fighting away. We haven't any idea of when we will get over. Some are telling us that we go over next week. Then others tell us that we will be split up and sent over in [drafts?]. In that event the Battalion Headquarters will be left here & we will have to train up the Reinforcements that will be sent

from Canada. We are hoping that nothing like that will happen and we don't expect it. Our Battalion is showing up fine and they are giving us great praise. We are busy on Musketry now and as soon as we get that finished we will be ready for the front & we expect that next week we can say we are ready to go. Willie Fenton is doing well now that he is away from home and I think everything will be right. I wrote Edna a description of the voyage over and also sent her some pictures and she will give you some. I haven't heard from Tosey yet. I do wish things were right with you all & I wish that a special effort was made. I have been down in Dover and it is a fine old place. Has a big castle & the day I was there the Harbor was full of Destroyers & Battleships.

Well I must close now and must say I met a Capt. Kidd. I think he came from Kingston & I was wondering if he was any relation to Will. He is a Chaplain. Write as soon as you can and give my best regards to all I know and thank you very much for papers & all.

With kindest regards. I am

Sincerely yours

George

A994.058.008 (10)

Mrs. Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario
Canada

West Sandling Camp
Hythe
June 20.15

Dear Sister

You will see by this that we are still here. I have been over at Canterbury and the Cathedral is simply wonderful. Wish you could see it. The Black Prince is buried there.

Love to all

George

A994.058.008 (11) postcard

Mr Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario

Canada

Jul 22.15

Kind regards.

George

A994.058.008 (12) Letter

Sandling Camp

Hythe, Eng.

July 13.15

Dear Friends

I received your letter dated June 28th today and you mentioned that you hadn't a letter from me for a long time. Well, Edith, I am sure I have written you not longer than a fortnight or 3 weeks ago so it must have gone astray.

You see we are still here and expect to be here for a full month yet around about the 1st of Sept. there will be something for us all to think about. There is some talk of General Brooke taking a party of us over to France to see how things are going and if that is done I am almost sure of being one of the party. If I do I will tell you all about it.

The War is going splendid over in France and Belgium. The Allies are going at it stronger every day. The Germans cannot break through and the situation as it now stands is that both sides have put up such strong field works that they are at a standstill. In the meantime the British are manning a lot of troupes behind the lines. The Germans are going to try and break through during the next two months but they can't do it.

I get your newspapers all OK and we all certainly enjoy getting them. It seems like as if we are not so far from home when the newspapers come in. I also had a letter from Edna today. Everything seems to be alright but Edna is feeling lonesome. However this war won't last forever and I think that we will have a happy letter home again. I would love to see them all. I will soon be nine months away from home.

General Lord Brooke is in command of our Bde. So you see we have a real live Lord over us but we had the Bde. before he thought about our lot. Col. Welch who is second in command of the 1st Battalion was over here on a visit from France & he told us that it was common report at 1st

Div. Headquarters in France that the 4th BDE. is the best BDE. that ever left Canada. We [?] as you know to the 18th Bn. 4th Bde. 2nd Canadian Div. Our Bn.is doing a lot of good work and I think will make a name for themselves in France.

Willie Fenton is doing fine now. Since he got squared away he is doing well. I have him in the Pioneer Sect now. I have to look after the Pioneers and I have him in direct supervision. Well I must close now and hope that everyone is real well. I am sending you a couple of snapshots. Am thinking about taking a weeks leave and go up to Scotland. I have not had any leave and am beginning to feel as if I should have some.

General Sam Hughes is expected here almost anytime to inspect our troops and I will not be able to get leave until after that.

Give my kind regards to all that are my friends.

Sincerely yours,
Geo W. Nelson

A994.058.008 (13) postcard

Mrs Wm Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford, Ontario
Canada

Kindest thoughts
George

A994.058.008 (14)

West Sandling Camp Hythe, Eng.
Aug.1.15

Dear Friends

Time seems to roll along at a very rapid rate & I can hardly believe that it is the 1st of Aug. This time last year we were spending some very anxious moments as to whether there would be war or not. Well it has come and we have been at it a year now and untold misery has been

caused by it. It is to be hoped that there won't be another year of it. I guess you will be busy at the harvest now. I hope it is a good. The harvest over here looks splendid.

Milton Aikens and Garfield Cleave were over here one day last week. Aikens spent a day and a half in camp and Cleave spent a half day. I was more than surprised to see them. Aikens is a great big fellow and looks the picture of health. He is a Sergt. now and is in charge of the Machine Gunner Sect. of the 1st Bn. He has been doing fine work over there. He told me a lot of what went on over there at that battle of Ypres war. They suffered so much. The British Div. and our Canadian Div. had to attack a certain part of the line. The British had a terrible task to do and were not able to do it and when the Canadians got so far forward they had to retire. The 1st Bn. was to blame themselves as they rushed forward too fast. I think you will remember Rural Dean Robinson at Walkerton. I knew him well as he was Chaplain of the 32nd for a long time. Well, his son was in that fight and was struck by a shell. Nothing was left of him but scraps of bone and flesh. The old man has had a stroke and in a very bad way. Tranter was in the charge and only got a short distance from his trench when he fell. Some of his men stopped to assist him but he told them to go on and that was the last they saw of him. Aikens said that he was loved by all of his men and Col. Hill said that he realized that Tranter should have got more out of it than he did. Col. Hill was not liked by any of them and they are all gone and he is left. Well we are to be received by the King next Wednesday and after that at night. I have heard we are all to be at a Reception in Folkestone. After that I don't think we will belong here. Some say we go to the Dardenelles and others say we are to go to France but none of us know but I hope we get away soon.

We all like to get the papers you send. Col. Wigle likes to see the Mail and Empire, yours are the only Mails that come. You really don't know how good it is to get a look at the Beacon. I am sure it must be a nuisance for you sending them but I certainly am glad to get them. Give my regards to all true British.

Sincerely yours
George

A994.058.008 (15)

West Sandling Camp
Hyates
Aug 16 15

Dear friends

Just a year ago now we were all watching the first events of the War. The Germans were pouring into Belgium and France said things were going wrong. It seems to me to have been a very short year. A year that so far as experience I have lived a lifetime. In less than two months, I will have been with the colors for a year and during that whole year I haven't regretted for a moment that I came forward. As time goes on and we become more fully trained we all become more satisfied with everything. I often in an idle moment wonder what you are all doing and what everything is like. I suppose everyone is very busy with the harvest. Harvest is in full swing here in England and they have a splendid one too. It would do your heart good to go through this grand old England and see everything as it is now with the wheat being cut. Any Englishman can be fond of this fine old land. I was of as far as Edinburgh, but no place like the South of England.

Kent County is the finest of them all. The people here are wonderful and they can't do too much for us. Everywhere we go we are welcomed with smiles and wide open doors, Yesterday Col. Wigle, Major Ingram and myself went for a motor ride to Dover and on our way back called at a place that Major Ingram knew and we had a splendid time. We had an air raid at Dover last week. Dover is only fourteen miles from here but they did not do any damage. The Battery hit one with its first shot and a Torpedo Boat destroyer brought the Zeppelin down in the channel where it blew up. So you see we have no fear from them. You have no idea of what the British Navy is doing in this War. When a German Submarine is captured, it never appears in the papers but we get a lot of information from the Naval officers.

We are about to go forward from here in about two weeks and probably by the time you get this we we'll have left. We are all anxious to go over for that is what we came to do. The war is going alright. You have no idea of the numbers of troops that Britain has ready. I can say that there are millions in England and another million in France. This may surprise you, but all the same it is true.

I get all your papers and are very glad and thankful to you for them. After reading them I give them to the men to read in their huts. I hope that you are all well and everything going right. I hope you will be able to go down to see Edna. She is pretty lonesome. But you all back in Canada must keep the camp fires burning, till the boys come home. Write as often as you can. I don't get time to write as often as I would like to, but if I don't write, my thoughts are always with those at home.

Kindest regards to everyone,
George
xxxx

A994.058.008 (16)

To: Mrs. William Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford
Ontario
Canada

West Sandling Hythe Kent
Sept. 5, 1915

Dear Friends

I received your letter a few days ago and Sid showed me his letter so I wanted to write you all while we were in England. We all expect to get away very soon and in fact we did think this would have been one of our moving days. However, it will come very soon.

There is not very much going on just now. We have sort of slackened down from Training during the past week and have been occupied in getting everything in shape for overseas. We have finished our Div. training and it ended up with four days of almost day and night work. My little mare came through it all fine and we had a few days of very hard work. We were up around Ashford where the Zeppelins were dropping bombs.

The German Zeps and Submarines seem to have got their stomach full lately as there doesn't seem to be anything going on now. The British have caught a lot of their Submarines. There is lots of ammunition going forward now and the British are shelling the Dickens out of them over in France. The grip is tightening all the time on the Germans and they know it also.

From all the reports we get you must have had a terrible summer over there. It's too bad now that we need everything so bad. I am going to send you two or three snapshots. I am taking my camera over to France. I really don't know how I am going to get my film developed but I guess there will be some place over there.

The King and Lord Kitchener inspected us last Thursday and the King said we were equal to the finest Div. that he had seen since the war commenced. It was a great sight to see them all. They all seemed very pleased.

Sept. 7th

I did not get your letter finished as it has been somewhat busy for me. I don't get much time with tearing around. Everything comes to the adjutant and it is a certain stream of messenger

clerks and others to keep me going. I don't mind it a bit. In fact I love it. I think I must have been born to this work. I have a fine staff of clerks in the Orderly Room (that is the military term for Office). We get the name of having the best Orderly Room in the Brigade. I felt quite proud of that as I am responsible for the work of the Orderly Room. I have to do many a thing that seems so difficult, especially when some one is brought up for punishment. As man is brought up and I feel that we are man to man. Although one is a private & the other a major we are both men and I would rather do the punishment myself than award it.

Probably it might be interesting to you to know how military discipline is worked. Our Bn. is divided as follows: Four companies 6 officers & 221 NCO's & men. Then we have a Bare Company of 1 officer and 99 NCOs & men. Signal Section 1 officer 17 men. Pioneer Sect 11. Transport 1 officer & 13 men. Brass Band 25. Bugle Band 25. Stretcher Bearers 16. Army medical men 7. Machine Gun Sect. 1 officer, 34 men. Those sections that have an officer come under him for discipline [??] that [?] are directly under the adjutant. So besides looking after all my Battalion work, these over 100 to look after. The harder to [?] are the Buglers. They are mostly all boys and the little devils are always in trouble & I can't punish them. I always do what I think is just & right and use everyone as I could be dealt with myself. I don't think there is a man in Bn. who has anything against me and I have the good will of all the officers. There isn't an officer but will do anything I ask him. That is what every adjutant can't say. I have had a wonderful experience since joining this Bn. I have gained in knowledge of men what I wouldn't gain in a lifetime. I have seen so many different sides of life that I come to think that I couldn't harbour an unkind thought of any one. So many things enter in our life to mold our thoughts and character that you really have to know all about a man before you can be hard with him. Some men have had many misfortunes and trouble which has soured them. Others were born under fun circumstance. Then others date back further. Oh I don't know when to stop when I get on this subject.

We had another air raid by the Zeppelin last night about 30 miles from here. It was an excellent night for them. A cloudy night when there is little wind. Tonight is another good one. We don't mind them here. People have got over their first fright and now everything goes on the same. Britain is organizing all the time and daily growing stronger. When a nation can [?] their war, people subscribe a war [?] of over 600,000,000 pounds in 3 weeks they are not very weak. We are about 45 miles from our firing line and we hope before may day to be much nearer them. This is the last letter I will send from England. Will write as often as I can after we leave here. Write as often as you can. I get your papers regular and we all enjoy them. I send them out to the officers here. Love and kind regards to all that are interested.

George

A994.058.008 (17)

To: Mrs. William Kidd
R.R. # 1
Allenford
Ontario
Canada

Somewhere in France
Sept. 24, 1915

Dear Sister and All,

I have been able to get a few spare moments and will squeeze you in a few lines. Since enemy over here, I have been rushed night and day and I am afraid that I will fall asleep on this before I get it finished. You will no doubt be wondering where we are. That I cannot tell you for fear by any chances the enemy would get to know where our battalion is and in that way arrive at the struggle opposing them. But we are up in the front line or at least very close by: and it is a continued war of as big guns. I cannot give you any idea what it is like but the terrible bombardment I can only liken to thunder. It is a continual war and sometimes I wish it would stop. It usually lessens at night but then the rifle fire starts up in full in the interval.

The day before yesterday I saw the German [?] for the first time. Of course I had to see them through a periscope. You can't put up your head in the daytime what ever. But there is a lot of exciting things go on. It is rather funny at first getting accustomed to the bullets whizzing around. The Germans keep playing away but don't seem to accomplish anything. The allies have gained the ascendancy of [??] now and they are fighting for their very life. The artillery is great and we are paying back old scores. The people over here don't seem to amount to much. Of course I suppose the better class have moved out. But no one has much to live for either the French or Belgians in this part. You will see them going on with their [?] picking crops, ploughing, etc right in the range of the guns. Up around the trenches everything has grown up wild. A sort of a no man's land. Long grass and weeds.

Well I must close now and will write again as soon as I can. I am writing to Tony next and I hope that every one of you are real well. I am real well myself. Feel some times as if I could make use of 2 months sleep, but that don't amnt to much. I have had two hours sleep during the last thirty so you can why I would like some. However when the war is over everything will be alright.

Give my best regards to all. I would love to slip in and see everyone. I miss Edna and the little girls very much but probably we will all be together soon. I get your papers regular and they come in mighty nice. Will close no period.

With love to all.

George

A994.058.008 (18)

Belgium Oct. 28th

Dear Friends all,

I received your letters this afternoon also two bundles of paper and have just been looking them over. You don't know how good it is to get papers over here and funny to say I look over all the local papers very thoroughly. News that will not interest you seems good reading to us.

I also in the same mail received a letter from Edna. She is having quite a time moving. It is not a very nice job. I feel that it will be much better for her to be at Southampton some place where she will be away from that Brick Yard. They are a nice bunch down there. Oh well we are here first. But I had thought probably some of them could have been a little neighborly but I guess those I thought friends were only those who were trying to keep up a good side for their own interests. But the longer I live, the more I have come to the conclusion that the less we have to do with the [?] the better off from my experience with men in this Bn. I can tell a man for what he is capable of the minute I see him.

At the present time we are resting out of the trenches at a little village behind lines. We have had it pretty steady since we came over and I can afford a little rest. I am billeted at a Belgium home and for the second time since leaving England I have been in a real bed. The first time was the second night we were in this country. I was billeted at a beautiful chateau and oh dear find I look back with fond memory to that place. The first night I was in the bed I could not sleep. I believe that the bed was too nice but I certainly can sleep now. The beds over here are so short that you have to lie crosswise.

It is raining very heavy for the last two or three days and the country is a sea of mud. You have no idea of the mud in this Flanders. It is raw and cold also but we are all healthy and manage to keep fit [?] of the mud. We find much mud on our cap or clothes everywhere.

The front along here has been very quiet lately with the exception of artillery and air fights. The artillery go after each other whenever the air is clear. I witnessed a couple of air fights the other day. In both cases the Germans had come down. One came down with in [??] lines. The other

one our line of machines chased the Germans with machine guns. One landed all right and they captured several important documents.

We have the best of the Germans all along our front. The artillery gives their fine shots for every one they give us and we also give it to them. Our men are in the best of health and all eager to give the Germans the cold steel.

Well I hope you are able to read this and I will have to close. Write as often as you can. I will try and write you as often as I can. We will be back in the trenches again in a few days and I don't get much time when I am there. It is desperate weather to be up there now. The rain is pouring tonight. The Germans are very nervous [?] and are sending up their flares in large numbers and keep up.

Well must close now. Good luck to you all

George

A994.058.008 (19)

Belgium Nov. 21, 1915

Dear Sister,

Will try and send you a few lines today. This is Sunday and I always try to get a few letters away today.

Well we are just finishing up a turn in Reserve and will be back in the trenches soon. We are in hopes that the weather gets frosty soon so that the mud will be hardened up. The last three days we have had a little frost and it has [?] quite a bit. The air is very damp and raw and I really think we suffer more from it than if it was cold. We have had no snow yet, but a little hail. I don't think I will ever forget the mud and water that we had to wade through. I never thought there could be so much, but it is all in the game and it might be worse. I was very glad to get your letter and the rose. I am sending it back to you as I don't think this any place for a rose. Flowers seem to be a [?] [?] in this country. I am living in hopes of getting a few days in England in January as leave and am building on getting a rest and clean clothes for that day. Willis Fenton is in a hospital at La Havre with [Rheumatism?]. Anyone that has a touch of that will [?] be put out in this country. A man has to be physically fit to stand the strain here. Nothing unusual has happened since I last wrote you. The shells and guns get to be such a daily occurrence that we think nothing of it. We had several big shells dropped on a village [?] where

we are quartered. They did not do very much damage. They certainly make us all skip when they commence to drop, and if a shell, which I think is coming directly at me, comes over me, I am going to dive for the first ditch whether it has water in it or not. Ha Ha. Our artillery soon puts the [?] on the Germans. We have the Germans' Goat and they are pretty sick of it. There have been two German planes brought down near us and also one [?] came down on there [sic] own accord. They said they lost their way but it looked as if they came down to get out of Germany. Down our right The 1st Div. captured 12 Germans one night and killed about 100. They were Prussians and all were very untrained. The war on our front is going well. I wish that things would take a different turn in the Balkans. That is the worst place at present. I got your two bundles of papers and I want to thank you very much for them. I know that it must be great trouble to you, but they help a boy quite a bit over here.

I am sorry to hear that Will had the bad luck with his shoulders and hope he is better now. Hope both Russell and Gordon are well also. I won't know all the wee folks when I get back. I have a bad cold and don't feel like writing very much so will close now. I have [?] your paper that you sent me.

Give my regards to all and hope every one is real well. I am writing to mother and Tosey this afternoon if I get time.

Bye Bye, George

A994.058.008 (20)

Belgium Dec. 2, 1915

Dear Friends,

I really don't know to whom I owe a letter but I will try and write everyone in the next few days. We have been moving back and forth a lot lately and as a result I have not been able to write as often as I would, but if my letters are short you will know what the reason is on account of the wet weather. The troops have been moved in and out more often so as to save the men from getting what they call trench feet. This starts in [?] wet feet and not proper care, and if not properly cared for, they may have to have them taken off but I don't think we have any that have had that done. One of our men who was returning to England with trench foot was on that hospital ship that went down and he was able to kick the bandages off and was saved. Two other of our men who were wounded and returning to England went down on this ship. Poor fellows they had a livid time of it. The hospital ship struck a mine, but such is the fortunes of life – we never know what is going to happen.

Everything is going along fine and we are all very healthy. One thing about this life we are able to say that there isn't very much sickness. I expect that by the time this reaches you it will be Xmas and I hope that you will all have a very happy and merry time. I hope that when the next one comes around we will all be together again. I don't think the war will last beyond another six months.

Well this is only to be a short letter. I have tried 3 times to get this far and it doesn't seem as if I am going to make headway. It is a constant whirl in my room and sometimes I wish that I could get a day off. However I think that I will be able to get 8 day leave to England around New Year and you bet that I will sleep and eat all the time when I am over there.

Must sign off now as mail is going. Love to all and a real Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to come.

Sincerely yours,
George

A994.058.008 (21)

Belgium Jan. 7, 1915 [probably 1916]

Dear friends,

I have been very tardy in answering your letter. My intentions have been real good, but somehow I seem to get busier all the time. I am hoping to get leave in England some time soon and am intending to go to some place and have a good rest and catch up with my letters. But no leave has come through yet and probably it will be some time yet. Leave is one of the great things we look forward to. I wish I could get away to England tomorrow. Ha Ha. Well I received your box of good things tonight. Gave Sid his socks and everything came in first class order. The cake is dandy. Mother's box with maple sugar came all OK also. I must write to her also. But I felt that I hadn't written you for some time, so you should hear from me first. Those shirts that you all sent came along fine and the boys had them on inside of an hour. Socks is a thing that will come in very useful at all times. Don't make any of those long scarfs for over here as the weather is too mild for that. Dry socks are the main thing over here. You see the trenches are so wet that with the continual standing and walking in wet trench and mud and water that the men get chilblains and also what they call trench feet. A bad case of trench feet a man has to have his feet taken off. I don't think we have had a case yet, but it takes an awful lot of looking after. The officers personally see that each man washes his feet in cold water and rubs grease on them. If this is not done the blood will not circulate and eventually gangrene will set in. So you can see what importance we give to socks. We have a very good arrangement to make everything as good as possible. Each Bde has a big wash house and Belgian women are

employed washing socks and underclothes. Each Battalion has a drying hut built and we leave fires in it and we receive dry socks from the Bde and put them in the drying room. Then all any man has to do is hand in his wet or dirty ones and he gets a dry pair. Each night we send them to the Bde and get clean ones. In this way we have been able to get along fine. It wasn't this way when we came over first and it was desperate the way things were. But big improvements have been made.

We have terrible heavy work this winter and men are being gradually worn out by steady and hard work under the worst conditions. No rest whatever and it is pretty tough to see so many of our original Battalion gradually go away sick. But the work has to be done. When this war is over I will have done my share and no more war for me. I think we would all like it if it were summer time but this wet weather is very trying. Sid is well. He puts in his time at woodcutting. We have always a few men not able to do hard work so I put Sid in charge of party and it is his duty to get a supply of wood for the trenches to help out in the coke and charcoal which is 2 ½ pounds per man. You will know how long and how big a fire 2 ½ pounds will make.

I received your letter the other day and I was glad to learn all about the people. I suppose your will be pretty busy but write as often as you can. I like to get letters even if I don't get time to write very often.

Thank you very very much for remembering me with the box of good things. Santa Claus has been real good to me this year. I must close now. Give my kind regards to those who are doing such splendid work in getting us some socks and shirts. Tell them if they knew how everyone appreciates a good dry warm pair of woollen socks they would feel their efforts are not in vain.

Love to all, Geo. W. Nelson, Major

A994.058.008 (22) [Typed letter]

The Pollock Nursing Home
50, Weymouth Street
London W.

February 23, 1916

Mrs. William Kidd,
Elsinore, Bruce County,
Ontario, Canada

Dear friends,

I received your last letters all O.K. but have not been able to answer them as the Germans were able to give me a part of their hate in the right hand – a piece of rifle grenade struck me but I am glad to say nothing serious and will be around again in six weeks or two months. Write as often as you can and as soon as I am able I will write you a good long letter. We received the parcels all O.K. from the Red Cross and everyone was delighted with them.

With kindest regards, I am, Yours sincerely, George

A994.058.008 (23)

50 Weymouth St.,
London W.
Feb. 27, '16

Dear friends,

I received your letter the other day. It was forwarded from France. I think you have missed one or two of letters. I always wrote to each one about the same time and I can't understand why you didn't receive them. This won't be much of letter as my left hand is very awkward. My wound is coming along fine. It is just two weeks today since it was done and it is really wonderful how they [?]. I get good care here in the hospital. I am the first officer in the 18th to be wounded. We had two killed but I am the first wounded. I rather think that I am the final Adjutant to be wounded in the 2nd Division so I am just a little proud of that. It shows that I have been where the trouble is. Sid was with me when it happened. He was thrown [?] with the explosion but did not get hurt. Edna cabled from N. York today. I am glad she is coming. I am looking very sincerely forward to seeing my family. I will help [keep?] them here until after the war. They can live here as easily as in Canada.

Must close now as I am getting [?]. Got all your paper and thank you very much.

Love to all, George

xxxx

A994.058.008 (24)

9 [?] Grove, St. George's Road,
Wimbledon, Surrey, England

Mar. 24, '16

Dear Sister,

I have received your letters all correct. I expect that they will make use of the papers over in France. I left Hospital last Tuesday but have to still go back to have massage treatment every day for a while yet. My hand is very stiff but I expect to get the use of it back shortly. The second finger is not very good and I have my doubts about it but still I can lock the pencil with it so that I will be alright. No, I won't be going back to Canada until the war is over. Unless something happens that I don't know about now. I hope to be back to the Bn. in a month time. Edna and the youngsters are looking well and like it over here. We have rented a furnished house for 3 months and after the 30th of March our address will be "Everfield" Ember Lane, Esker, Surrey, England. I hope you are keeping in better health now and that when the spring opens up you will be all O.K. I must close now and hope you are all as well as this leaves me.

With kind regards to all,

Sincerely your George

A994.058.008 (25)

Eversfield, Ember Lane,
Ester, Surrey, England

Apr. 13, '16

Dear Edith,

Just a few lines to let you know that all is well. I am still going to the hospital but I think another week will finish everything. Last Thursday my hand became badly swollen and angry and the scab had to be taken off and since then quite a bit of pus has come out, but really it has been a lot better by getting that stuff out and my hand will not look as bad as I first thought. I have it still bandaged up so cannot do very much writing. I thought I had told you how it happened. I was talking to a boy that worked in the Brick yard and a German rifle grenade burst near me and a piece struck me in the back of the right hand. The large piece was taken out in Boloyau [?] but there is still a bit in the palm of the hand but the Doctors tell me it could hurt me. The bone of the second finger is badly broken and that finger will be ½ an inch shorter and I will not get full use of it ... everything is coming along fine.

I am going back to the front May 3, so you see I will be there about the time this reaches you. Am anxious to get back and be with the Battalion in this summer fighting. Two bundles of socks

have come and I have sent them on to Col. Wigle. I am glad that they are letting you know that they receive them all O.K. Too bad about Hugh McRae. His folks must feel very bad.

Well I must stop now. Give my regards to everyone. Geraldine is having a big time and Beryl is so healthy and fat that she falls asleep at her meals.

Bye Bye, George

[P.S.] Wish you would send a Beacon first chance ...Edna gets a Beacon.

A994.058.008 (26)

Royal Pavilion Hotel, Folkstone

May 5, 1916

Dear friends,

I am stopping here for a couple of days on my way back to France. Am going over Sunday evening if all is well. Hated to leave Edna and the little ones but we have to keep a stiff upper lip in this game.

I read your letter to Edna and it grieved me very much to think that any one would think us guilty of taking socks that belonged to the men. I think it would be just as well if you stopped sending any more from the Red Cross as after all I look at it this way. Those that say the officers get them, know that you are sending them to me and I consider it a direct insinuation that I am gathering them. It fairly makes me sick to think of such a thing. I get socks sent to me from all over and I gave mine to those who are not so fortunate and why should I want any that are being sent by the Red Cross. Just the other day some man in Detroit sent me a box containing 100 [?] cigarettes and I don't know who he is. That is just an example of what is sometimes done. So when these people are so miserable to think of such a thing, why I know that none of our men want their giving.

Well everything is going along nicely. The Canadians are losing a lot of men now but we are holding the [?] and it won't be long before he has to make a new lot of trenches. Wasn't that a horrible thing in Ireland. It is just like that rabid crew to doing something when they got a chance. But they had a short time of it. They are [?] some of the leaders now. I must close now. Give my regards to all. I have received your papers. Many many thanks. I will write to Russell and Gordon soon. Hope you all are well.

Sincerely yours, George

A994.058.008 (27)

Eversfield, Ember Lane,
Ester, Surrey, England

May 28, '16

Dear friends,

I have been a long time writing you but have often thought of doing so but the last month has been cram full of happenings. I went back to France, put in a week in the trenches at St. Eloi but my hand kept swelling up and the Dr. advised me to come out so went to Hospital and have just finished up two weeks there. Am out now living at home but have to attend daily at hospital for 3 weeks for Electrical treatment and I expect to get the use of my hand again. I was foolish to go in so soon. So have made up my mind to get good and well this time. I got a lot of souvenirs. German Helmet, nose caps, Belgian steel helmet, French bayonet, etc. Will show you them when I get back. Well must close now.

Love to all from all, George

A994.058.008 (28)

Little Lachire House
Willesboro, Sahfor Kent

June 21, 1916

Dear friends,

I have received your two letters also package of papers. I intended writing sooner but somehow I did not feel like it and I always think that unless you feel like it you wrote a poor letter. Ha Ha. Well you will notice the above is a different address. We are still at Eversfield but we are moving tomorrow to the above address. The reason we are going there is that it cuts far from West Sandling Camp. About 14 miles I think. I go before a medical board next Monday and the hospital doctor advises a month or two of light duty so that I will have to join our reserve Battalion the 39th and be with them until I get back to France. When that will be I have no idea.

I am going to try to get different work but may not. However I am going to try as I have done my share so far.

I had a letter from Col. Wigle yesterday and he is to be here on the 8th of July and I will know better then what I will do. I hope that he doesn't go back to the Bge.

The Canadians lost every being in the recent fighting . I heard that they lost in two weeks 11,000 of all ranks. I was quite disappointed in missing it all. But probably it is for the best. I will get lots of fighting yet. I don't think I would be satisfied if I were back in Canada. I want to stay and see the finish.

Edna and I were at a very old church on Sunday last. It is one of the oldest churches in England and I am told there are only two others like it in England. It is what is known as "Inns of Court", a very old part of London. It is supposed to have been built by the Masons and yet it is round. The oldest part which is round was built in the 11th century 800 years ago. Can you imagine a building of that age? The larger and later part was built later and the tradition is that of the Earl of Essex who was a very wicked robber. The Earl had amassed a large fortune for those days died and willed his money to the church provided he was buried in the temple church. He had been excommunicated by the Pope so could not be buried in a holy place. So they took his body and poured hot lead all over it and then hung it up in a tree in the courtyard. Then messengers were sent to Rome, and the Pope, not wanting to lose the money, said he couldn't have been a very bad man and reinstated him. So he is buried near the center of the church. A marble statue full size is on top of the grave and during some alterations not long ago this slab was removed and one of the men stole the skull, but the lower jaw was missing. All the teeth in the upper jaw were there and the most remarkable thing was that every tooth was double, finest ones and all. So with the rest of the Earl's money was built the new part of the church. The choir is all boys and men and the most wonderful singing I have ever heard. Their voices are wonderful. The organ dates back from the reign of Queen Mary and two were built and the lawyers of the middle temple wanted over and the lawyers of the middle temple wanted the outer and they couldn't agree for five years, so the famous Judge Jeffries who was the master of the court at that time was called upon to decide which and the one he picked is the one that is there. It is a wonderful instrument and has a most beautiful tone. Judge Jeffries is the famous one who had his victims hung, and tried them after they were dead.

Well I must close for now. You will be tired of reading this stuff. Edna and kiddies are all real well and I feel Edna will be writing real soon. Her address will be as above and mine will be attached to the 39th Canadian Bge. West Sandling Camp, Hyltie, Kent. Kind regards. My hand is nearly right again, somewhat stiff.

Sincerely yours,
George

A994.058.008 (29)

[undated]

Just a card. Major Emerton and myself are in [L?] on our way to Scotland. Have been through St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. We will go [?] the [?] and attend service at Westminster this afternoon.

Love to all, George

A994.058.008 (30)

[undated]

West Sandling Camp, Hyltie, England

Dear Sister,

I received your letter today with the flowers from Gordon and I thought it would be nice if I sent them back. I have kissed them also and if you think of it they will have travelled a long way. I also had a letter from Edna today with some tulip petals enclosed. They all came nice and I am sending them back also. It seems almost as if flowers have a spirit. They are so beautiful and I don't think anything seems to reach me the same as flowers. I received Mother's box today and there isn't a thing broken in it. It is a wonder those [?] were not broken. I am going to have a good supper tonight. I wrote to Mother and all last night, so will you let her know that I have received everything OK. I will write home again next week.

We were all worried when we heard of that in the papers about us being in France. It must have been some fool reporter who did that. It will be bad enough when we do go without making such foolish reports. Edna and Geraldine were badly frightened. It is pretty tough on those left behind. We all know that our part is not nearly as bad as the part of wives and family. I have always told Edna not to be foolish and worry and be downcast even if the worst should come as it would only make her miserable and sick and make all around miserable and it does not do any good. Before we thought of the War I always desired that she do and look on the bright side. I am glad to see that you all also have the belief that I am coming back for I have always had a firm conviction that I would come back from this War and I also firmly believe that if people will only hear kin to themselves that a lot will be explained. I may be wounded but that won't be anything. Major Ingram told me coming over on the boat that he had the same conviction. Other officers I know and they have told me so that they expect to get killed. It seems a very funny thing these convictions but I think that it is in around the proximity of danger that people think and listen to themselves. Well the war is going good. You may have

had good news before this letter reaches you, but good things are on the way. Everything seems quiet now but all news are suppressed for a purpose. Good news will come from the East. Also we will not be in France before another month. That is the Battallion won't go over before that time. But Colonel Lord Brooke who is in command of our Brigade is taking a party of officers just to give them a better idea of how things are and how we might improve our training and I expect to go along. Am going to do my best to go anyhow. I think I have a good chance to go for I could make a lot of changes in readiness for our move. If I do I will be able when I get back to England to write you impressions of the war first hand.

Well I must close now and try and get in a little reading before going to bed. First post has gone so that means it is 9:30 and it isn't long before sun up. I am feeling fine and [?] all my hard work. Will send you some snaps of myself and horse. Have a dandy little mare. Rode down to Hyltie today and ordered a pair of riding boots. This cost me five Guineas – that is \$20.00. What do you think of that? Shoes are very expensive in England but they are the very best. I had my photos taken and am sending them to Edna and she will send you one. You can address all my mail to West Sandling Camp, Hyltie, England. Think it will reach me sooner. Love and kindest regards to all. Write as often as you can.

Sending you also some Honeysuckle. It grows...[?] I haven't seen Capt. Kidd for some time. I think he must be away. I will look him up as soon as I can. I seen Harvey Porter the other day and he looks real well.

Sincerely yours, George