Royal United Services Institution. Journal

Publication details, including instructions for
authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rusi19>

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Published online: 11 Sep 2009.

To cite this article: Charles Dalton Esq (1902) General Wolfe's Advice to a Newly-Joined Ensign in 1756, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 46:298, 1596-1599, DOI: [10.1080/03071840209416144](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071840209416144)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071840209416144>

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GENERAL WOLFE'S ADVICE TO A NEWLY-JOINED ENSIGN IN 1756.

Contributed by *CHARLES DALTON, Esq.*

(*Editor of "English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714."*)

WOLFE'S letters, like his personal belongings,¹ are greatly prized by their fortunate possessors. Fifty odd years ago literary circles in Glasgow were agreeably surprised by the accidental discovery, in their own city, of a batch of twelve very interesting letters from Wolfe to his bosom friend, Captain (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) Wm. Rickson; also the first half of an unaddressed letter from Wolfe (then Lieut.-Colonel of the 20th Foot) to a young ensign. The late Dr. John Buchanan, LL.D., an eminent Glasgow antiquarian and historian, who edited and annotated Wolfe's letters to Rickson (which began in 1749 and ended in 1758), as well as the before-mentioned half letter, in a local work entitled "Glasgow Past and Present," describes in his chapter on Wolfe how these same letters were found. He says:—

"It happened that an elderly gentleman died a few years ago, in whose possession an antique military chest had remained more than half a century, uncared for. It was known to have been the property of a relative long since dead—a colonel—but supposed to contain only useless papers. The key had been broken in the rusty lock, and thus the contents were fortunately preserved from dispersion and loss. After the gentleman's death the chest was broken open by his representatives and found to be filled with antique military reports and papers, besides bundles of old letters. In a corner, carefully tied up by themselves, a group of letters was discovered bearing the signature 'James Wolfe.'"

Wolfe's twelve letters to Rickson were presented by their owner (Mrs. Robertson, great-niece to Lieut.-Colonel Rickson's widow) to the Museum of Scottish Antiquities, Edinburgh; but the half letter from Wolfe to a young ensign remained in Dr. Buchanan's possession and was recently bought, along with some of Colonel Rickson's papers, by the

¹ Wolfe's sword is preserved at the Royal United Service Museum, Whitehall; his cloak is at the Tower of London; his spurs were formerly in possession of a Glasgow gentleman, but now, unfortunately, lost; while his sash, stained with his blood, is, or was, in possession of a Scottish family named Stirling. And the little book on fortifications (John Barker's) found in Wolfe's pocket after his death, on the fly-leaf of which work the hero of Quebec had written "This is a very good book," is in the Royal Artillery Institution Library.

present writer from a well-known Edinburgh autograph dealer. "In order," wrote Dr. Buchanan on the sheet of paper in which this precious fragmentary letter is enclosed, "to test the handwriting to be that of Wolfe, the fragment was sent by me to Robert Wright, Esq., 102, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, author of a *Life of Wolfe*, now in course of being published, that he might compare it with the numerous letters to Wolfe in his possession. This I did on 17th June, 1863, and after a careful comparison he wrote me on 7th July following:—'At the first glance I was satisfied that the handwriting is Wolfe's and none other; and after having compared it with Wolfe's original letters at Squerries, there remains no doubt whatever on my mind that Wolfe wrote the letter to *Dear Huty*.'"

The letter in question was pronounced by Wolfe's biographer to have been written to Ensign Hugh Lord, nephew to Lieut.-Colonel Rickson, who was appointed ensign in the 2nd Battalion of Lord Charles Hay's Regiment (33rd Foot), 1st September, 1756. The letter is as follows:—

"Dear Huty,—By a letter from my mother I find you are now an officer in Lord Chs. Hay's Regiment, which I heartily give you joy of, and, as I sincerely wish you success in life, you will give me leave to give you a few hints which may be of use to you in it. The field you are going into is quite new to you, but may be trod very safely, and soon made known to you, if you only get into it by the proper entrance.

"I make no doubt, but you have entirely laid aside the boy and all boyish amusements, and have considered yourself as a young man going into a manly profession, where you must be answerable for your own conduct; your character in life must be that of a soldier and a gentleman; the first is to be acquired by application and attendance on your duty; the second by adhering most strictly to the dictates of honour, and the rules of good breeding; to be most particular in each of these points, when you join your Regiment; if there are any officers' guard mounted, be sure constantly to attend the parade, observe carefully the manner of the officers taking their posts, the exercise of their esponton, etc.; when the guard is marched off from the parade, attend it to the place of relief, and observe the manner and form of relieving, and when you return to your chamber (which should be as soon as you could, lest what you saw slip out of your memory), consult Bland's military discipline¹ on that head; this will be the readiest method of learning this part of your duty, which is what you will be the soonest called on to perform.

"When off duty get a serjt or corporal, whom the adjutant will recommend to you, to teach you the exercise of the firelock, which I beg

¹ "A Treatise on Military Discipline," by Humphrey Bland, Esq., Brigadier-General of His Majesty's Forces. London, 1743.

of you to make yourself as much master of as if you were a simple soldier. the exact and nice knowledge of this will readily bring you to understand all other parts of your duty, make you a proper judge of the performance of the men, and qualify you for the post of an adjutant, and in time many other employments of credit.

"When you are posted to your company, take care that the serjeants or corporals constantly bring you the orders; treat those officers with kindness, but keep them at a distance, so will you be beloved and respected by them. Read your orders with attention, and if anything in particular concerns yourself put it down in your memorandum book,

which I would have you [keep] constantly in your pocket ready for any remarks. Be sure to attend constantly morning and evening the roll calling of the company; watch carefully the absentees, and enquire into reasons for their being so; and particularly be watchful they do not endeavour to impose on you sham excuses, which they are apt to do with young officers, but will be deterred from it by a proper severity in detecting them."

Here, unfortunately, the rest of this excellent letter has been torn off.

The water-mark on the paper of the above half letter is identical with Wolfe's letters to Rickson,¹ viz., the motto "PRO PATRIA," under

¹ Article on Wolfe's letters by Dr. Buchanan in "Glasgow Past and Present."

which is a lion rampant, crowned, brandishing in his dexter paw a knife, while his sinister paw grasps a bundle of fascines(?) To the right of the lion is the figure of Britannia, seated, holding in her dexter hand a large battle-axe(?) The above figures are enclosed by a wooden stockade. This remarkable heraldic device appears to have been a Government water-mark on the paper issued to the British Army from 1749-1759. There is still preserved at the British Museum¹ a letter from that great commander, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, to the Duke of Newcastle, 4th September, 1759, which bears the self-same water-mark.

Hugh Lord, Wolfe's *protégé*, had a very creditable military career. He was promoted lieutenant 8th May, 1758, and the same month his battalion became the 72nd Foot, the command of which was given to the young Duke of Richmond. Lord served with the last-named corps on an expedition to the French coast, and was at the siege and capture of Havanna in 1762. In January, 1763, he purchased his captaincy in the 72nd, and on this regiment being disbanded in the autumn of 1763 was placed on half pay. It may be taken for granted that Hugh Lord was considered a good officer, as he was appointed major of the 75th (Prince of Wales's) Regiment of Foot, 30th May, 1778, which was a few months after the said corps was raised. It may be mentioned that one of Major Lord's brother officers was Captain Thomas Pictou—afterwards the celebrated infantry general who commanded the "Fighting" Third Division in the Peninsular War and fell at Waterloo—who, like Lord, was a native of Pembrokeshire. The 75th were disbanded in 1783, and Major Lord again found himself on half pay. But on 19th March, 1801, Hugh Lord was given the command of one of the eleven Companies of Invalids in Jersey. These companies were reduced before 1808, and, in recognition of his meritorious service, Hugh Lord was allowed to retire on full pay as major. He died 2nd June, 1829, having attained the age of 88.

¹ Add. MS. 32,895, folio 160.