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On: 17 March 2015, At: 00:32

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

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: C. Case-Horton (1914) Deceased Soldiers' Effects, Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 59:437, 253-262, DOI: [10.1080/03071841409421860](https://doi.org/10.1080/03071841409421860)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071841409421860>

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DECEASED SOLDIERS' EFFECTS.

By C. CASE-HORTON.

IN the present day, thanks to the system of registration adopted in the service, it is not a matter of great difficulty to ascertain who may be entitled to such sums of money as may be standing to the credit of the name of any soldier dying while serving with the Colours. Of course, there are cases in which, apparently, the relatives of the deceased non-commissioned officer or man are unknown; and for the benefit of their possible next-of-kin, from time to time lists are issued.

In the middle of the last century, however, the case was very different. The letter writing habit was not so prevalent. The soldier wrote comparatively seldom to his relatives, even if he could write, and his letters from home were equally rare. When, however, it became known to the kin of a soldier that their son, brother or nephew, as the case might be, was dead and that some small, for it was seldom a large sum, was standing to his credit, applications were duly made to the authorities therefor. But, of course, a proof of the relationship was required before such sums were paid over, and failing the legal certificates needful, various kinds of outside means of identification were, if not asked for, at any rate forwarded to headquarters.

The writer has recently had access to a number of these articles of identification, referring to the effects of soldiers who served between the years 1842 and 1863, and a curious collection they are.

The earliest is dated February 16th, 1842, and takes the form of a receipt for the burial of William Gillies, who died in the Royal Infirmary, and was buried at St. Cuthbert's Burying Ground. The cost of this man's funeral was precisely 13s. He would appear to have been on leave at the time of his death. His grave cost 4s. 6d., the hire of a "mort-cloth" 6s., the warrant for his burial 6d., "watching" 1s., and "recording" a similar sum. How a certificate of burial could prove the identity of a dead man's next-of-kin does not appear.

The next item is dated August 14th, 1844, and consists of a most miraculous representation of "Michael Winn, 63rd Regiment, Chatham." This is a rude water colour sketch in which the subject in uniform stands on the quay side. In the water is a full-rigged ship, presumably a man-of-war, and opposite is a fortress labelled "due Aden." On the back is part of a letter addressed to his sister. After the usual "hoping to find you in good health as it leaves me at present, thanks to God for it," he asks for news from home of his sister, her husband and her family. But the chief news in his letter

is to the effect that he had expected his brother to be transferred to the 63rd, but that this had not happened and the brother had been sent to Ireland.

The uniform in this queer sketch is interesting in a way, and has been executed with as much skill as the poor fellow possessed, even down to gold paint on the shako and cross-belt plates. The man-of-war is by no means badly done. The next is presumably about 1850 in date. It is but a fragment of a letter, bearing on one side an engraving of "Nutwith, Winner of the Leger, 1843," published in 1849. It was apparently addressed to the man's brother. He has not written home, and excuses himself thus:—

"You will forgive me for not writting to you before for i quite forgot your Directions, and i can assure you i have a great deal of work at Pressent, but, thank God for it, i am in good health again, and a little work i don't mind little."

James Carroll, of the 87th Royal Irish Fusiliers, on June 25th, 1850, sent to his father and mother at Castle Street, Roscommon, Ireland, a picture in water colour of himself in full uniform, flanked on one side by two regimental Colours and a cannon, while on the other side, the "Kent" is depicted in full sail, passing a lighthouse. Beneath the picture are several lines of what purports to be poetry. It is almost worth quoting for its very quaintness. On the inside, for the picture is done on a sheet of Bath post, is a letter to his father and mother which, after the "hoping to find you, etc.," tells that he has been uneasy at receiving no news as to whether they had given up their house, and regretting that he can give them no monetary assistance, for "Poor Recruits has nothing in Chatham, . . . but Please the Lord when I join my Regt., then I will be able to do Some Good." It may be permitted to wonder whether the proposed assistance to his relatives materialized. However, it is worth noting that the "Kent" pictured in the sketch is not the "Kent," East India-man, the story of whose fate is so well known—for that disaster took place in 1825. The letter concludes, "Adieu, Dear Father and Mother, for a Short time, With the Assistance of God, hoping to see you all again, when I Return from a foreign Shore, leaving Chatham Barracks To-morrow Morning, 25th." The Colours depicted are curious. One has a blue fly, the other a red one. The blue one conceals the red one, and has a curious rose wreath on a white ground with a gold eagle, and beneath, Badajos, Talavera, Barrosa and Vittoria. But Badajos is not among the honours of the 87th.

Several of the papers are undated. One from a soldier in the 90th contains a passage not without interest, and probably refers to the introduction of the Enfield rifle:—

"not spend mi Christmas with you we ar at a new drill called the new Rifle drill, and no one Can get a furlow until we learn it, But as soon as I Can get it i will let you no we expect to move away from this everyday. . . . No more at present from your upset Brother."

The heading of this paper bears a steel engraving of "Divine service in camp." On the back are these words: "Dear sister, i send you this card, keep it until i do see you, with God's blessing." Under the circumstances it was a very pathetic message.

George Grant, of the 78th Highlanders, writes on October 12th, 1856, from the Camp, Poona, to his father. His letter is headed by a full-length portrait of himself in regimentals, the tartan being peculiarly well done. After the usual opening he tells that "they are preparing an Expedition to send up the Persian Gulf against that country, seeing that the Shah (or King) has appeared to be in a little hostility to the British Government ever since the Russia War commenced, for Persia has been an ally to Russia this sometime back one of our Steam Frigates was up the Persian Gulf the other Day and she has returned with the news that there was an army congregated at a place, I Don't remember the name of it, but some of the people that went up on purpose they had to return quicker than they went on shore. There is about 5,000 Troops going up there and one of our Wings is in orders for Belgaum to relieve the 64th Regt., seeing they are told off for the Expedition." Grant had another year to serve in India, and on his return to England intended to take his discharge. Evidently, however, he died in the service. Unaccompanied by a letter proper, but contained in the folds of a fragment of official paper, marked "Cover No. 13 R.P. 20,000, 9—58 (3401)." we find a tiny piece of Crimean medal ribbon and a slender wisp of dark brown hair pinned to it. On the paper is written:—

"I send a lock of his hair and plase to send it Back to me and also a Piece of the ribon belonging to his Midal that he got in Sebastapool, Claim his Clasps and Medals and other affects if you please.

ELIZA NUTTY,
Jameses Place,
Dublin."

The paper on which this is written is perforated with hundreds of pin pricks. If the medals and clasps were sent to Eliza Nutty, clearly the cherished lock of hair was never returned.

How a long, printed copy of a very fulsome ode on the Coronation of George IV. could possibly aid anybody in the identification of a dead soldier it is hard to say, yet such an object was so sent, and lies before the writer at this present moment.

One female relative of a deceased man evidently had a firm belief in family features being handed down, for she forwards her own portrait—a much cracked and worn ferrotype. The good lady has a huge gold brooch, necklet and long earrings, not to mention a heavy gold bracelet—and her wedding ring is in evidence. Two faded, black-edged envelopes have a somewhat pathetic interest. One is from a Sergeant John Farrell, of the 75th, and is labelled by a stamp, "Saved from the wreck of the 'Ava.'" The postmarks vary from February to May, 1858. The other envelope was saved from the wreck of

the "Colombo." It was addressed to Marion Clarkson, Flatford (?), Nr. Edinburgh, Scotland, and appears to have reached London in February, 1863. A Mr. William Connett, finding that he could not get the "minister of our Parish" to testify to the identity of a dead man, suggests as a substitute, "Mr. G. Franklin, who is my next-door neighbour, who is one of the churchwardens he is as respectable as the clergyman, his brother is now the Mayor of this City (Exeter). I have also enclosed a letter received from Mr. Bale, S. Africa (a vague address truly) who knew my brother and sent me the intelligence of his death. This you will cause to return."

The whole of this is written on the back of a City of Exeter hand bill, regarding the funeral of "Her late Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent"—the mother of Queen Victoria. It is dated March 23rd, 1861.

The fragment of a letter from "Driver Sylvester Murphy, 2 Field Battery, Royal Artillery, Allahabad, East Indies, or Elsewhere," is headed by a steel engraving of a very lachrymose-looking individual.

Beneath the picture is this line:—

"The grand Purse extension Railway is no go!"

The letter is dated February 20th, 1859, and is addressed to "Dear Father, Mother and Sisters." Unfortunately we have not the whole of the letter, but a part tells us as follows:—

"As i was drawing Soard to defend My Comerade who was laying wounded by a tree, I saw the Man 50 yards from Me when he fired at me passed the ball between My right Arm and My Side grazed My Skin there being four thousand of them from us a small distants we made a charge at them with four large guns and a few regiments fought 2 hours when the Made off as fast as thy possibly Could left us all their arms which they could not carry."

But did drivers in the artillery carry swords?

The letter continues: "We are expecting to remain hear a little time at 'tulsepure,' but we was warned to march at a minutes notice which they say is to Gurrick Pure and be Stationed thier. But is say they wars being ended it is uncertain to say for we lay now at the foot of this large hills over these hills is a country be itself and if we get over these hills we are beginning the Wars."

On the last side of the paper he tells that "I never found greater fun at home than I found hear in the battle of tulsepure, they lattery end of it being compared to fox hunting when took 16 guns 5 thousand of them fled away when we would fire a cannon at them, i did see a duzzen of the falling we now are encamped on the field where we fought them, fears no danger the 53 reg. . . ."

This account of the writer's personal adventure was eminently intended for home consumption.

The battle alluded to is Grant's victory at Tulsipur, fought January 4th, 1859, and took place across the Raptee, just on the

borders of Nepaul. Nepaul is evidently the "country be itself," but at the time the Nepaulese were our allies.

Written in a very shaky hand and addressed "to the ware office London in speed," is a short note regarding the sum of £1 19s. 3d., standing in the name of a soldier of the 85th at the time stationed in the Mauritius. It is dated from Bradford, March 14th, 1856. "We are informed that my Son micah Cally inlisted as a Soldier in the north of ingland and Set off for london He is My Son But a marrid man.

His father X mark
William and Anner Cully,
No. 3, Gorges Court,
Bradford, Yorkshire."

A letter from Kildare, dated October 14th, 1856, is headed by a most complicated view of military evolutions at the Curragh, in which there is a terrific explosion shown in the middle of a square, but possibly meant for a *feu-de-joie*. The letter comes from a Sergeant Henry Reddin, of the Light Company, 18th Royal Irish. It tells of the death of Patrick Whelan, who was stabbed by a man of the 56th Regiment with a bayonet. A coroner's inquest is to be held and further information is promised. Sergeant Reddin hopes that the "man who done it will be punished severely." Whelan was stabbed in the shoulder and also through the heart. His death was much regretted as he was a popular man.

An undated letter from Thomas Welsh to his uncle and aunt from Chatham tells them that he has enlisted in the "86th Royal County Downs." He writes that he is "very content so Fare for i like it well." He hopes for a furlough at Christmas and encloses "a pound out of my bounty and Had i had more to spare I would have sent it you. But should I have at any time anything to spare, you shall have it for you Have been a good father to me." He sends kind messages to quite a long list of friends. The heading of this letter is a coloured lithograph of "a soldier of the Line."

A queer marriage proclamation and certificate is among the papers, but there is no clue to the dead man whom it may concern. It refers to Peter McDavit, clothlapper, of 42, New Wynd, Glasgow, and Mary Jane Marshall, of King Street. The marriage took place on April 7th, 1857. The paper is a quaint production. At each corner roses with, by the way, plenty of thorns, are engraved, while the centre of each side is filled up by texts of scripture, two from Genesis and one each from Ephesians and St. Matthew. It is needless almost to add that the texts are concerned with "Not good for man to be. . . ." "Bone of my Bones, . . ." "Husbands, love your . . ." and "What therefore God hath. . . ."

A letter from M. Martin (regiment unnamed), North Camp, Aldershot, and dated July 3rd, 1860, is the only letter addressed to a wife.

The man has evidently omitted to write for quite a long time. He tries to excuse himself on the score of "the way I have been

knocked about on account of the Shift we got and the Bad health I have had I am struck off all Duty and is to be sent to Depôt, me and a great many more, and I am very glad of it for this is a Dread-full place to soldier in the Men Generally Ware their knapsacks from 7 to 8 hours every Day. Besides there is not a week but the Queen or Prince George comes here to Review the troops!"

He has, however, the grace to enclose 3s. in postage stamps. A message to his son, and to his father, mother and sister concludes the letter. Somehow the document does not ring quite truly, perhaps it is owing to the printed verse, "A Soldier's Affection," which heads it, the extravagant professions contained therein being possibly intended as a cloak for the very small remittance and the lengthy silence.

"George Edwards, E Company, 130 Medical Staff Corps, Aged 25 years, 1855," had, apparently, not a little artistic talent—witness a card really prettily designed with the above name, etc., in floral lettering. But we have no further information regarding the man.

A rather interesting view of Winchester Barracks, with a parade in progress, tops the short letter of "William freeman, No. 4222, No. 11 Company," to his mother. He sends messages to friends and is looking forward to his Christmas furlough. Did he ever have that furlough, we wonder?

William Cairns, Grenadier Company, 42nd Royal Highlanders, writes from the Western Heights, Dover, July 11th, 1857.

The letter-head is a full-length private of the regiment in lithograph, backed by a view of Dover Castle. He writes to his sister, from whom he has not heard for three months. As she has changed house he is anxious for intelligence, and thinks "that you might wright me one now and let me know how you ware geting on." He is also anxious to know if "Daniel" (possibly a brother), who was also a soldier, had got his discharge. He thinks that both his sister and Daniel are offended with him and wants the matter cleared up. He recalls that "Glasgow fair comences on mundy first and i'll be looking for a faring when you write if it should be ever so small, for it is a long time since I have got one. . . ." He sends "my best respects to your (and presumably his own) father and all inquiring Friends." It is a human document, and one cannot help believing that the man was fond of his home and relations. Perhaps as he had "gone for a soldier" they were not as proud of him as they should have been.

A letter from Margaret Kilderry, dated April 8th, 1862, and written from Carnane, Doolan, Co. Clare, claims 15s. as due from the death of her son, Martin Kilderry, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Foot, who died December 12th, 1860. It appears that this amount had been retained for his brother Michael, of the 73rd Foot, who was actually dead at the time the distribution of one half had been made to the mother. The top left-hand corner of this letter shows us a picture of the "Death of St. Francis Xavier"—evidently considered as most appropriate. The paper, Bath post, is gilt-edged!! Mrs. Kilderry did things well it would seem.

Private H. Harding (regiment unnamed) writes from Shorncliffe, June 10th, 1858, to his mother. He thanks her for a letter, regrets that she has been ill. He also has been laid up but is better. It appears that his brother wished the mother to live in his house; this course the man begs her not to pursue, at any rate until his furlough is over, which he will get in a few weeks' time. A "little George" has sent him some postage stamps for which he is most grateful. Somehow, though only a short letter, it bears the impress of genuine good feeling. Again, we must fear that the poor fellow did not live to enjoy his long-looked-for furlough. Some rather well-known lines, "To My Mother," head the letter surrounded by the curious embossed frame common in those days.

A quaint view of the Citadel of Corfu is on the letter of a man, Denis Dunaton (regiment unnamed). It is decidedly Irish. He tells his father that he hopes he "Wont Blame Me for not Wrighting to Yo Before now the Reason that I never Wrote to yo Was this I Was not ABLE to Wright My own Letter." However, now he has learnt to write he intends to do so more often. He sends messages to "Sister Elon" and others. He hopes that "Brther James Will ARive in Fermoy and that He Will Go to See Yo and I hope that He Wont Be sorry as He Wished to come to this Regiment for the Boman catlic Men is not Much Lucked after in this Regiment the company that I Belong to We are two to one Strong afther (?) We Have not one, Sergent to March us to Chaplen on Sunday it is one of the prads (?) that March us to Mass on Sunday. . . ."

He concludes with a triple request for a speedy answer.

A fragment headed by a view of "H.M.S. 'Vengeance' entering Malta Harbour, May 7th, 1853," and dated from Verdalla Barracks, Malta, February 4th, 1854, has lost its signature. The concluding passage is amusing:—

"Forgetting My old Entended Who I hope Will be Single and enjoying good on My Return to Land of the Shammorack. Here is a few Little pictures for the Child. I would send Better, but Could Not do it, because the would be taken in the Post Office.

"Excuse Mistakes in this."

Oddly enough the handwriting of this paper is the best of all in the collection.

William Powell, No. 3938, 46th Regiment, Preserved Company (? Reserve), Malta, sends a view of the fleet at anchor in colours. His letter is dated March 22nd, 1856. His mother has been ill and he is anxious. He sends his "best respects" to his father and thanks him "for the presant that he sent me." It seems that his mother had written to him, begging him not to volunteer, but that the letter arrived three hours too late, and he had already enlisted in the 46th Regiment and was sworn in that very same day. He was to receive "9 pounds bounty." He had volunteered from the militia, it seems, and feels sure that he will like the regiment best. He hoped when

he returned to England to see them all again and looked forward to that time—it never came.

Michael O'Shaughnessy, No. 6 Company, 58th Depôt, Curragh Camp, Kildare (undated), sends to Bridget O'Shaughnessy, probably his sister, a really decently executed water colour of himself in uniform. He could not, we think, have been the artist, as his handwriting on the back is almost the worst of all the specimens of bad writing in this collection.

Augustus Murray, a corporal in the Light Company of the 37th Regiment, sends from Trincomalee, Ceylon, in 1855, a portrait of himself in uniform. In it he has been depicted with a black face owing to the climate. The execution of this drawing is not nearly so good as the last mentioned. From a note on the back it appears that the man had neither friend nor relative in the world, but a certain Maria Thomas, who forwarded the picture and a letter (not now forthcoming), seems to have filled up the requisite form and claimed the assets of her dead friend or lover.

A piece of folded paper, without any written note thereon, contains three pieces of medal ribbon. Those of the Crimea, the Baltic, and either Hyderabad, Meeanee, Punniar or Jellalabad. These scraps of ribbon are interesting as they are of the original issue, and consequently the Baltic piece is watered horizontally in curves instead of vertically as it was later, the blue edges are not tipped with yellow. The Indian rainbow scrap is not watered and the central colour is brown and not yellow. But how a dead man was to be identified by these three scraps of ribbon hardly appears at first sight.

Corporal Andrew Burk, 75th Regiment, appears in an amusing sketch accompanied arm in arm with "his sister, Bridget Burke." One is inclined to doubt the "sister," as the entry is in a different hand-writing, and her "Burke" has an "e" which his lacks.

Bridget wears a black dress beneath which peep out very tiny and elegantly pointed shoes. A blue three-quarter jacket trimmed with ermine!! A red and gold girdle with large tassels, and a marvellous bonnet of blue trimmed with small wreaths of roses on each side, and two rolls of hair cover each ear. The picture as a whole is most weird.

The crossed Colours of the 7th Royal Fusiliers are represented next, having between them a blue vase on a white pedestal, both of eccentric shape, and the vase contains a bouquet of roses and thistles. The shamrock is omitted both in the vase and on the Colours, for what reason we do not know. The picture was done by a private, W. Parry, was sent by him home, and after his death used as a means of identification. One point may also be noted, and that is that the Union Jack in both instances is, as usual, incorrectly drawn, but the "honours" are correct.

Dated January 12th, 1859, and writing from Cork Barracks, Owen Shorden, a private in the 91st Regiment, writes a farewell letter to his mother. He expects to sail for India "on Saturday," he being one of a draft about to proceed thither. He appears to be troubled about family matters, his brother giving him anxiety. He sends a

curious message to his sister, "send me word who it is that you are getting the money from for there is a woman here in the name of Mrs. Murry and her husband is out at the Regiment. . . you must tell me who you applied to for the money, be sure to let me know in your letter as I would like to know." Evidently there was a skeleton in the cupboard.

The view of Cork Barracks which heads the letter is more curious than fine.

Patrick Whelan writes from the Curragh, at which encampment there is a somewhat lurid field day depicted. His letter is dated September, 1856. He had been stationed at Dublin, but was at the last moment prevented from seeing his sister, to whom he writes. He much regrets the "happy afternoon" he thus missed with her and her husband. He sends various kindly messages to "Miria" (Maria), who has sent him presents, and gives the latest news, which is that there is a chance of the regiment returning to Dublin. The regiment in question being the 18th Royal Irish, to the Light Company of which he belonged.

Patrick Tohey writes from Aldershot on August 31st, 1856, to a friend, Patrick Keough. He was just back from the Crimea, and had two brothers who were still out there, so he evidently belonged to a family of soldiers. He makes all kinds of enquiries about his friends, wishing to know what has befallen them since he left England. He tenderly asks after his friend's father and mother, and also the crops and the fishing, and his friends married and single; after which he reaches the particular query:—How is his friend's sister? But if there was any romance it is to be feared that nothing came of it.

William Bradbury, of the 70th Regiment, writes from Chatham in 1858 to his father and mother. He has been very uneasy at getting no letters, and begs for a reply by return of post. He tells them that he likes his service very well at present, "and i Ham in good spirit and i should like to go to india very well wich i thinke that I shall go the next draft and i think that it will be in a month or so and i hope that you will tell all my friends that I like soulgring very well at present." He sends a message to his brother to the effect that he had not forgotten "what he said to me that Monday morning when he came from Manchester."

The letter finishes curiously. After his name and regiment it continues: "but we have left the Barrick and we are in the huts Brumpton but put that daraction on your letter when you write to me so good by amen."

Shamus Barnes writes from Malta on February 7th, 1863, to his sister.

The letter is clearly written and the man had apparently taken the trouble to rule faint pencil lines in order to be neat.

He thanks his sister for a card, probably a carte-de-visite which she has sent him, and regrets that the cost of a similar one out there would be at least 12s., which is more than his purse will run to. He mentions that the Ionian Islands are about to be given up, and personally he does not regret it. He complains that Malta is a dull place.

Surely the letter cannot have been written from Malta, but the writer forgot to head it Corfu. The only sport is boat racing, he says, and every company has a boat. He appears to have had to fill up a paper from the War Office regarding the death of a relative, of whom he and his sister were the sole kin. His Christmas has been a merry one, but he fears that the poor in Lancashire have fared but badly: it was the year of the Lancashire distress. He finishes his letter thus: "By jove I shall make a splendid housekeeper for any old woman who has a long purse and requires a young husband, for at present I hold the position of Cook to about ninety of her Majesty's gallant defenders, and feed them like fighting cocks. God guide you." This is the last letter in the collection.

The writer thinks that little apology is needed for the contents of this paper. The documents concerned throw a side light on a not too much exploited side of military life. Of course, the conditions of the present day are totally different from those of the middle of the last century. Education has advanced and such illiterate epistles would not now be found. The interest, however, in the old ones remains, and, as we think we have shown, is more often than not a pathetic interest.