



George Pennell Pre 1914 and during WWI

The following letters are from the family archives of George Pennell of Hankerton, great uncle of Jenny Todd.

Dear Annie

I am well, I have just been to see poor George off to France. We went some way to meet them a fine handsome lot of fellows. We were able to wait by his side until Waterloo station in fact I took his arm. Lots of girls and relatives were walking to the trains with the men. The band was playing lovely. I had a great deal of trouble from breaking down and I think Will did.

Oh dear how the people cheered them and the poor fellows cheered back again. Some looked very bright, others looked down. After the men had gone on to the platform we were allowed through too so we were with George when he was in the train and kissed him good bye and then the band played `Auld Langs Syne` and they steamed out of the platform waving their hats and cheering. George waved to us as long as he could see us. He went off very bright and cheerful and smiling. I thought I saw his eyes moisten just before starting but he went off very jolly, a true soldier. You see some sights, relatives crying. I had to cry after he had gone poor fellow. He will miss coming to see us and we shall miss him

With love
Dad
France
14th December 1916

Dear Sis,

Just a line to let you know I am quite well and getting on all right. Hope this will find you all the same. We all come from the line. At present resting and have very good billets, and the living is very good, much better than I had expected, far better than in Africa, but I don't suppose we shall be here long.

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We have just done two days march which of course don't go down very well as it was raining nearly all the time which wasn't pleasant I can tell you. So dear sister the French people seem to be a dirty lot, can't fall in love with any I've seen yet. I haven't been in any large town yet only villages. Will close now with fondest love from your affectionate and loving brother.

George

British Red Cross and Order of St John
Enquiry Department for Wounded and Missing
18 Carlton House Terrace, T 2 11

19th February 1917

Corporal G. Pennell 27980, 12 Platoon, 3rd Grenadiers

Dear Madam

We have now obtained a leaflet about your brother's death from Private. C. Marshall, 13981, 3rd Grenadier Guards, c/o Record Office, Buckingham Gate, London, S.

He knew Corporal Pennell well and went out in the same draft on the 27th November 1916. The Grenadier Guards had attacked the village of Fontaire in front of Cambrai, but not being able to take it had returned to the trenches.

Corporal Pennell and Marshall were in the trench. He was smoking a cigarette and Marshall cleaning his rifle when a shell came over the top of the trench where he was killed. He gives a distance as 200 or 300 yards back from the village of Fontaire. We hope in your sorrow it will be a comfort to know that your brother's death was instant and must have been free from suffering and also that he received attention and burial at the hands of friends.

Yours faithfully
for the Earl of Lucas. I.C.R.