

‘The next thing I remember was waking up on the beach, the shells still coming across...I had a wound through the foot, one through the buttock, one through the groin and two through my arms so I was absolutely helpless.’

(Private George Waugh)

'Flies! Ee' used tae keep shaking everything otherwise ee' got flies in everything. The water was never very good either.'

(Private Nichol Robertson)

‘The sick were in a terrible state, all suffering from dysentery...It was pitiful to see them, so weak, and blood and water pouring out of them. We had medicine we could give them, but we could really do very little for them.’

(A nurse on one of the hospital ships)

‘Then the Turks guns started to shell us while we were advancing.’

(Private Adam Gray)



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(Private Alex Taylor)

‘It will be a year next Thursday since we joined the Army, and already some of my dearest friends have been killed. But, we have to forget these days and keep looking forward, as we never know whose turn it will be next.’

(Private John McIntyre)

'Just before the charge in the morning, a shell burst in the trench I was in and killed one chap outright, and wounded three others, one of whom died later in the day from his injuries.'

(Private William Spalding)

'Just before the charge I got struck on the head with a small bit of shrapnel so I was not in the charge. There was a big lot missing. There were few in the charge that got back safe.'

(Private Stewart Miles)

'I don't know how the rest of the 4th got on. I am only talking of the trench I was in. There must have been a great many Hawick men killed.'

(Private Alex Taylor)

'We left our trenches at 7.35 a.m. after a very heavy artillery bombardment and attacked.'

(Lt.Cathels)

‘We certainly did get the order to fall back because we were in a very precarious part of the line and we seemed to be getting hit from every direction. It was well on to night time before I got back to the old British firing line.’

(Private Nichol Robertson)



## Letters from Soldiers

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'If you have ever seen rain falling on calm water, that is what the bullets were like.'

(Lt.Cathels)



'I cannot truly describe the charge we engaged in... I can only remember the faces of so many of my Hawick chums lying injured and looking up at me, some wanting help, but most of them past wanting help.'

(Private Alex Taylor)

‘You will no doubt have heard from the War Office that I have been wounded in action. I was wounded just above the left knee and the bullet has gone clean through but don’t worry about me, thank God I have got off so easily, for when I see some of the other boys, I have been very lucky.’

(Private Elliot Little)

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‘A piece of shell tore my pocket and I lost my pay book, notebook, postcards etc., and it also struck my ammunition, exploding 10 rounds, a few bullets going through my left arm.’

(Private Adam Gray)



'You will be surprised to hear I am wounded but do not worry yourself about me, for I am getting on all right. It is only a wound with a bullet on the top of the head.'

(Private A.E Bell)

‘And I can remember a fellow Beattie, he came from Hawick, and he was just lying, dying. And you can’t stop, you had to go on.’

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‘Every now and again there was yin sent for oot o’ the mill  
with a wire tae say that her brother or fither hed been killed.’

(John Laurie of Slitrig Crescent, child factory worker at  
Pringle’s, Hawick in 1915)

## Letters from Soldiers

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'I would like to be back in Hawick again, not for a week-end but for good.'

(Private Robert Maben Reid)



'I ran like wild to get through the Turks, throwing everything off my back and had my rifle blown to pieces.'

(Private Alex Taylor)



'We got three lots of trenches...the shellfire was awful.....simply awful. The machine-guns were horrific and I came through only by the purest of miracles.'

(Lt. Cathels)

'I am now lying in Alexandria Hospital with a fractured arm. On the morning of 12th July we made the charge. Our big guns gave the Turk a hot hour. When the guns ceased we got the order to advance.'

(Private Adam Gray)



'We are never out of range of the Turkish guns, and they keep firing shells at us all day long.'

(Private John McIntyre)

'I am the only one left now out of my home district, the rest being killed, wounded or missing. The 12th July will long be remembered by me.'

(Lance-Corporal J. Thomson)



‘The fight itself, at least the part I was in, was just a confusion...I got wounded, a shrapnel shell burst up above. But before I got down to the Dressing Station, I got hit twice on the road down to the base. However, I managed to get out of it.’

(Private Nichol Robertson)

'I myself buried four of my fellow officers including Lt. J.B. Innes of Hawick.'

(Lt.Cathels)

‘While I was in the act of bandaging a comrade the Turks attacked us and we were sprayed by fire from a machine gun which simply mowed us down. We could do little or nothing as the trench we occupied was full of dead or dying men.’

(Private Alex Taylor)

'I got in to a trench and 6 Turks gave themselves up to me. I got one of them to bandage my arm. I sat down and looked after them and 3 hours after, I got a shrapnel bullet through my bandaged arm. I was 6 hours in the trench before I got out and walked down to the base where I got it dressed and had something to eat.'

(Private Adam Gray)

‘Some people say the Turks will remember the Borderers, but the Borderers will certainly remember the Turks!’

(Lt.Cathels)

'I assisted at the burial of the two unfortunate lads, and we put up a rough cross to mark the spot.'

(Private William Spalding)

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## Letter Extracts

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