



# PVT. WILLIAM GARROW JR.

Correspondence collection created by Pvt. William  
Garrow Jr.

## ABSTRACT

In 1995, the Oshawa Museum received a donation of a collection of letters written by William Garrow Jr. The collection includes over 18 letters written by William, most of them to his two sisters Leah and Lillian, while he was overseas during the First World War. It is a unique collection as it chronicles William's time overseas, starting with his arrival in England, following him as he moved to the Western Front and ends with his family's notification of his tragic death. The collection also includes the official documents sent to the Garrow family informing them of William's death and finalizing his estate.

Transcription by Krystin Manweiler

Online exhibit: [Letters From The Trenches](#)

## Archives Identifier

A995.8

St. Martin's Plains  
Shornecliffe  
Kent, England  
Nov, 20/15

Dear folks at home,

I guess you will think that I have forgotten you all, but such is not the case as I've have been rather busy the past week or so, but I now take advantage of the first lull, by writing to my dear folks at home.

Well how are all at home? I do hope they are well, I am feeling fine, and I do hope you do also well.

By the way, received the letter of Lillian wrote to me and also the Reformers and Sunday school papers, also the pictures of our company that was in the Star Weekly then Leah's letters came to-day and was glad to hear from her but haven't received the parcel that was sent to me on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> but I will keep my eyes open to it may be here any day now.

No doubt you had some time trying to find me in the company pictures that appeared in the "Star Weekly."

Thought you would have some trouble trying to find me, because I took a very bad picture it seems that I wasn't focused right, anyway you can just see me and that all in the lower right hand corner of the picture in the front row.

Did you get the picture of our section that I sent to you. It was taken the last day we were at the "Hythe" ranges" No doubt you will have no trouble in picking me out, as I am in the very front row. I think it is a good picture of the section only the fixed bayoneted cast a shadow on some of our faces.

I suppose Leah and Lillian well be putting on the finishing touches for the concert on the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month. In one way, I would like to be in my Shibley's concert, but in another way I am glad I am here + ready to leave at any moment, for the front to do my bit for my King and Country, against that terrible enemy "Germany." I am glad to know that "Leah" is getting such a fine chance in the choir to take solo parts in the anthems. One thing, I do miss and that is the nice little song services, that we used to have at home. I suppose you have kept my music that I left at home. I sang at a bible class meeting, aloud two weeks ago, to-morrow.

I am glad to hear that Uncle John has received the position of manager of the Auto(?) part. I guess by the time I get back to Oshawa I will not know the town. I must say, that I am glad to get the "Oshawa" papers every week. I haven't heard from "Harold" yet, but no doubt I will hear from him soon.

I hope that Leah and Lillian enjoyed their visit while in Toronto

So you really thought that I had gone to France, no I am still at "St Martin's Plains" and expect to be here for a while at least. Although, I believe a draft will be leaving here pretty soon, but as the exact date I cannot tell you. Our company has been on brigade work this week. I have been working with a working party making gave walks around the lines.

By the way, could one of you send me a woolen muffler as it is getting rather cold now, I would certainly appreciate a muffler very much, it is about the only thing that I lack in my issue

I am going to send my brass shoulder badges and bronze hat badge home, also one of the regimental brooches that I bought down town.

It is a nice enameled brooch, with a Marguerite in the centre, the Marguerite is Princess Patricia's favorite flower.

Well folks, I must close now hoping all are well as this letter leaves me.  
Hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain,  
Your loving son + brother  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855

Kisses xxxxxxxx No. 4 Company  
11<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion  
P. P. C. L. I.  
St. Martin's Plains  
Shornecliffe  
Kent, England

Somewhere in France  
Jan, 7/16

Dear Leah; -

I received your welcome letters, dated Dec7, and 15<sup>th</sup>, also your photo, the letters and photos arrived a day or two ago, was sure glad to hear from you again also to hear that all at home are well.

Well Leah, this is Saturday, and sort of a day off for me. I was on guard yesterday from nine am till nine am to-day It rained often and on during the night, and was quite windy for a while but it is nice to-day. This is great weather we are having the weather is just like October weather. Tomorrow is marching day, we move farther up the line, we march off at six thirty o'clock and have to march about fifteen miles.

I received Mamie's little note yesterday also a letter from Mr. Henley. I also received Aunt Fannie's parcel, a few days ago a parcel from Majorie Hutchison, and the parcel from the fellows of the class. The parcel Aunt Fannie sent contained chocolate bars, maple sugar, raisins, layer figs, socks, handkerchief, soap, comb, mirror. The parcel that Majorie Hutchison sent contained handkerchief, socks, and chocolate. Then the parcel the fellows of the class sent contained five Jaeger mufflers, one for each Oshawa fellow here, and handkerchiefs. So you see my good friends far over the sea haven't forgotten me, by any means.

That certainly was bad about what happened to Pte. Perkins he must have been exhausted.

Yes I have heard one or two of those songs that you mentioned. Did you all spend Christmas in Toronto? Our company held a theatre party in one of the French cities here. The show was put on by some Canadian soldiers from Montreal I think. It was in the form of a Minstrel show, and was great. It lasted for about two hours. The singing was fine and the jokes were good. One of the jokes they used was: "Why are the "Princess Patricia" like a hand of boiled eggs?" I suppose you don't know. The answer is, - you can cut them up as much as you like, but you can't beat them.

By the way, I have met quite a number of Oshawa fellows lately. We were up quite near a number of Oshawa fellows. I saw "Milt" Oster, "Bob" Holdaway, and Henry Haggerty. They were in the same battalion as Mr. Matthews was in. I see by the paper that he has been sent back to Canada. I also saw "Bill" Culling the other night. He also comes from "Oshawa." So after all this world is so big, as we happen to cross the path and come in contact with people we know

Well Leah, as news seems scarce this time, I will draw this letter to a close. Hoping this letter will find all at home well, al hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain  
Your loving brother  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855  
No.3 Coy. P. P. C. L. I.  
B. E. 7.  
France

P.S. Thank you very much for the photo, I must say that it is a fine picture of you.

Somewhere in Belgium  
Jan, 11/16

Dear Lillian;-

Just a line to let you know, that, I received your welcome letter, and as usual was glad to hear from you again, also to hear, that all at home, were in the best of health.

Well Lillian, I was glad to hear the concert was such a grand success. Yes Lillian, I received your photos, which I think is just fine, you certainly took a good picture. I also received Leah's photo, which I think also is good.

I don't just know if there is much news, I can tell you this time, news seems to be rather scarce, as I wrote to Leah yesterday, and told her all the news, but probably, I can scrape together news, enough to interest you.

Oh! By the way there is certainly class, to your stationery

The weather to-day is grand, just like November weather. It hasn't been very cold here, as yet, although, we have had lots of rain, which keeps the air, damp and chilly. My mail seems to be coming along alright now, even better than when, I was England, if you address my mail to the address, that, I will give you at the end of this letter, I will receive my mail alright.

I received Leah's card saying that you all were going to spend Christmas in Toronto. No doubt you all enjoyed yourselves? I received a letter from "Eimest Meechs," Dave's brother, the other day, with the invitation to spend a dew day with them, at the first opportunity. They live in "London," you know. I think it was very nice of him to extend the kind invitation to me. I intend to write him, soon.

Well, yesterday was Sunday, and moving day, we changed bullets you see every day, is a work day on active service. We marched fifteen miles in heavy marching order. We are up pretty close to the firing line, about three hundred yards back from of the front line trench. There is a battery, that a British battery just back of us, that has been doing some heavy shelling pretty nearly all day.

This morning was sort of a busy morning. I was busy cleaning my rifle, and cleaning my one hundred and twenty rounds, of ammunition.

I received a letter from Geo Henley, also a little letter from Mamie Adams.

Well Lillian, as I have told you all the news. I will draw this letter to a close, hoping this letter will find you all well, as it leaves me.

Hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain  
Your loving brother,  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855  
No.3 Coy.  
P. P. C. L. I.  
B. E. 7.  
France

Somewhere in France  
Jan. 19/16

Dear Lillian;-

I thought I would write you a letter, in answer to the letter and card that I need from you yesterday, well I was sure glad to hear from you again, and to know that you all enjoyed yourselves on Christmas Day in Toronto but in Leah's letters she said that mamma feel down the stairs at Aunt Fannies and sprained her wrist + grazed her face which would be very painful. I hope that it will not develop into any serious, as their accidents sometimes do. Write often and on and tell me how her injuries are. I do hope she will be all better now.

Talk about an "avalanche" of letters, I got four letters and four cards yesterday from home, I sure was glad to get them, I assure you.

I am enjoying the best of health, at present, so tell mamma not to worry.

I suppose you had a good time, when you went to Whitby, with the rest of the bunch.

There was quite a number of soldiers in that concert wasn't there. "Glenn" Henry sent me a photo of those that took part and also the program and names of those that took part in the concert. It was a fine picture, I must say, the costumes must have been grand, there are quite a few faces that I don't know.

You certainly got a lot of Christmas presents, didn't you, old "St. Nick" was good to me, even if I was away, out here, I think I told you all about it in another letter home. I got Marion's parcel, and Leah's photo. I wrote a letter, thanking Marion and Auntie. I sure would like some ice-cream, I haven't had any since I left "Montreal."

No Lillian, they don't censor your letters. I think that only censor out going mail, and mail from soldiers at other points, along the line that come into their camp.

That family where, I spent such a nice time in England, have written on two or three occasions, they have offered to send me anything I want, they are going to send me some papers. I write to them quite often.

Well here, I have been writing the last twenty mins, and haven't given you very much news, but I must try, and give you a little news, that will interest you, perhaps. We are at present, in tents, eight men, to a tent. Our regiment has just come (down from the line) from the trenches, two companies, were in support trenches, and the other two, in the first line trench. Our company, was in the support trench. We had quite an interesting time, the last day or so, that we were up there. The "Bosches" sent over about a dozen shells, that dropped quite near to our dug-outs, which we had to vacate and make for a safer point, as we had no come back. They say the shells were fired from a "German" armoured train. Then, the other night, quite a number, of erratic shots, were fired over our way, either from a machine gun, or a rifle battery. I don't think they had us marked, but I think they were erratic shots, the tendency is to shoot high at night. Believe me, things were quite interesting for a while, but after a while we were able to return to our old position, and they never bothered us any more that day.

Well Lillian, as I have told you all the news, that is possible for me to tell, I will draw this letter to a close.

Hoping this letter will find you all well, as it leaves me, and hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain,

Your loving brother (Willie),  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855  
No.3 Coy. No 12 platoon  
P. P. C. L. I.  
B. E. 7.  
France

Somewhere in Belgium  
Jan. 28/16

Dear Leah;-

Just a line, to let you know that I received the "Christmas" edition, of the "Reformer," the other night and was sure glad to get it, as, I am always glad to get the local paper and the "Onwards," as we get quite a bit of spare time to read, especially when we are in reserve, or resting up, and any reading matter is welcome then.

Oh! By the way, Leah, that box of apples that you ordered from "Burlington," to be sent out here arrived yesterday in the best of condition, and sure was glad to get the box, and while I am here, I wish you to know, that, I think it was very thoughtful, and kind of you, to send me them as they were grand, the fruit was packed good, and the fruit was good, and sound, when the box arrived. I sure enjoyed the fruit as did the rest of the boys. I want you to know that I appreciate your kindness very much, and thank you very much. I pretty near gave up all hope of ever receiving the box. You know, I thought it would come through the "Stores Dpt," and I have been inquiring nearly every day, for the last week of the "Quarter-Master Sergeant" to see if it arrived but, as I said it arrived in the mail yesterday.

Well Leah, since I wrote you last our company has been up to the trenches, and did the required time in the trenches. The life in the trenches isn't too bad, from my experience, in fact, life, in the trenches, is just what a person makes it. It was rather quiet during our time in the trenches, altho' there was quite a lot of artillery fire, during the day, + the most of the rifle fire, machine gun fire, was done at night, by both sides.

The "Bosches" sent over a few rifle grenades, and trench mortars, but, I don't know as there was any damage done. We lived like "kings," while, we were in the trenches, that is, in the eating line. We were paid ten framed (two dollars) a couple of days, before, we went to the trenches, so we blew it pretty nearly all in on eats, such as sardines, pickles, pine-apple, pork and beans, ect. and we sure did enjoy them.

The trenches were pretty fair, also the dug-out two men to a dug-out, we weren't allowed to take off our equipment during our stay up there, so just imagine sleeping with your boots on and equipment with one hundred-twenty rounds of ammunition, and smoke helmets. So by the time we came out of the trenches and landed back in our reserve billets, we were glad to get our boots and equipment off, so as we could have a good nights rest.

We are in the reserve billets at present, but expect to move back to the resting up billets soon, they say, we have a fifteen mile march, over cobble-stones, in heavy marching order, before, we arrive at our billets.

Well Leah, here, I have been writing away like a race-horse, for the last half-hour, and I guess you will think, that, I am never going to stop. So I will just draw this letter to a close quietly, hoping this letter will find all at home in the best of health, as it leaves me at present, also hoping to hear from you again soon.

Remember me to all

I remain,  
Your loving brother (Willie),  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855  
No.3 Coy.  
P. P. C. L. I.  
B. E. 7.  
France

Xxxxxxxxxx

Somewhere in Belgium  
Feb. 8 1916

Dear Leah;-

Your welcome letters, of Jan, 6 + 13 arrived here about a week ago, along with the S. School papers, + quarterly, also the local papers. I was indeed glad to hear from you, also to receive the papers, I was also glad to hear that all were well.

Marion's letter arrived the other day, one from Eddie + Mervyn Saunders, one from Ethel Warne, and Frank Greatrix, as you see, I hear of what goes on in Canada. I have answered them all, but yours, and Ethel Warne's so you see I am pretty nearly caught up again. In the letters that Marion wrote to me she sent the picture, of Willie Garrow's children, in England, and she asked me to write a line to them, so I think, I will try, + drop them a line soon.

The letter which Eddie Saunders sent he enclosed two photos, of myself, which was taken the last day, I was in civilian's clothes, which I think was not too bad considering the fact that I wasn't as good looking, as I am now, Ha! ha!

I was sorry to hear that, Harold Luke, had such a cold, but, I hope, he is better by Christmas. I was glad to hear, that, you all had such a good time the night you all went over to "Whitby" but the 84<sup>th</sup> were certainly trounced in good style. I hear you, and Lillian are in strong with Sgts. Granell and Currah, two of the 84th Sgts.

You were asking me, whether, I ever got tired of marching, of course there are times when one feels kind of tired, but, I must say that there are few, if any, drop out on the line of march, and we have some real stiff marches. The marches are kind of tiresome, especially when shifting billets, and you have no idea where your new billets are, then march on and on say probably for three and four hours farther on, then suddenly a house or barn appears in sight, and you think that probably this is your new billet, but you come up to the house, and march past the house, and so it goes on, and you hope that the next house is your billet and you march past, that until probably one hears that the billet are three or four miles farther on. Was rather hard marching at night, the roads are so bad, especially the shell town roads, that have holes, about eighteen or twenty inches deep, then there are the roads that are ankle deep a road, so we do mostly of our marching, in the daytime, only when we march to the support trenches, you see there all roads that troops cannot march up in the daytime, on account of being in full view of the enemy.

I saw quite a number of Oshawa fellows yesterday, they were out on a route march with their brass band + marched past our billets. There was "Tommy Sheridan, Henry Hag(the rest is cut out), "Milt Oster" and "Danny Shea". I looked for "Bob Holdaway" and "Bill Arnold" but it seems that "Bob Holdaway" has received promotion from Sgt. to Quarter Master Sgt. but as for "Bill Arnold" I don't just know where he was. Then the other day I saw "Albert Foster" as we were coming in from a working party. The other day, we had brigade sports and of course there was great doings, I heard that our regiment won nine prizes which I think was pretty good.

I was glad to hear that you all were so well remembered at Christmas you sure got lots of presents.

That letter that was in the "Free Press," to Kel. Herrington's parents was certainly lovely. I was sorry to hear that Mr. Bull had been hurt.

Remember me, to Mr, Lott, + all inquiring friends. By the time you receive this letter you will know that I have received your photo + Aunt Fanny's parcel, also Majorie Hutchison's parcel.

I was glad to hear that you all had such a good time, that night at our place.

You were wondering why we were going back to France, but you see we are near to the frontier, and probably, when we are in the trenches at Belgium Flanders then when we do our time in trenches we come out and go back to rest billets in French Flanders. Do you see?

Say Leah, if you wouldn't mind would you please send out some candies, mixed candies, the kind we used to get at Woolworth's, such as peppermints, humbugs, acid drops, etc. The peppermint + humbugs help to keep you warm especially in the trenches or on sentry go.

Well Leah, as I have told you all the news, I will drop this letter to a close.  
Hoping this letter will find you all well as it leaves me, + hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain,  
Your loving brother  
Pte. W. J. Garrow  
No. 475; 855  
No. 3 Coy.  
P. P. C. L. I.  
B. E. 7.  
France  
XXXXXXXXXX

Somewhere in Belgium  
Feb. 11 1916

Dear Leah;-

I received your welcome letter, of Jan 21 last night, + was sure glad to hear from you again, also glad to hear that all your colds are better,

You wrote that letter on one of the nights when I was up in the trenches and probably you were writing that latter as I was doing my sentry go in the early hours of Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan. You know the time out there is about five hours ahead of the time in "Ontario" province

Well Leah, I really don't just know what to write about, as there is the second letter, that, I have written to you this week + there seems to have been no interesting happenings since I wrote you last. But probably I can think of something that I will prove, to be of some interest to you. I wrote and told you all the interesting happenings, that, had happened up till last Tuesday, so I will not review them in this letter.

For the last three or four days we have been having rather an easy time especially in the daytime as we are not allowed out of our billets during the day. As our billet is in plain view of the enemy, if we should expose ourselves the enemy would soon start + shell us, so you see if any work has to be done, we do it at night. Our platoon has been carrying rations every night, up to the front line trench, of the fellows up there, every night. I was on guard the other day, along with two other fellows, we each do two hours on and four hours off. It was sort of a guard to alarm the fellows, in the billet, if there was a gas attack also to sound the alarm if any aircraft were near, and see that everybody is under cover, and as there is a road that runs up past our billet, to the trenches, the road is known as "Suicide" Road which nobody is allowed to go up during the daytime with the exception of artillery observers and we challenge everybody travelling on this road, at night.

I just heard the other night, in fact it was last night, that a well known "Canadian" regiment were shelled out of their billets by German shells, the first night in the midst of their billets they say, you could hear the screams of the men as the shells burst among there it sure must have been an awful experience. I suppose you will see by the casualty list, that a number of "Pats" names have appeared in the casualty list so you see that we have been in action.

So Mr. Neuton has resigned his position as organist. Really, I didn't believe he would last long, as I heard in a latter sometime ago that he offended quite a number of people + failed to show any tact whatever.

So "Bill" Eaton is leaving Oshawa + the town sure will miss him.

I received about six letters yesterday in from "Rhea Croskem, "Olga", Irene Mitchell, Majorie Hutchinson, "Dave" Meech and one from yourself + in every letter you all mentioned that Mr. Garbetts had enlisted if that is the fact you all will sure miss him.

So you are sending me a box of good things well believe me I will have both eyes open really to receive it I sure will be glad to get it.

So Harold Luke, has been granted leave, he sure is lucky, we were kept right down to business, when we were at Shormecliff and we were on brigade duties most of the time. I delivered you message to "Archie" this morning + he says he will be pleased to hear from you.

I was glad to hear that you have got a new hall seat + mirror as the hall sure did look vacant without it.

I will be pleased to have you send the program of the "Revenge" it sure must have been a grand success as Mr. Hemley wrote + told one all about it, + he was sure it would be a success, as he had confidence in all that were taking part in it to make is so.

Well Leah, here I have been going along like a race horse for the last hour + no doubt you will be thinking that I am never going to stop.

So I guess I had better draw this epistle to a close, before you call for "Help"  
Hoping this letter will find all, in the best of health, as it leaves me at present.

I remain as B 4

Your loving brother, Willie

P.S. Remember me to all No 475; 855 No. 3. Coy.

(WJG) xxxxxxxx (No 12 platoon) P. P. C. L. I. B. E. 7

France

Somewhere in  
Belgium Flanders  
Feb. 21/16

Dear Leah;-

I received both of your welcome letters, one from Jan 29<sup>th</sup> + Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> also two packages of local papers containing the "Onwards" + the two programmes. I sure was glad to hear from you again, but sorry to hear that you haven't been feeling well, but hope, you are better by this time.

I don't feel extra well to-day, but I guess I will feel better by to-morrow. You see we had a inoculations parade yesterday morning + it has made, we fellows kind of out, of sorts, it has rather a sickening effect on one, anyway, we are excused from duty for the next twenty-four hours, so that isn't to bad.

By the way, I received your parcel last Sat. night + I think you very much for it, it contained the very things I was in most need of. I must say that the boys + myself certainly enjoyed the wafers. I was really in need of the soap, + the tooth powder, also the brush. I'm sure it was very kind of you to send it along, + I thank you all very much, I also received a dandy box of good things from the "Beatrix" family. It contained candy kisses, scotch mints, candles, peanut bars, oxo cake + two writing pads, this is some of the paper, that I am using. I have to write to them yet to thank them all for it. Basil's parcel hasn't arrived yet but I expect it will arrive anyday now.

Well Leah, we have been up to the trenches again, since I wrote you last, that is the front line. The trench our platoon was in was not very good, badly drained, + in some places caved in. The dug outs were not very big + four of us had to squeeze in where there was only room for two, but anyway, we made the best of conditions, + I guess, we didn't get along too bad. The bay in the trench, that we four were holding was only fifty-five yards from the German front line, pretty close eh? In some places the trenches were only thirty yards apart, that is near the "Glory" hole, it was at this particular point, where the "Bosches" exploded two mines that killed a large number of Canadians.

We had good food rations up there, our cooks, were right up in the trenches with us, + we had hot meals, + believe me it was good, that, we did, for we kind of had a bad spell of weather it rained, snowed, + hailed during our stay up there. But the cooks had piping hot tea for us, all through the nights, + it sure went good. We had quite a lively time up there, the "Bosches" sent over everything imaginable, with the exception of gas. They sent over rifle grenades, trench motors, rifle bullets, machine gun, + rifle grenades + minnow wurpers?, but of course we retaliated with what we had. We had quite a few casualties, in fact, we lost some of our best men. One poor fellow was shot right through the head, as he was doing patrol duty in front of the lines. We were certainly sorry to lose him as he belonged to our platoon, and I don't believe that I ever saw a frown, on his face. It is certainly pretty risky doing duty in "no mans land" for if a flare is sent up and the Bosches see anything moving they open fire at once. Many a man is caught when one of these flares go up (that make night into day) The best way to do is to either fall flat on your face and remain motionless or you happen to be standing up at the time when the flare is sent up, it is best to cover up your face and try to get yourself in such a shape that you will look just like an old stump of a tree.

We are present resting up, but expect to go up the line soon again, but I think it will be a different part of the line. It is kind of cold to-day, it froze quite hard last night.

Say, I was sorry to hear that Aunt Nellie had lost her brothers. What regiment was he in, I sure would like to see his grave, if I knew where he was buried, or if I knew what regiment he was in, I could probably find somebody that knew him. I was also sorry to hear of Walter Carter's death.

So poor Robbie has had pneumonia. I hope he is better by now.

By the way, I was glad to hear that you received the cheque of my assigned pay. What was the amount? It should be fifty dollars \$50 for the two months.

I found out when the other boys enlisted, it was July 29th of last year, and I enlisted Aug 30th.

I guess those songs that Lillian bought are good, in fact I know one of them quite well, that is "Till the boys come home" It is very pretty and makes quite a march song, the troops sing it quite often, and I have also heard some regimental bands play it.

I will send my badges back home this week, that box, I think, will be alright.

Well Leah, here I have been writing away here for the past hour so I think it is time I called a "Halt!" So I will bid you "Au Revoir"

Hoping this letter will find you all well.

I remain  
As B.4.  
Your loving brother  
Willie G  
No. 475855  
No. 3 Coy  
P.P.C.L.I.  
B.E.F.  
France

"Somewhere in  
Belgium Flanders"  
Feb. 26/16

Dear Leah;-

Your welcome letter of Feb. 8th arrived here last night and was sure glad to hear from you again and also to know that you all are well, as I am at this time of writing.

I was glad to hear that your concert was such a grand success as I was sure it would be.

I will certainly be glad to get Aunt Ratie's parcel as I am pretty nearly run out of socks and handkerchiefs so if you will send it along, I will be very much obliged.

You were asking me to make out a list of things that I would like you to send out, well Leah, I am pretty well fixed in the way of clothing, but, I wish you would send out some gum, candies, biscuits and cake as I would appreciate them very much.  
Send out some of those candies we used to get at Woolworth's.

So Charlie Cassels has been trying to enlist.

By the way, I received a post card from Lance Cpl. Harold Luke last night and was sure glad to hear from him.

We are having a little winter weather these days, there is quite a covering of snow on the ground.

I have been getting lots of mail lately, I got a letter from "Greta" Coody the night before last and I card from "Harold" and a letter from Marion Campbell last night.

Well Leah, I didn't get your letter finished last night, something turned up, and I had to leave it, well, I have had breakfast so I guess I will be able to finish it, before noon.

It is kind of thawing to-day also raining which makes things rather disagreeable.

Say wasn't that sad about Mrs. Geo. Hezzelwood. She certainly was a lovely lady.

I sure would like to hear you sing some of the new songs of "Lillian's"  
So "Lillian" has been playing most of your accompaniments.  
I am glad to hear is, I think I will have to work her overtime when I get back as I haven't had a good sing-song since I left "Oshawa"

There is one fellow in our platoon that had a grand silver tenor voice. His name is "Vernon" her used to sing in "St. James Cathedral Male Quartet" Toronto, along with Dr. Albert Ham's son. This fellow "Vernon" and myself have a few little duets. He sings the tenor and I sing the baritone. You ought to hear us sing "The Rosary", "Love's Old Sweet Song", "Sweet and Low", and "Battle Eve" and quite a few others.  
Our voices blend well to-gether even if I do say so myself.

Another fellow and myself have just had some nice fried cheese which sure went good.  
We fellows here sure make some great fancy dishes in our spare time.

Well Leah, there seems to be very little news this time, so I guess I will draw this letter to a close.  
Hoping this letter will find you all well, as it leaves me and hoping to hear from you soon again.

With love and kisses to you all,  
I remain  
Your loving brother

Willie

P.S. I will look up my badges and send them at the first opportunity.

Somewhere in  
Belgium"  
(Flanders)  
Mar. 1/'16

Dear Leah;-

I received your welcome letter and "St. Valentine's" card about one hour ago and as usual was pleased to hear from you again, also to know that all are well, as you say there has been such a terrible amount of sickness in "Oshawa" but it seems that we have always been fortunate enough to escape sickness and I hope that we are always that fortunate.

Well, I am still numbered among the living and enjoying the best of health altho for a few days I was troubled with a sore shoulder which gave me quite a lot of pain, but I did not parade sick with it. I used an embrocation which seemed to do it good, anyway the soreness has all left it. Perhaps I should not have told you about it, as probably you will be worrying, but there is no cause for alarm, as I said before it is all better now. So don't worry yourselves.

This has been a real fine day, just a dandy day for the first day of March.

A regular "Spring" day as one would say. It has been quite warm.

I feel just like a "spring chicken" this was a 'bath day' to-day.

We paraded to the baths and had a real good shower bath, a clean suit of underwear, clean topshirt and also a clean pair of socks, so I just feel like a new man as it was the first bath that I have had for five weeks.

It is great to have such convenience and accommodation as baths, cinema shows and "Y.M.C.A.'s" such as we have out here, as we are not very far from the firing line and we are able to get hold of some real good "Canadian" newspapers from the "Y".

Did I tell you that I received a nice letter from Greta Coedy, last week, and it seems that she has been very busy, they are busy at the "office" where she works and she is also taking piano lessons.

She has also been sick, but she is better now, she was saying that she received your "photo" alright.

By the time you get this letter you will know that I have received both yours and "Basil's" parcel.

I received lots of mail to-day, your postal card, and Lillian's letter, also yours and yesterday I received "Lillian's" postal, a letter each from "Jean Garrow" and "Majorie Hutchison" and "Rhea Croskem".

You don't know how delighted I am to get mail.

I must get busy and answer the above mail, I have three letters to answer.

You see, I have to have sort of a letter writing bee when I write as sometimes we get in places where we don't get the time to write, so that is why I write in bunches and I guess some of my letters are rambling affairs.

The "Oshawa" boys here are all well I see them all quite often altho "Bill French" (**You will meet him later**) is in another platoon, but in the same company and "Bill Bowden" was away taking a machine gun course at headquarters but he is also back with the company, but not in the same platoon as ours, now "Walt Hobday" is taking a grenade course but he expects to be back with the platoon in a few days.

I sure will be glad to get those socks that Mrs McLaughlin is knitting, also the pairs that the girls at the factory are knitting for we fellows and I will certainly see that the bunch get their share.

Say, that certainly was sad about Little Murray Drew also Hugh Parks.

I guess I told you that I received a card from L/Cpl Luke. He expects that they will soon be moved out here. He says "Piph" "Ab. Trull" and Don Gliddon are all fit and sent their best regards to the bunch out here.

I was glad to hear that Mama was feeling alright and better of her injuries, also that "Papa" has steady work.

I must say that we have steady work out here, sometimes we think it is too steady but of course that is only when we feel tired and of course one cannot help being tired once in awhile.

What in the name of thunder is the matter with our choir, is that they don't like the organist, or is that there is nothing interesting about the work which they receive there.

I was glad to hear that the second production of the "Revenge" was such a grand success.

You asked me how many days we stayed in the trenches and how many out?

Well Leah, I am afraid I cannot answer those questions, as the censor would only cross the answer out, or my letter would be destroyed, and probably mean a "court martial" for me, so you see we have to be careful what information we let out.

You see it just like this, if we were to give out the dates and time that we went into the trenches or how many days we stayed in the trenches, our letters, if passed, might get into the hands of some of our enemies spies and they would send back their report to their headquarters and the enemy would be waiting for us and probably shell the road or communication trench that we might use and they would know the time we would enter the trenches.

So you see, we have to be careful about what information we let out as it might prove disastrous to our regiment it is was overlooked by the censor.

So I am sorry I cannot answer your questions, but you know the circumstances.

We Leah, I guess I will draw this epistle to close as I have told you all the news that is possible to tell you this time.

Hoping to hear from you soon again, also hoping this letter will find all well as it leaves me.

I remain  
Your loving brother  
Willie

"Somewhere in Belgium"  
April 2/16

Dear Leah,

'He comes up smiling' I am still numbered among the living and enjoying the best of health and hope you are all enjoying the same.

Well Leah, I was sure glad to get your letter yesterday and I hear that all were well.

I also received the parcel that the Ever Ready Bible class sent through you to the "Oshawa" boys here and I must say for the rest of the boys and myself included that it certainly was very thoughtful and kind of your class to remember us fellows over here and we only hope that the time will soon come when we will be able to repay you all for your kindness.

Up till last week I received very little mail and it seems the Canadian mail was help up for one reason or another.

I did hear that our mail was quarantined but however the mail is coming along pretty good now.

I received quite a few letters the past week, a letter each from the following: Frank Greatrix, Mrs. Cook (Eng), Rhea Croskem, and Orma Wilson, also quite a number of S.S. papers that I distributed among the boys.

Then I received two parcels, one from Marion containing chocolate, gum, orchard drops, assorted candy. I received her parcel when I was up in the firing line and I sure did appreciate the box very much.

The other parcel I received the other day from "Glen Henry" to we fellows from the "Sunday School"

It contained sardines, oxo, butter, soda biscuits, ect.

I gave the other boys their share and they thought it was nice of the school to remember us.

We are certainly being well taken care of by our dear friends at home.

The boys along with myself will write a letter back to the school in a day or two.

As I said before, I rec'd very little mail up till last week for about the whole month of March. I only got about two letters and one was from England.

Since I wrote last, we have been up to the firing line again, making my fourth trip in.

We went to a different part of line and there was only about ten dug-outs in the whole of the line that our company held, so you see we scarcely got any sleep at all, and we struck bad weather, cold and rainy which made it a hard trip in.

Our regiment had very few casualties and of course we are thankful for that.

We have been out of the trenches quite a little while now and we are at a camp quite away from the firing line, but still within hearing distance of the big guns.

I have kind of good news to tell you and I have rather blue news to tell you.

Well, I will tell you the blue news first because it happened first.

Well Archie has left us, he was sent to England to a hospital to get treatment for a goiter neck, we certainly miss him as he sure was a live one. I don't believe there is any cause for anxiety on the part of his parents as the last letter he wrote he was feeling pretty good he said, and anxious to get back here, but of course he must stay in England until he is fit to come out again.

Now for the good news, and you cannot guess what it is.

Well the other afternoon when I was going to the wash house for a wash, I happened to look around and who do you think I saw? No, you don't know.

Well if I didn't see three good old friend of mine "Ab Trull", "Percy Pipher" and Harold Luke, and you can just bet that we glad to see each other again, in fact it was quite a "re-union" for us.

That same night, the four of us from Oshawa in my regiment went over to their camp and went for a long walk, and of course we talked over good times, then we went to a moving picture show and saw some real good pictures, including "Charlie Chaplin"  
We were over to them three nights hand running and I guess we would still be going over to see them but they moved away the other day.

I must say that the three of them look as if the army is agreeing with them.  
Percy Pipher is still as fat as ever and the two look well.  
I saw two or three other Oshawa fellows in the same regiment as Harold is in.  
One fellow's name is Bouckley, he lives about a block south of us on Albert Street.  
I will sure be glad to get that piece of Xmas cake from Mrs. McLaughlin.

I certainly was sorry to hear of the death of Florence's baby.

Well Leah, I believe I have told you all the news so I will draw this letter to a close, hoping to hear from you soon again.

Remember me to all.

I remain

Your loving brother

Willie

xxxxxx

"Somewhere in Belgium"  
May 1/16

Dear sister Leah;-

Your welcome letter arrived here last Friday, and I was certainly glad to hear from you once again, also glad to know that everybody at home was well.

Really Leah, this is certainly a grand day, the sun is shining brightly and everything is so fresh looking that is to say everything has life to it.

This must have been a magnificent country in peace times, especially in mid-summer weather like we are having now.

Well Leah, I am still numbered among the good looking people that exist and getting better looking every day Ha, ha! Still enjoying the best of health that is to say, "born 1895 and still going strong, - Johnnie Walker"

I wrote to Aunt Katie yesterday and to "Glenn Henry" also a letter of thanks to Mrs. Trew for the cookies.

I got a letter from Greta Coedy the other day, also a short letter from a girl friend of hers, that works in the same office as her.

She likes her work fine, and she received another raise in her salary.

She is also quite a land shark, as she has bought some real estate in Detroit which is a pretty good investment she says.

By the way, I saw some Oshawa boys the other night, namely Milt Oster, "Bob Holdaway" Bert Farrow, Mrs. Farrow's brother, also "Bob McKie" who used to stay at Mrs. Geo. Salter's on Richmond St. He used to be in the fire brigade.

I was asking "Bert Farrow" if he knew where Robbie Garrow was and he said that he saw him quite often in England. He has joined the "engineers" by what this Farrow boy says.

Another fellow that used to be in the "engineers" but who has transferred to our regiment and was in the same company as Robbie was, was saying that he met Robbie and was asking for me.

I was glad to hear that the Boys Conference was such a success.

Herb Cook and Skinny Mitchell would certainly make a hit in fact, I supposes everybody in kakhi(? that's how it's spelled) would.

So, I have still some impersonaters back in Oshawa, The little Mackie boys.

There are certainly nice little children, in fact the whole family are nice.

I will be on the look out for that parcel, as it should be here any day now.

The only thing that I am afraid of is that you all are spending too much money on me.

I don't want you to do that, as I would sooner be without these good things, than have you spend so much money on me, because I don't want to sponge on nobody unless I am really in need of it.

But really, you always send such lovely parcels, provisions that have that touch and taste of home, which are right royally welcomed.

Your "Spring" opening of the store must certainly have been lovely.

Your description of the decorations was A.1.

Tell Lillian when she writes to "Gertie Forward" to tell her that I sent my best regards.

Well Leah, I believe I have told you all the news, so I will bid you "adieu" for this time.

Hoping this letter will find all well as it leaves me, and hoping to hear from you soon again.

I remain,  
As ever  
Your affectionate brother  
Willie

"Somewhere in Belgium"

May 7/16

My dear sister Lillian;-

I received your ever welcome letter a few days ago and was glad to hear from you again, also to get your Easter postal.

I was also glad to hear that all were well.

So you have been wondering why I haven't written home.

Well Lillian, I don't think that I have been neglectful as I have written a letter to Leah or yourself every week.

In fact, this is the third letter I have written to you and Leah in the past eight days, but I think the reason that you haven't been getting my letters is that the Canadian mail only leaves here twice a week, so probably that is the reason why my letters are being somewhat delayed.

Then again, we don't get much chance in fact, no chance whatever to write letters while we are up here in the trenches, as we generally strike bad weather while we are in doing out turn, and there seems to be no decent place to write a letter, so probably that is another reason why you haven't heard from me.

But listen Lillian, I'll not forget you and I will write to you or Leah just as often as possible.

No doubt you will think that this is terrible writing, but really I am writing away and I am all cramped up for room in a dugout with three other fellows, and we are rather crowded, in fact the dugout will only hold two comfortably, but anyway, we try to make the best of conditions.

Oh! by the way, I received Leah's parcel alright, and it sure was welcome.

I guess you will recognize the stationary as some that was in the parcel that Leah sent.

The fellows that bunk with me, certainly enjoyed the sandwich biscuits, we put them out of sight the same night as they arrived here.

Just at present, there is some pretty lively strafing going on, some pretty heavy stuff going over.

By the way, the same night as the parcel came, I received six letters and two cards. Pretty good eh?

I letter each from Majorie Hutchinson, Marion Campbell, Dave Meech, Leah's and yourself, also a card from Mrs. Henderson, and yourself, and two letters from Rhea Croskem.

Say, I was certainly sorry to hear of Eddie's sister's death.

The poor girl must have suffered something terrible.

Poor Edward, he has had no end of trouble, and he will feel heartbroken.

When you or Leah write to him, tell him that I also send my deepest heart-felt sympathies to him.

I suppose Mr. Garbutt will soon be leaving you all, and you will certainly miss him.

I wish that he was our chaplain, as I think he is fine.

Our regiment has no chaplain, but our brigade has one, quite a nice fellow.

For awhile we had quite a young fellow for chaplain, a nice young fellow, but I heard awhile ago that he was wounded while ministering to a wounded soldier.

It seems that a fellow was hit and they took him into the same dugout as the one this young chaplain was in, and while he was helping to attend to this poor wounded fellow, a shell came and went right through the dugout, and killed the fellow that had been wounded and wounded the young chaplain.

It was certainly too bad.

How did your class concert come off.

No doubt it was quite a success, judging from your programme of activities.

Well Lillian, as news seems pretty scarce, I guess that I will draw this epistle to a close.  
Remember me to Mrs. Jacobi.  
With love to you all,  
I remain,  
Your loving brother,  
Willie .G.

"Somewhere in Belgium"

May 25/16

Dear sister Lillian-

Your very interesting letter of May 2nd arrived here a few days ago, and to say that I was pleased to hear from you is putting it mildly.

So you are sporting a new bracelet, no doubt about it, but what it is a nice one.

I got your lovely birthday card about a week ago, and thanks very much for it.

We have been getting some real nice weather for some time now.

Say that certainly was hard luck about your league program, you bet if I had been home I sure would have done what I could to help you out.

How are all the folks at home. I do hope that they are all well.

I am feeling real good these days.

I suppose the 84th will be leaving Oshawa soon.

Archie is still in England, I guess it will be some time before he gets back here again.

Yesterday was Victoria Day, no doubt you had a holiday and had a good time.

I was certainly glad to hear that your class concert was such a success.

Thanks very much for the program.

So your "Easter" music was a success, I was quite sure it would be a success.

Now I suppose you are busy with your S.S. anniversary music.

I have been doing a little singing myself.

I sang at a regimental concert at the "Y" here a few nights.

I sang a couple of songs for them.

We certainly have some real good talent in our regiment.

Really Lillian, news seems scarce this time so I will draw this epistle to a close.

Hoping to hear from you soon again, and hoping this letter will find all at home in the best of health.

With love to you all,

I remain,

Your loving

brother.

Willie

xxxxxxx

P.S. I will try and write a longer letter next time and probably more interesting, but as I have told

Leah all the news in the letter I wrote to her yesterday so you will be able to get the news from her. Willie

Minister's Office  
Ottawa, June 22, 1916

Personal

Dear Mr. Garrow,-

Will you kindly accept my sincere sympathy and condolence in the decease of that worthy citizen and heroic soldier, your son, Private William James Garrow.

While one cannot too deeply mourn the loss of such a brace comrade, there is consolation in knowing that he did his duty fearlessly and well, and gave his life for the cause of Liberty and the upbuilding of the Empire.

Again extending to you my heartfelt sympathy.

Faithfully,  
Sam Hughes (signed)  
Major General,  
Minister of Militia and Defence  
for Canada

L/Cpl. W.E. French

Belgium Aug 7/16

Dear Miss Garrow;

It is with regret that I kept you waiting so long for an answer. I know the sorrow and pain which you must all feel. Each and every one of us, although we do not often speak of it, silently mourn for our dear comrades. It is hard on us, but I realize that you dear folks in Canada, have the greatest anxiety, the deepest sorrow, and the saddest loss.

I employed every means to obtain more particulars for you. Fellows who were wounded, have given me valuable information. This has taken a little time, but I am thankful that now I have a great deal of authentic news.

Your dear brother did not fall from a shell as I previously wrote. I was informed that he had. But he was in the face with a bullet, while repelling the German advance. His life was quickly robbed from him. He fell without a moan and expired instantaneously.

I can assure you that your dear brother, and my esteemed friend dies a hero's death. The fellows in the trench with him, of which few are left unwounded, laud his work to the very skies. There was no N.C.O. in that part of the trench, and your heroic brother, the coolest and most noble of his fellow soldiers, took charge. No one appointed him leader, but due to his fearless example, the rest looked to him for guidance. His noble stand heartened the rest and the German onslaught was not only checked; then, but further advance was not made by the Huns through our regiments front.

I am not allowed to mention places, or particulars of military value. But I think I can safely say, our company were just behind the front line in supports. It was these supports where the few left from the front line, strengthened by our company, or what was left of it, made a resolute stand and repelled for three days the most determined attacks.

A great deal of the praise for the successful stand is due to a few outstanding men. You gallant brother set the example of resolute steadiness, and more depended on his stand than on reinforcements. The Germans were within a few yards of his part of the trench before driven back. Their sudden rush were checked and repelled by his band at their part of the line, and several told me, Will's stand was all that served them. Everybody was all excitement and he calmed and rallied his comrades by his grand and successful stand.

Before he fell, his leadership proved successful and the line was held. It will be some satisfaction I know for you all to realize. That your dear brother did his little bit in such a splendid manner. Let the thought of his supreme sacrifice, which at least will be rewarded above if not here, cheer you all, and comfort you in your time of deepest sorrow.

Owing to the terrible engagement, the looses have been so great, that I fear personal things were neglected I would most gladly send any of Will's personal things, but I so far can find no trace of them.

The remains of our dear fallen comrades were buried in grave yards, a short distance behind the front line. In which one you noble brother lies I do not know.

If I find out any more, no matter how little, I will immediately let you know. Percy to whom you also wrote is detailed for other work and temporarily is away. He may have found out more. We will immediately write any particulars.

We feel more deeply than we can express, the sad loss you have sustained. But let us remember

God rewards the noble men.

Sincerely Yours  
W.E. French

Department of Militia and Defence  
Ottawa, October 24, 1916

From- The Adjutant-General,  
Canadian Military

To- Miss Leah W. Garrow,  
Post Office Box 214,  
Oshawa Ontario

No. 475855, Private William James Garrow-  
Canadian Expeditionary Force

Madam,-

With reference to the casualty to the deceased soldier marginally noted, I have the honour to state that the following report has been received from the Officer Commanding, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, through the Officer in charge of records, Canadian Expeditionary Force, London, England,-

"This man was killed about 2pm on June 2nd by a bullet in the head, death being instantaneous. There is nothing on record here to show that his body was recovered."

Enquiries relative to the place of burial of the late Private Garrow have not yet been completed, but you will be advised of the result in due course.

I have the honour to be,  
Madam,  
Your obedient servant.  
Frank Beard

Department of Militia and Defence  
Ottawa, July 19th, 1917

Dear Miss Garrow,-

I am today in receipt of a letter from one of the former officers of the P.P.C.L.I. furnishing me with the information on which you requested regarding the death of your brother, Private W.J. Garrow, No. 475855, June 2nd, 1916.

The letter was dated June 25th, 1917 from France, and I may add that the officer who wrote the letter was killed about a week ago.

The following is an extract from the letter:-

"No. 475918, Sergt. Lelievre No. 3 Company P.P.C.L.I. was about five yards away from Pte. Garrow when he was hit. No one else so far as he knows being near. He gives the following particulars:

Pte. Garrow was hit about 1pm near the top of Warrington Ave. where No. 3 Company was stationed. He was hit in the head by a rifle bullet during the firing, which took place as the Germans came over. He fell over, apparently killed, and was not seen to move again. he was bleeding through the mouth. The order to retire down Warrington Ave. was given a few minutes after, so no opportunity was given to examine Pte. Garrow, or to bring him out. The Germans came over the ground where he was hit and were not driven out from this part of the line.

Sergt. Lelievre remained with his company, but heard no further particulars regarding Garrow and feels sure he was killed. He knows nothing of the story of Pte. King and thinks he must have got confused with some other man. Warrington Ave. was a support trench, which ran diagonally into the front line and was held by No. 3 Company."

The letter contained a sketch of the line and marked the spot where your brother was hit.

Yours sincerely,  
Gregor Barclay