

Photocopy of letter (1885) from Private R.F. Cook to his wife re amputation of his foot after a skirmish during the march to relieve General Gordon in Khartoum

Publication/Creation

1885

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Give my love to all at home
I don't trouble about me
for I am all right.

I am getting an old friend
to write this for me as
it may awkward
writing in bed, but I
will write myself some
time.

If any change takes place
in the arrangements I
will write again.

Believe me

Your aff. Husband
R. F. Cook

S. S. Fanges
Pitkin
30.3.85

My Dearest Wife

You will be
very sorry to hear that I have
met with a sad accident
out here. On Sunday yester-
day week I was out at the
front, when we were
attacked by a large force of
Anaks. We formed square
& did as well as we could
I succeeded in beating them
off but in the fight I had
the misfortune to get a
shot through my left leg



of the horse was so much
 smashed by the shot that
 I had to have the foot taken
 off just above the ankle.
 I was sent on board this
 ship as soon as possible.
 I am doing very well.
 There is a party of invalids
 leaving here for home
 next Thursday, if all
 goes well I am coming
 with them. We shall land
 at Portsmouth for delay
 the "Tembroke Castle" is
 the name of the ship
 unless they change her
 for another one.
 The Troops out here are in
 very good health at present
 & the wounded are doing
 very well. The weather is
 getting hotter every day.
 but we are cool & comfortable
 on board the ship. I kind
 of visitors of all sorts
 General Graham has been on
 board several times &
 I can assure you we want
 for nothing. I am in
 good health myself with
 the exception of the leg I
 never felt better.

King 3rd 1966

856
Dorset

"CORONA" RAMC 469
77 PALMERSTON Rd
BARKSTONE POOLE
DORSET

Maj-Gen. R. E. Bamsley

Sir

RAMC
469

I noticed in the current issue of "Soldier" there exists a museum of R A M C relics in Aldershot!

I wondered if the enclosed letter is of interest!

The writer was my Father, who went on the march in the abortive relief of Gen Gordon, concerning which he lost a leg. His regimental number, 4954.

He died, in his 90th year, drew a pension over 80 years and while in Chetley Hospital, was presented with an artificial leg by Queen Victoria. A very active man

to have with
formed and
the club of
at acting as
to Brighton
rd and 9
in three hours,
rds.

The Capt in which I was honored to
serve five years in the first war, being
invalided from Mesopotamia and service
in India, and during the Afghan war
in 1919 also.

I would have liked you to have had
his medals, unfortunately during my absence
on service he remained and I therefore
lost contact via his new family and
all his possessions.

Believe me Sir yours respectfully

Henry J D. Cook

5th 1966

"CORONA"
74 PALMERSTON RD
PARKSTONE POOLE
DORSET

Major General R E Bamsley -

Sir

I thank you for your letter of the 5th inst, also to thank you for your kind inclusion of the photostat of which I am very proud to keep as a memento of that grand old warrior my Father.

I am now a retired Male Nurse. On the first-war outbreak, was in training at the Hallaway Sanatorium Virginia Water Surrey.

Hoping to quickly join up, went to London Inns of Court C. I. C. - university, as many more, met with

considerable frustration. - 'Come ago
in a few days' seemed to be a fairly
general advice, and thousands of
keen young men departed disappointed.
The advice to me was -

"Why not join the British Red X?"
Not to my liking, so I departed,
and in the interim enrolled in a
large Nursing Institute awaiting a
possible call, which never came!

Soon, I was sent out on a case
in Somerset. "Cerebral Thrombosis"
a retired Col of Royal Engineers
Indian Army. Amazingly enough
I some years later saw his portrait
hanging in his mess at Rawal Pindi.
He eventually died, "Hypostatic Pneumonia"
after eight months acute illness,
which then left me free to cric more

situation. I came
 seemed to be a
 and thousands of
 departed disappointed
 a year -
 British Red X
 no 3 departed.
 travelled in a
 tube over it in a

up. which I virtually did
 at Whitehall in R.A.M.C., mainly
 to keep in touch with my work, I
 had taken up.

Passing through training school and
 N.C.O's class I found myself detailed
 for duty in Cambridge Hospital
 Aldershot depot. As I was keen on
 getting away. I sent in an

application to be placed on a draft,
 The authorities were not pleased at this
 reminding me. I was foolish in

forgoing possible rapid promotion, as I
 probably was, however I found I was
 soon on draft for Mesopotamia and

sailed early in '16 on H.M.S. "Deerha"
 Arrived in Egypt, we soon moved
 off again, per H.M.S. "Delta" arriving in

Bombay doors. a brief stay in Bombay
 then embarked on a smaller ship to
 pass over the bar at the entrance to the

Shatt-el-Arab river (aboard H L Vita)
 landing eventually at Janooma on the
 Persian side.

We soon moved off, landing at final
 destination, in an old liquorice factory at
 "Marina Masrus".

This place as an hospital did not prove
 so successful as others in the area,
 for the old refining sheds made up the
 boards, but having no sides, proved very
 unsatisfactory during the appalling hot days.

It was in this area we lost England's
 finest brain surgeon Sir Victor Horsley,
 through heat stroke at "Amara".

I remained in this spot about 2 years
 being invalided to India & Malasia
 a spell at the depot at Doolali, where
 the flu spell struck, luckily I came
 through!

I went through the Cholera epidemic
 of 1919 in Bombay taking a turn both

I remained in this spot about 2 years
 being invalided to India & Malasia
 a spell at the depot at Doolali, where
 the flu spell struck, luckily I came
 through!

Small - el. One side
indicated essentially
side. (Edward & J
been moved off
taken in an old
place as an
as on hospital
old

European and Native wards.
I understand over 12,000 Natives died.
I myself dealt with some hundreds. It
was quite shocking, and the lovely
Parsel Hospital which those philanthropic
people handed over at Bumballa Hill
became more or less a gigantic latrine.
Returning to the depot, I was then
detailed for Embarkation duty at the
dockside prior to my own departure, on an
old handed over German ship renamed
'Licia'

I went into Stase Military Hospital
on arrival in England. After three months
rest returned to my old hospital at
St Ann's Bay, Cliffs Bournemouth, a
branch of the Mother Hospital in Lunenburg.
I forgot to mention, I went up to the
Afghanistan campaign in 1919. Our hospital
the 18th B.G. H. at a place named
Gharia in the Annum Hills, staying

instance.

I beg you to excuse my somewhat mixed statement! candidly, I should have made a better job of it in days of youth and pre-war conditions.

When one is getting old and infirm as I regret to say I am, notwithstanding a loss of grip on etymology, and arranging of it. Such is life, according to the planning of higher ones above!

I trust you are well.

Again thanking you for your kindness

Believe me Sir, Sincerely and respectfully,
yours Henry J. D. Cook