

# THE MURDUCK NET

*of people who have used the surname MURDUCK through the ages*

**William Edgar Elliott's  
letter to my grandfather  
William George Murduck  
July, 1918**

From P[riva]te W. E. Elliott, No. 3233397<sup>1</sup>  
12<sup>th</sup> Res[erve] B[attalio]n  
No. 5 Co[mpan]y  
Witley Camp<sup>2</sup>  
Surrey England

14 July 1918

Dear George,

Just a few lines to let you know that I am well, hoping you are the same. Well, George, I received your letter today, July 14<sup>th</sup>, and I was glad to here [sic] from you. Well, George, I think England is worst than the west be leave me. I do not like it a bit and it is so cold and wet it is just like the west. Well, Charlie your brother is in this camp<sup>3</sup>. He comes down to my hut every night. Be leave me we stick to geather pretty good. Say George, he is the only true Friend I have in this country. I would give him my shirt if he wanted it. Well George, Charlie is looking pretty good and he told me that Canada would look pretty good to him and I gess it would to. Well George, I have meet a lot of the Boys [Page 2] over here From home, and they were glad to see me. Dat Gilding<sup>4</sup> is only three huts away. Bill Applebe<sup>5</sup> is here. Art Brown<sup>6</sup>, Charlie Stabler<sup>7</sup>, Harry Abbott<sup>8</sup>, Wibern Woods<sup>9</sup>, Tom Walton<sup>10</sup> and last night I was to town and I met Rick Foster the fellow that worked over at the Brick Yard with is Brother E. Foster<sup>11</sup>. His Brother has gone back to Canada. Well George, a week ago last Saturday, Charlie your Brother and I went over to Frensham Pond Camp<sup>12</sup>. That is where we were for twenty eight days. All Canadian troops go there first when they come from Canada for twenty eight days. Well, Saturday when we went over we seen a lot more of the Boys over there From east Toronto. I will just give you some of the names of them Jim [Twylar ?], Vick Cook, Alf [Bengay ?], [Page 3] Mark Marshall, Tom [Witham ?], Simpsons Driver John Brown and there is a lot more there to But I cant give you all the names just know. Well George, we got five days leave so I went to London and I had a pretty good time. Say, it is some place Be leave me. And girls, why you can't move for them. All I could hear was hello Canada – but I kept away from them do you Be leave that George. Say I [ ? ] them in the parks till I got sick of them and [dat ?] Gilding just looked at me. He would not go near them. Say George, there is a girl down near where Charlie's girl lives<sup>13</sup> and she writes to me. The other day she sent me her picture and I don't think

much of her. She looks like a pure bronk. [Page 4] She lives at Sittingborne, Kent, England. But don't give any of that news at home, will you. Say George, I got a letter from Mrs. Best and she said she would like to see me back home again. She has moved now. I got a letter from Pearl Carlton last week and she said that Mrs. Best was over here in England. But that is a damn lie. Say George, Sid Elliott<sup>14</sup> was over at [Frenchman] Camp, but he came over here last week so last Charlie and I went over to see him and he was glad to see me and your Brother. Well George, I think this is all this time so Good By from your Friend Bill.

PS Say George, this is bad writing but I guess you can make it out all write and don't say any thing about the girls at home please.

Wm E Elliott

Bill Elliott sealed the envelope on 13 July 1918, and addressed it to

William G Murduck  
Hagerman PO  
Markham Ont Canada

and posted it as a 'free frank' letter – a "Canadian Soldier Letter".

The envelope was postmarked Godalming 7:45pm 14 July 1918, and it was back stamped at Markham on 31 July 1918.

At Markham, Hagerman and Markham were crossed out with a pencil, and Coleman was written in. The letter was re-directed to Unionville, where it was front stamped 1 August 1918. But, there is nothing on the envelope to indicate when it was finally delivered to the Coleman Post Office and placed in to my grandfather's hands.

\*\*\* Please note, punctuation has been added, and some spelling corrected, where it seemed appropriate to do so. The general tone and 'jist' of the letter and Bill Elliott's manner of writing and speaking remain nonetheless.

Bruce Murduck

27 December 2016;

updated 26 December 2016

[murduck@one-name.org](mailto:murduck@one-name.org)

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<sup>1</sup> **William Edgar Elliott, Service No. 3233397.** He was the son of William James and Isabella Elliott, of Coleman Post Office, East Toronto. He was drafted on 27 March 1918, and remained at Witley Camp until September, when he was transferred to the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He arrived in France after Armistice Day, then was returned to Canada and was discharged at Toronto on 10 May 1919, and was ever a presence in my grandfather's life.

<sup>2</sup> Witley Camp was established for Canadian service men during the war. It's located just a bit south and west of Guildford, County of Surrey, which is itself several miles south and west of London, England.

<sup>3</sup> **Charles Henry Murduck, Service No. 454705.** He was the son of George Thomas and Kate Frances Murduck. Charlie appears to have 'run away from home' to Smiths Falls, Ontario, where he attested on 26 June 1915. Once struck off strength because of shrapnel wounds received, and again because of serious trench fevers, he died in the final push for the French/German border on 11 October 1918 – just one month before Armistice Day.

<sup>4</sup> Probably **Frank Gilding, Service No. 3230517.** Frank's home was located at 1636 Danforth Ave, east Toronto, just a bit east of where Bill Elliott and George Murduck lived. Frank was drafted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1918, and died within minutes of reaching the front lines on 29 August 1918 – sitting down to rest on a packing crate, a German shell exploded and killed him instantly.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly **William Henry Appleby, Service No. 237510.** He attested at Toronto on 12 April 1916, when he was living on Ethel Avenue, Coleman Post Office, east Toronto. William H. was posted to Witley Camp in early April, 1918, at which place he remained until early November later that year. He survived the war and was discharged at Toronto on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1919.

<sup>6</sup> A total of 121 men named "Arthur Brown" enlisted for C.E.F. Service, one of whom gave his surname as Browne. At present I do not know which of these men Bill Elliott might have been referring to.

<sup>7</sup> Possibly **Charles Thomas Stabler, Service No. 665643.** This man was living at 10 Winston Avenue, Toronto, when he attested for service on 7 February 1916. He died in Buckinghamshire, England, on 21 January 1933.

<sup>8</sup> I have no idea who this man might have been.

<sup>9</sup> Nor do I have any sense of who this might have been.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, I have been unable, so far, to ascertain who this man might have been.

<sup>11</sup> It's not been possible to easily and readily establish who these men were.

<sup>12</sup> A 'Segregation Camp' designed to prevent the spread of disease from the newly arrived troops to those troops at the Reserve Battalion camps. New arrivals normally spent 28 days at these camps. Frensham Pond Camp was on the Frensham Common, a few miles west of Witley.

<sup>13</sup> 'Charlie's girl' was **Dorothy Foster.** She and Charlie became engaged to marry at Christmas, 1916. They met while Charlie was recuperating from shrapnel wounds suffered a few months earlier. Photographs of Dorothy exist, but until this letter surfaced, even the approximate location of her residence has been unknown. Unfortunately, a couple of girls named Dorothy Foster were enumerated during the 1911 Census of England and Wales living in the broad area around Sittingbourne. Which one was she?

<sup>14</sup> This was most likely **Sidney Arthur Elliott, Service No. 238115,** although I can not at this time be certain.