

## Waterloo Letter.

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FROM MR. F. W. NEALE.

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“LETTER TO MY MOTHER AFTER WATERLOO  
JUNE 20TH 1815. BROOKE PIGOT.

To Mrs Pigot  
Belvedere Street  
Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England  
Post Paid to Dover—.

Antwerp, June 20th 1815, Tuesday

My dear Mother.

No doubt you will see by the Gazette that I am amongst the Wounded in the first days action on Friday the 16th. You have no occasion to make yourself the least unhappy about me as my Wound is in a very fair way. We marched from Belle Croix on Thursday to Soignes where the whole of the Brigade collected, and marched at 2 o'clock in the morning to a Town called Neville, we passed it about two miles, when we pitched our Tents, cooked our Dinners, and at 4 o'clock proceeded to the scene of action, to join Blucher, and the Prussians who were hard at it from 7 in the morning. All the time we were getting our Dinners we heard the engagement going on, and saw the smoke from the Cannon. Our Brigade, the 30th, 33rd, 69th and 73rd, the rest being Hanoverians, Dutch and Belgic Troops, arrived in the Field about 5 o'clock. The French occupied a very strong position, an immense Wood, they say extending 20 Miles. No doubt Lord Wellington was taken by surprise, as he was at a ball, it is reported,

when he received the intelligence the Enemy was so near. We had to march full 20 Miles to the Field and a very hot day. As soon as we arrived on the ground we were ordered to advance upon the Wood, the Enemy keeping up an immense Firing of Cannon and Musquetry. We were ordered all to lie down in the corn which was full six feet high thinking they would come out of the Wood, but no thank you, they knew better and as we lay down we lost a great number of Men killed and wounded. We were then ordered to advance, but again halted, the 30th Regiment was taken to the rear to cover the Main Road, the 33rd and 73rd deployed into line and gave a well directed Fire, but the Enemy posted so strong, and the corn preventing them being seen by us, took our poor Fellows down like bricks falling. The 69th were order to the left, and moved into Line and fired, then formed square, expecting Cavalry upon us. None however came, we again formed line and fired, and retired to another part of the Wood, left entirely to ourselves, no Regt. but the brave 42nd being at all near us, and them a good distance off from us. We formed line, and commenced firing upon them, when the 8th Regt. of Cuirassiers of French Cavalry came out of the high Corn down upon us, before we could break into open Column and form the Square. The Grenadiers commanded by Lt. Harrison, the first Company by Brevet Major Lindsay, the 2nd by Lt. Pigot were almost to a man either killed or wounded, the Rascals crying 'Vive l'Empereur.' I will tell my tale first, I was crying 'Come on 2nd Company, Come on,' when I was cut down with a sabre by one of the Rascals, left for dead, and the horses riding over me, the old 42nd and Genl. Halkett's Regt. of Rifle Corps advanced upon them with a good fire, when the Enemy retreated upon full gallop, again riding over me, and several of our men the same

with me. I was some time before I came to myself, and one of the men said 'oh, Mr. Pigot, how you are bleeding' not knowing I was wounded. As soon as I thought they had got far enough away I got up and joined the 42nd and went down to the Village with them, and was taken to the rear, and dressed by a Dutch Surgeon, our own not to be found anywhere. That in less than five minutes we lost more than half our men. After being dressed, I was taken to *Janappe*, a village about three Miles from the Field, by Sergt. Graham and Captain Hall. The next day, they were beating us terribly, when all the Wounded and Baggage were ordered to Brussels. I rode in one of the Royal Train Waggons. On Saturday night we were ordered to retreat to Antwerp, the Enemy advancing upon us. A great number of French Prisoners coming into Brussels, a cry was raised the French were down upon us. No one ever saw such a scene. Baggage thrown from the horses into the river, officers galloping to get away, Carts, Waggons, Artillery, all thrown into the River, Soldiers, Women and Children and all this caused by Some Persons crying the French were in Town. Such a train of Baggage you can scarce form an idea of, it extended more than 12 Miles, a great number of officers have lost all theirs but mine came safe yesterday. Major Lindsay was taken Prisoner, they took his Watch, Epauettes, Sabre and Belt from him and then they saw they were pursued and could not get him off, one of the French Dragoons turned back and cut him down with his sword at the back of his head, and over his eye, but he is doing well, and is with me here. I am worse all over my body with the horses riding over me twice, I am black, blue, and green. I lost my cap and sword. Lt. Wightwick who was supernumary officer to the Company I commanded died on Saturday of his wounds, Colonel

Morice was killed on Saturday Major Walton has his horse shot under him, and was wounded himself, Sir Wm. Allen, Sir Thomas Picton, Duke of Brunswick, Sir Henry Clinton all killed, Lord Uxbridge, Sir Colin Halketh wounded and several others too numerous to mention. You may imagine when I tell you our Brigade was 2000 strong and now only 200 remain. It is reported 210 pieces of cannon are taken from the French by Wellington, and Blucher, Genls. Carnot and Vandamme taken Prisoners with 15,000 Frenchmen. We expect some of them through here to-day. The 25th Regt. left here last night for Brusselles to escort them. They never fought so well in their lives. Bonaparte's carriages are taken, and he is said to be wounded. Lord Wellington & Blucher are following them up and they are in full retreat. The officers of every Regt. say they never saw such a fire as they kept up on Friday. They gave it us famously the two first days but they are getting it now. Those who are spared ought to be very thankful which I am. With my very best love to you all, I remain your dutiful Son, Brooke Pigot.

P.S.—I shall send this by the Country Mail here paying Postage to England, and on Thursday shall write by the Military Mail.”

