

## Gen Sir Neville (Gerald) Lyttelton (1845-1931)

1st Accession

- 1 1899 Dec 26 Maj-Gen Edward Stuart Wortley, Chieveley Camp. Natal to Reggie [Reginald Talbot]. His account of the battle on the 15th [the Battle of Colenso]. Blames Sir R. Buller and praises Lyttelton. Situation as he sees it and difficulties of fighting Boers. Talk with Winston Churchill who had just escaped from Pretoria. MS 8 pp
- 2 [1900] Jan 28 Fred Talbot, Tugela River, to his mother. Copy [in Helen Talbot's hand]. Crossed the Tugela River [on Jan 15th?] and waited ten days for Warren to appear on their flank. Described battle [Spion Kop] as seen through glasses from distance of 5,000 yards. Boredom of soldiers. MS 5 pp
- 3 [1900] Jan 29 Fred Talbot to Arthur [Wigram, his brother-in-law]. Pencilled note in another hand 'this is Edith's husband'. Copy [in Helen Talbot's hand]. Boredom in camp waiting for action, relieved by firing naval guns and Howitzers; the effect of lyddite. Pluck of Boers during Warren's battle [Spion Kop]. Recent skirmish between Boers and 60th [Rifles]. No one knows of another attack will be made. MS 4 pp
- 4 1900 Feb 2 Dick [Ellison],<sup>+</sup> Modder River to Mrs. Talbot. Boers 5 miles north; no useful fighting; unpleasant country; news that Lord Roberts is arriving. Believes troops need to be independent of railways to fight where advantageous to them rather than to Boers; thinks free states are getting war weary. MS 6 pp
- 5 [1900] Feb 4 J.G.T.\*, Camp by Tugela, to his sister. Copy of part of letter [in Helen Talbot's hand]. Events at Tugela River, Buller about to make final attack on the following day at 6 a.m. If Ladysmith is not relieved war will be prolonged. Confusion of command between Buller and Gen Sir C. Warren led to latter's defeat. MS 4 pp
- 6 1900 Mar 17 [Brig-Gen] J.R.P. Gordon, Bloemfontein to General [Talbot]. Is happy that 9th and 16th Lancers are in his brigade. Advance from 11th February leaving Modder River station. Horses suffering through lack of fodder. The Free State will not bother us much in the future, though Transvaalers say they will fight it out on the other side of the Vaal River. MS 4 pp
- 7 1900 Mar 18 Telegram. General French, Bloemfontein, to General Talbot. "All thanks you wish you with us French". Printed & MS 1 p
- 8 1900 Mar 22 Helen J.C. Talbot, Glenhurst, Esher to Cousin Reggie [Reggie Talbot]. Enclosing unspecified papers he might like to see. War Office report that Freddy [her brother] had been taken prisoner, now contradicted. MS 1p

+ Probably Captain Richard Todd Ellison, elder son of Colonel Sir Richard George Ellison and Amelia Todd, who was in the Second Life Guards. The family was related to the Chetwynds who were related to the Talbots.

\* Possibly John Gilbert Talbot 1870-1937; son of John Talbot and nephew of Lyttelton.

## LYTTELTON

- 9 1900 Mar 26 C. Miles, Cavalry Barracks, Windsor to General [Talbot]. News from Carter and Henderson. Reports that General French has praised the Household Cavalry Regiment. Suprised that Brab and Basington have had their brigades taken away. Other general news. MS 4 pp
- 10 1900 Apr 1 [Sir] N[eville] G. Lyttelton, Colombo, to Margaret [Talbot]. Account of Val Krantz. His temporary replacement of [Lt Gen Sir C.F.] Clery and news of being given command of the fourth division. Progress of Eddy [Stuart-Wortley] commanding 2nd Battalion of his regiment. Death of Aunt Jane. Afraid he will be asked to command at Pretoria after the war. 'Buller and Wilson have been worth their weight in gold'. MS 6 pp \*
- 11 1900 Apr 1 Eddy [Stuart Wortley], Camp Colenso, Natal to Margaret [Talbot]. Condolence for death of Aunt Jane. Relief of Ladysmith due largely to Lyttelton. General confidence in Buller has been lost. Foresees rows between Buller and Warren over Spion Kop; between Long and Buller over lose of guns at Colenso; between Buller and White over former's order to make terms with Boers after Colenso and between Buller and Roberts. Pessimism that Buller's next move will ignore straterical considerations. Problems surrounding a settlement. Battalion that formed part of Ladysmith garrison very weak and many ill from enteric and dysentery. MS 10 pp  
[Pages 1 and 2 lightly crossed through in pencil.]
- 12 [1900] Apr 9 Freddy Talbot, to Elanderslaarte, to Reginald [Talbot], his cousin. Hard time setting to Ladysmith. Hart's madness; his order of attack on Pieters hill which Lyttelton luckily stopped. Lyttelton very popular and has been given fourth division. MS 4 pp
- 13 1900 Apr 22 [Sir] N[eville] G. Lyttelton, Ladysmith to Peggy [Talbot]. Full description of the Natal campaign with detailed analysis of Colenso, Val Krantz, time taken to reach Ladysmith, Spion Kop, etc. Criticism of Hart and Buller and comments on other senior officers. MS 8 pp
- 14 1900 Aug 14 F.W. Kenner [?], Ford's Free State Hotel, Winberg to Genral [Talbot]. Details of his march from Kapper River on 28 April, joining Ian Hamilton's force, and going to Bethlehem. Minor Skirmishes. Sad to hear of Dick Ellison's death. MS 4 pp
- 15 [1900?] Oct 3 Z. Ryendfer [?], near Greylingstad, Transvaal, to General [Talbot]. Is in charge of Intelligence for General Clery of an area between Heidelberg and Newcastle. Thinks prolongation of war possible because radicals may come in and give better terms. Lord Roberts orders about transportation have hindered a surrender; only shortage of Boer ammunition will stop war. Admiration of the Boer as a fighter. Thinks lightly equiped mounted troops with mounted guns should scour country whilst infantry hold railways and supplies. Glad to hear Edward Talbot has been given the Regiment. MS 10 pp

\* Part of this letter describing how a bullet nearly missed Lyttelton is quoted in his biography "Eighty Years" on page 226.

## LYTTELTON

- 16 1900 Nov 1 [Sir] N[eville] G. Lyttelton to Middelburg to Reggy [Talbot]. March from Natal via Lydenburg and Pilgrims Rest to Middelburg, with occasional encounters with Boers. Buller improved lately - 'More so stratigically perhaps than tactically'. Praises Knox of 18th Hussars. Difficulty of using cavalry to advantage, and need to use mounted rifles. Feels Boer families have been treated too well by soldiers and will turn wives out to the nearest commandos. Has been offered command of Pretoria, where an enquiry revealed mass bribery and corruption. Hopes Talbot's sciatica is better. MS 11 pp
- 17 1900 Nov 10 [Brig-Gen] J.R.P. Gordon, Pretoria, to General [Talbot]. Arrival in Pretoria with French, 1st and 4th Brigades and 400 infantry after march from Machadad. Describes command arrangements of Brigades. Boers are breaking their oaths of allegiance and returning to fighting. Future career; hopes to qualify for an Indian command. MS 4 pp
- 18 1900 Dec 22 R.L. Adlereron, Costabelle, Hyres, France, to General [Talbot]. News of men in his company. Recounts different aspects of the war as he sees it, from service under Gen Hamilton, Gen Hunter and Gen Broadwood, including cavalry, food, ammunition, infantry, transport, Boer method of fighting. His bullet wound and treatment and insight into the Boer character; Boer feeling against De Wet; the loyalty of the British subjects. MS 10 pp
- 19 1901 Jan 3 [Sir] N[eville] G. Lyttelton, Middelburg, to Peggy [Talbot]. Has accepted command but does not expect to take it up yet. Recent Boer attacks by night; carelessness of some of the officers. [Gen] Roberts departure overdue. New methods of fighting being adopted, and farm burning given up. Peace committees formed amongst captured Boers who surrender. K[itchener] of K[hartoum] will court martial soldiers who surrender easily. His step-mother very ill. MS 4pp
- 20 1901 Feb 17 [Col T.C.] Porter, [Commander of 1st Brigade of Cavalry Divn], Trematon Castle, Saltash, Cornwall, to General [Talbot]. [Gen] French has been success of the campaign; recognition due to Tucker and others not always well paid; despatches will cause arguments; Sir Ian Hamilton and Pole Carew unduly pushed. Jealousy between infantry leaders and cavalry commanders. The effect of Boer gunfire, future of cavalry and the diminished importance of shock tactics; uselessness of carbine and sword. MS 8 pp
- 21 1901 Mar 8 Gordon Carter [written] 'between Luxor and Assonan', to General [Talbot]. [Copy]. Criticisms of a note in the United Services Magazine February 1901 that mortality amongst horses in the war was due to bad management of the officers. Deaths in fact were mainly due to exhaustion, caused by insufficient food and water; forced marches were necessary to relieve Kimberley and stop Cronjje at the Modder, both of which led indirectly to the relief of Ladysmith and Mafeking. MS 8 pp [The address, signature, and other parts of this letter have been crossed out in ink].

## LYTTELTON

- 22            1901   Mar 21   [Sir [Neville] G. Lyttelton, Bloemfontein, to Reginald [Talbot]. Since last writing considerable changes in plan have taken place. Left Middelburg to direct operations against De Wet, then threatening to invade Cape colony. Subsequent events and escape of De Wets men. Is now in command of Northern part of Orange Colony and will have headquarters at Springfontein. Recounts episode of trial under martial law of some Dutch Colonials; feels there will have to be more to prevent train wrecking. Consumption of horses during chase after De Wet. Comments on those who have done well. Plumer and Knox the best mounted men. MS 8 pp
- 23            1901   May 24   [Sir Neville Lyttelton] 33 Grovenor Road, Westminster, S.W., to Reginald [Talbot]. Has three months leave and hoping for extension. Was doing little except direct movements of columns sweeping up the southern part of the Orange colony. Expects war to be over this winter. Honours list a fair one. Finds Buller popular with masses not with those high up who know things. Wolseley also popular and public feeling is with him in his controversy with Lansdowne although feels the latter is right. Dined with King and found atmosphere very different from last reign. [Incomplete]. MS pp
- 24            1901   Nov 8   [Sir] Neville Lyttelton, Newcastle, Natal, to Reginald [Talbot]. Condolence on death of his sister. A new phase in the war has developed with determined attacks by Boers. Loss of Benson successfully kept Botha out of Natal. Attacks on forts Prospect and Hala. Little staleness amongst the men on the columns. Over 150 officers sent home as inefficient. Battlefield of Talana; lost chance of success by [Col] Moller, 18th Hussars and Pickwood, Royal Artillery. Grieved to hear about Buller's speech. [The speech given to the Queen's Volunteers on Oct 10th, which led to his removal from office] Jack [Stuart] Wortley recovering from his wound. MS 7 pp

2nd Accession

NGL/KL/543-653 1899-1904

Copies of Letters from General Sir Neville Lyttelton to his wife. Bound volume.

NGL/Fam/388-426 1899-1904

Copies of Letters from General Sir Neville Lyttelton to his family. Bound volume.

Photocopies of Talbot, Stuart-Wortley and Lyttelton family trees.

3rd ACCESSION, AUGUST 1990.

209 letters consisting of 190 letters from Lt Gen Sir Neville Lyttelton to his wife, 1904-1916, 12 letters to members of his family, 1904-1914, and 7 from Maj Gen Sir Reginald Talbot to his sister-in-law, Katherine Lyttelton. Lyttelton's letters cover his period on the Army Council, 1904-1908, as C-in-C Ireland, 1908-1912, and include comments on military reforms, Haldane, members of the General Staff and political developments in Britain (Irish Home Rule etc). Talbot's letters cover his command in Egypt and the progress of the South African War.

NGL/FAM: 427-429, 431, 444, 446-448, 451-454 (Lyttelton to family)

NGL/KL: 654-656, 660, 663, 666-668, 677, 680-681, 685-691, 694-700, 705-707, 714-717, 719-732, 735, 737, 742-746, 748-750, 753-755, 761-762, 765-766, 768-775, 779-781, 785-791, 793-794, 805, 807-809, 811-813, 818, 823, 825-827, 829-831, 833, 836, 846-853, 856-857, 863, 872-876, 878-880, 884, 886, 888, 892, 895-896, 898-901, 903-904, 912-913, 917-927, 929-933, 935-941, 943-945, 954-959, 962-965, 974-976, 981-983, 1003, 1028, 1032, 1035-1036, 1041-1042, 1047, 1050-1052, 1109, 1111-1112 (Lyttelton to wife)

FAM/KL: 605, 638, 648, 659, 675, 725, 741 (Talbot to Katherine)

1 reel 35mm microfilm.