



Goulbourn Museum's Virtual Military Collection Tour
"Letters from the Front"

During the First World War, letters were the primary method of communication between soldiers serving at the front and their families at home. Despite both state-imposed and personal censorship, these letters offer an intimate glance into the thoughts, hopes, and, at times, heartbreak of Canadians in 1914-1918. Moreover, these letters serve as valuable primary sources for historical research.

Objective: For this assignment, you will utilize your skills in primary source analysis, and will compare either Sefton or Bill Stewart's letter with a different First World War letter of your choice. You will explore the similarities and differences in their experiences and priorities, and will assess the value of these letters to contemporary historians.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

Grade 10

- A1: Historical Inquiry: Use the historical inquiry process and the concepts of historical thinking when investigating aspects of Canadian history since 1914.
- B1 Big Idea: National and international events, trends, and developments during this period affected various groups and communities in Canada in different ways.

SUPPLIES

- 1) Goulbourn Museum's Virtual Military Collection Tour: <https://goulbournmuseum.ca/museum-at-home/virtual-tours/>
- 2) The Canadian Letters and Images Project database: <https://www.canadianletters.ca/collections/468>
- 3) Either writing tools or computer

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Go to <https://www.canadianletters.ca/collections/468>. Under the search menu, select "Collections Search". Set the following parameters:
 - a) Collection: WW1
 - b) Document Type: -from soldier.
 - c) Leave all other parameters blank.
- 4) Select a letter by a soldier who was **not** from Ontario, in order to provide further contrast with the Stewarts. *Please note: some of these individuals authored multiple letters. For this assignment, the requirement is **one letter**.*
- 5) Read both the Stewart letter you have selected and your other letter. Answer the following questions and include the following criteria.



CRITERIA

Answer the following questions in 6-8 sentences each.

1. What are some similar topics or themes between the two letters? What can these similarities tell us?
2. What are some different themes or topics between the two letters? What can these differences tell us?
3. Is there anything missing or included in the letter that surprised you? (*ie references to battle, certain questions about home, blanked out information etc*) Why?
4. Compare the dates of the two letters. How might the similarities or differences between the two letters be impacted by the dates they were written?
5. How might any similarities or differences between the two letters be useful to historians of the First World War?

Extension Activity:

1. After conducting research, write a response letter to **either** Sefton/Bill Stewart or the other soldier.
2. Be sure to incorporate at least **ten researched historical facts** in your letter, to support the wartime experience of whoever's perspective you are writing from.
3. Be sure to include proper citations.
4. Be sure to write your letter in the contemporary language of the time (ie no modern terminology or slang).