

Field Marshal Lord Harding of Petherton (1896-1989)

Lord Harding prepared the following autobiographical notes in instalments in 1974, which he sent to Hanna Nicholas

**ASSORTED ARTICLES, LETTERS, EXTRACTS:
LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR, ANTONY HEAD, LATER LORD
HEAD 1955:**

Secretary of State for War
War Office
Whitehall
SW1

My Dear CIGS

Tomorrow you hand over and I want to tell you how much, on both personal and official grounds, I shall miss you at the War Office.

You have been an outstanding success as CIGS during a difficult and arduous period for you and I have encountered nothing but wholehearted and enthusiastic agreement in this respect.

It has been a great achievement on your part and I have indeed been fortunate. But beyond that, by your very straight dealing and excellent relations with all spheres of Government you had done an immense and incalculable amount of good to the Army's standing and prestige. I doubt if the Army has ever had a better ambassador among the potentates of Whitehall.

Personally I can't tell you how much I have appreciated your absolute straight dealing and candour with me or your unfailing courtesy and consideration for a much younger and less experienced man than yourself.

My only regret is that more of the measures we both knew to be desirable have not been put into effect; and that was my fault.

The country has asked a lot of you now and I still feel it may be more than should be demanded of anyone after all you've given. Their excuse can only be that they have given the most vital job to the only man in whom they have full confidence.

No CIGS has had a wife who did more for the Army than Mary and I am to some extent aware through Dot of all it owes her.

I wish you both the very best of luck in Cyprus and the hope that it will prove more tractable than present circumstances suggest. You will I hope not fail to let me know if at any time there is anything I can do to help in any way.

I shall be thinking of you both very much in the future and shall always look back with both pride and pleasure on the time when I worked with you.

Yours ever,

Antony Head