

From CONWAY, Sunday 21 January 1759

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Sluys, 21 January 1759.

Dear Horry,

I EXPECT to be abused, at least I deserve it, for having let so many days go without writing a line to you, being with new people in a new place and in a new situation. The very truth is that though I have been idle in fact, I have been intentionally the best correspondent in the world and have not writ to anybody literally to nobody but Lady Ailesbury and my letters of business.¹ But it has happened to me as it generally does, I believe, to those in business, that I make bad calculations of my time and the business itself, which is little, appears still less till one sets about it, and then one finds it multiply under one's hands and fill up the time of the post to the last minute.

I landed at Ostend on the 14 in the morning² after a most excellent passage of eleven hours, found no difficulty at all at the place, had few questions asked me, and after making my bow to the lieutenant de Roi³ who commands there, came away for Bruges in less than half an hour with three French officers⁴ who were going to join Monsieur du Barail there,⁵ having with great regret left my

1. To Vct Barrington, Secretary at War. Conway's official correspondence, in the Public Record Office, W.O. 1/863, ff. 487-576, includes letters dated 19 Jan. 1759 (ff. 487-90) enclosing a list of ranks of the army and ransoms (ff. 491-7); 24 Jan. 1759 (ff. 499-502) enclosing a draft of the treaty and convention (ff. 503-28); 31 Jan. 1759 (ff. 535-8) enclosing a copy of Barail's letter of 31 Jan. to Belleisle (f. 539); 4 Feb. 1759 (ff. 541-3); and the cartel 6 Feb. 1759 (ff. 545-76).

2. 'Ostend, Jan. 17. On the 14th instant a vessel arrived from Dover with two English officers [Conway and, mistakenly, Baron Dieskau], in quality of commissioners, who went directly to l'Ecluse in Flanders, to confer with Marquis de Baraile, Governor of Dunkirk, concerning an

exchange of French and English prisoners of war' (*Daily Adv.* 27 Jan.; see also Conway to Devonshire Jan. 1759, Chatsworth MSS, 416/59).

3. Louis Guiguer wrote Barrington from Ostend 10 April 1759, 'I have made my visit of ceremony to Monsieur de St Aldegonde, the Lieutenant de Roy, who commands here, during the absence of the Governor Monsieur Le Comte de la Mothe' (W.O. 1/863, f. 601).

4. Not identified.

5. 'Brussels, Jan. 14. The Governor of Dunkirk went yesterday to Sluys, to negotiate the exchange of French and English prisoners, in conjunction with an English officer commissioned for that purpose' (*Daily Adv.* 24 Jan.).