

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1914: Yesterday Germany declared war on Russia.**

**No letter from Arthur to Dollie today. On this date in 1914 Arthur and his fellow Territorial officers were busy preparing to leave London for their annual training camp. War with Germany was just two days away. Writing to Dollie one week later - a week that was to change everyone's lives for ever - Arthur reflected:**

“Darling it seems ages since this time last week. Do you remember Sunday how sweet you looked when you came to Waterloo to see us off. God bless you, dear soul, and may He watch over you. I pray for you and for us always...”

**Tomorrow, bank holiday Monday [3<sup>rd</sup> August], the Territorial troops will depart from London, to a rapturous send off from the general public.**

**3rd August 1914: Germany declares war on France**

**On Tuesday August 4<sup>th</sup> at 11pm, Great Britain officially declared war on Germany, but it wasn't until August 5<sup>th</sup> that Arthur was able to find time to write to his sweetheart, Dollie. The Territorials have been posted as guards on the Eastleigh to Basingstoke railway line.**

**In his letter of 5<sup>th</sup> August, Arthur gives Dollie a detailed account of his duties with the Territorials, starting with their deployment on Bank holiday Monday (3<sup>rd</sup>) – the day before hostilities officially commenced:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station

... On Monday [3<sup>rd</sup>] we had a very busy day: all the men had to be medically examined, have their kit inspected and kit bags labelled, and identity discs and cord issued to them. They also had to be fed and organised. Everything was done at some schools near Edward Street, which is now our depot for forwarding on late arrivals etc. I also had to get the guns and equipment completed and ammunition issued.

At 6.30 we marched out down to Waterloo. The streets were full of cheering crowds waving flags – very inspiring but rather an encumbrance at times. We got to Waterloo about 7.30. The platform was covered with all our stores etc all sorted out. So after the men had had issued to them a blanket and a waterproof sheet they lay down and slept. We entrained about 10.30 and got off about 11.15 .

On the way down we stopped off at our various posts to discharge the platoons allotted to them; **Evie** was dropped off at Farnborough. **Edouard** at Winchester Junction (a signal box where there is a branch line two miles north of here). I got out here [Winchester main railway station] with the Headquarters lot, unshipped my guns, got my men sorted out and packed away in the ticket office which is their present sleeping quarters. We officers, the Colonel, Adjutant, Medical Officer, myself and young **Reeves** – who has just joined us – hang out at a little commercial hotel called the “Eagle” down the road – a dirty spot, phauh!

I got down there about 4.30am: had a cup of tea and then turned in by the Colonel's orders...

**4th August 1914: Britain declares war on Germany**

**On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August at 11pm, Great Britain officially declared war on Germany. It wasn't until 5<sup>th</sup> August that Arthur was finally able to write to his sweetheart Dollie. In this second extract from his letter, Arthur gives an account of his activities with the Territorials on the first official day of the war:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station

... Up again at 6.30 – brekker at 7. After brekker I inspected the rifles of my men – then the Brigadier arrived in his inspecting car. **Livingston**, who has charge of this section of the line, and I then tramped up to **Edouard** inspecting all his sentries and patrols. I gave him your news and then we tramped on up **Rochford**'s section – another 4 ½ miles of track – inspecting his sentries and patrols, showing them what to do etc.

We reached the end of his section at a place called Itchen Abbas at 3 after 4 hours walking; found the local inn – the “Plough” and devoured cheese and bread with a glass of Shandygaff. Then we boarded a goods train back.

We then took off our things and slept for an hour, had a meal at 7. Then we came back to the station. I and young **Sorley** had to go down the line so we commandeered a pilot engine and did the job. I then hoped to be able to get to bed but orders came down that we were officially mobilised and I had to go up again to **Edouard** and **Rochford**.

So after waiting three quarters of an hour for the engine to coal and oil up, I commandeered it again and went up to them. **Edouard** was dead tired and rather miserable. I gave the message and got back here at 1am, went down to our sleeping place and found myself locked out. However after sundry rappings and ringings I managed to arouse the local landlord and got in...

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**5th August 1914**

**The day after official mobilisation; Arthur finally has time to send Dollie a letter, describing where he and her brothers are stationed. Dollie has already written to Arthur twice. It would seem her Mater had a narrow squeak returning from France; Dollie's eldest brother Ludovic Noel and family live in Paris:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station  
Wednesday afternoon 5.20pm

First of all thanks awfully dear for your two sweet letters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, both of which arrived safely. I was sorry to hear about **your Mater**. I hope she is recovering from her experience on Dieppe Pier. I have been wanting to write to her to welcome her home, but I am up to my eyes in work. So please remember me most kindly to her and ask her to forgive me until such time as I can write to her. Please thank her very much for her kind message...

This morning I got up at 7.30; had brekker then up to the station. It has been a pouring wet day. **Livingston** and I again went up to **Edouard** this time by a train, had a look round his place – everything dripping, but he had slept a certain amount and was happier. Then we plodded up to the end of his section – about 3 ½ - 4 miles and back – in the pouring rain, inspecting the patrols and the sentries. We all got wet through – puttees and all. So on the way back **Livingston** and I stopped a train for part of the way.

When we got in we changed and had lunch. After lunch I came up to see about my men's quarters, then inspected their rifles. After that I dozed for about three quarters of an hour; then had a cup of tea and here I am, dear, sitting in what was the Ladies First and Second Class Cloakroom, but it is now HQ of No3 Coy, writing to you, little girl.

Well, darling we are living in stirring times – though I wish I was with you, sweet heart. I miss you terribly. I am glad I have your photo... I wonder how you are getting on. I hope everything is alright with you dear. I feel anxious a bit sometimes. I do hope you really are perfectly well. By the way we are sure to be here for another fortnight, I think. So will you please write here as usual dear. I long for your letters day by day ...

**6<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Arthur is so busy he hasn't written home to Hampstead yet; he longs for his daily letter from Dollie:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station,  
Thurs. evening 9.47pm

...Just had a very strenuous day and am still in the thick of it – so please excuse a very short note. I am feeling a bit anxious as I have not heard from you today – I do hope everything is all right with you dear: mind you let me know at once if they are not. You are always in my mind – I do miss you terribly.

This morning I was busy in the orderly room: had a rifle inspection at 12. This afternoon I went up with **Livingston** to inspect **Rochford** and **Edouard**. Both are very well and shaking down rapidly. When we got back I went over to see my machine gun men. They have been moved out of the station to some schools near by.

Back to the station and a lot more to fix up. Then food. Since when I have been telephoning up and down the line and have just seized a few minutes to write to you darling. I received your letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> this morning, sent on from Camp. Thanks awfully dear. I pine for your news. Write as fully as you can that I may picture you in my mind what you do. I have not yet been able to write home.

Last night I slept here – quite well in spite of the trains roaring through the station. Well, dear little girl, time for Goodnight. I do hope and pray everything is all right with you ... Remember me kindly to your Mother ...

**7<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Dollie has been to a wedding; the Mater has recovered from her ordeal:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Eagle Hotel,  
Winchester.  
Fri evening 9.25pm

Thanks awfully for your sweet letter which reached me this morning. I do love to have your news dear and am all expectancy every morning to get your letter.

Last night I slept up at the station again and shall do to-night. Luckily I am perfectly fit and sleep like a top. How did you get on at the wedding: I hope everything went off all right. What dress did you wear dear. I'm sure you looked perfectly sweet. I am glad to hear good news of **your Mater**, little girl; I'd write to her only I have no time...

This morning I had a Machine Gun parade most of the morning. Then lunch. Then the Brigadier came along. After that I had a rifle inspection then there was a lot of odd things to do. We got down to supper at 8.0 Then **Livingston** and I went to call on a man but he was out, so I seized this opportunity of writing to you before going up to the Station.

Well, sweet heart, I can only hope and pray that you're well and happy. It seems ages since I saw you last. And now I love to think and think of you and try to picture ourselves once more together again...

**8<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Arthur sleeps at the station, despite the thundering train noise; he finds a moment to write home; the weather is awful, but the separation from Dollie is worse:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Saturday after. 5pm

Thanks so much, dear, for your sweet letter which came this morning. I'm sorry, sweet heart, to hear you're not very bright ...

Last night I slept up here in the station again in place of **Guy**: and slept awfully well D.G. considering that the trains are thundering through every few minutes about twenty yards from my head.

This morning, as it was pouring (which has continued all day). I had my Machine Gun parade in the little wooden school where they are now quartered, from 9.25 to 12.10. Then I got back to lunch. This afternoon I had a rifle inspection, then some various odd jobs. I wrote to **the Mater** and here we are.

The weather is most depressing: thank god I am perfectly well. But I ... miss you more than I can say... I'm awfully glad I've got your photo with me. It cheers me up ... I do hope you really are all right. I pray for you every day.

Remember me most kindly to **your Mother**. I only wish I could thank her personally for all her kindnesses to me...



**9<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Dollie wants to do her bit for the “Old Country”; keeping a brave face; Arthur’s mother is worried for her sons:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Sunday afternoon. 4.25pm

Thanks awfully, dear heart, for your long letter of yesterday which turned up this morning. I love you, dearest ... I am awfully proud of you darling for your spirit: you have cheered me up a lot. I have been very anxious about you dear: I have been worrying about you and **your Mater**. It is a very great relief to know all is well there.

As for your doing something for the Old Country dear ... by far the hardest and best thing for you to do, darling, even if it is the simplest, is to stay with **your Mater** and bear our separation bravely. We must all show the stuff we’re made of these days, dear and keep up a brave front, however sad and lonely our hearts may be within. So thank you dear for the ribbon: rest assured I will prize it and bear it as bravely as any knight of old bore his lady’s guerdon.

Though Sunday, we are none the less busy. Last night I slept at the hotel once more and had a very good sleep. This morning I went to Mass and Communion at 8 at the local Catholic Church. Brekker about 9: Parade 10-12.15; lunch at 1; parade 2.45 to 4.15. Now I am writing: afterwards I shall go to the station (I am in the school) to get some tea, if possible: supper at 7. And this evening **Major Samuel** and I are going down the line. I got a short note from **the Mater** this morning; she is a bit dull over the war. I must write to her again.

Well, heart of my hearts, main spring of my life, au revoir. Remember me most affectionately to **your Mater**...

**10th August 1914**

**Arthur tries to calm Dollie's fears of their being posted overseas; Dollie visits Arthur's mother at the Grove; a narrow squeak on guard duty; what a difference a week can make:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Monday afternoon. 4.57pm

Thanks so much for your long letter of last night: I do love to get your news. I hope you weren't too tired writing it... Be brave dear, you have it in you: you are the pluckiest little spirit in the world. As for our serving abroad, dear heart: I honestly don't think you need fill your head with fears about that. I shall not go unless it is a question of force majeure: and I don't think it will be that as besides our Regular Army we are recruiting a Second Army: besides that the Colonies are sending at least 48,000 men who have already been accepted for service in Belgium not England.

There remains only the Territorials who are required to garrison the Old Country: so really, I don't think you need have any apprehensions, darling. As for the length of the war, the more decisive it is, the quicker it will end: besides, I don't see how the Germans can carry on war without food and money...

I am sorry to hear about **the Mater**: poor Mummie dear, she is living through strenuous times. I'm awfully pleased you've been to see her darling, thanks so much. I have pretty nearly all I want here, dearest, but for you. I am dying to be with you again. Write and let me have the news dear, about **Dick**, if you've got it. I should like to know what he is going to do.

Last night **Major Samuel** and I did a five mile walk down the line and back, visiting the sentries. We were out from 10 till about 1.30. I laughed so once: a sentry challenged **Sammy** and he called out "visiting rounds". The Sentry no wise placated was ready to go for him. We asked the Sentry why afterwards and he said he thought the Major had been speaking in a foreign tongue. It might easily have been no joke as the Sentry had his rifle loaded and bayonet fixed.

This morning my fellows were all on guard so I just had a rifle inspection at 12. This afternoon a parade from 2.45 till now. And then I hope some tea. I missed it yesterday as the Refreshment Room was shut.

Darling it seems ages since this time last week. Do you remember Sunday how sweet you looked when you came to Waterloo to see us off. God bless you, dear soul, and may He watch over you. I pray for you and for us always...

11<sup>th</sup> August 1914

**A long night march to Basingstoke; a brief meeting with brother Alfred; Major Samuel is in charge of the Company; Arthur longs for Hampstead and home:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Eagle Hotel  
Winchester  
Tuesday afternoon 5.40pm

Thanks awfully for your dear long letter of yesterday afternoon. I got it first thing this morning with a letter from **Dick**. He doesn't give very much news. I'm glad all your folks are well, and as happy as anyone can be in these days of crisis. Please thank everyone for their kind enquiries and tell **your Mater**, dear, that I appreciate to the full her daily remembrance to me.

It is very very hot to-day and the flies are a pestilence. Last night **Wheeler** came down from Waterloo where he is stationed, being on the staff. After supper **Major Samuel** and I went up to Micheldever – where **Gilbert** is – by train. We got out there and walked along the track to Basingstoke. We left about 9.35 and didn't get to Basingstoke until 2.45: so you see it was a pretty long trek. The going by the railway was very rough and we had to traverse 3 tunnels. On the way we had to pass **Alfred's** section: we saw him – he was looking rather tired. When we got to Basingstoke we found we had to wait until 4.08 for the next train back. It was bitterly cold there was a very damp mist. At 4.08 we boarded the engine of the newspaper train and got back here about 4.45. Thence to bed. I got up again at 8.30 – brekker and parade 9.30 – 12. Lunch at 1, parade 2.45 since which I've had a shave and tea: but am feeling weary and very hot.

**Gilbert** is going up to the Depot, as we call our old HQ at Edward Street, for a bit: I think that he has been rather overworking himself. **Sammy** is going to take over his company. There is no more news as to how long we are going to be here. The secret of the movements of British troops and ships has been awfully well kept and it is difficult to find out anything. I know however that part of our Regular troops have been in Belgium for 10 days.

Well, dear little soul ... what is dear old Hampstead like in war time ... and the streets we've so often walked. How I love to imagine myself once more at home ... and to picture us two together as we were ten days ago. Times have changed indeed and though this war has been forced upon us, we must take it cheerfully as the hand of God and show the metal that we're made of – you dearest, watching and waiting at home, doing the daily round cheerfully, though your heart may be sad – and I, tramping the line by night, drilling my men by day – both of us ready to accept bravely whatever God may send us and to do our duty by the dear Old Country.

I love you heart of my heart, more than I have ever loved you before ... Pray for me dearest, as I pray for you that, though our hearts ache with longing for one another, we may take our duty bravely and cheerfully with both hands.

**12th August 1914**

**Dishonesty in the Ranks! Brother Dick visits Alfred on the line; pistols are issued to the officers; no hope of leave for celebrating Dollie's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday; friend Pulman is to marry next week:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Eagle Hotel  
Winchester  
Wednes. even. 8.57pm

Thanks awfully for your dear letter which came first thing this morning. Please thank your **Mater too** from my heart for her hand note...

This morning after breakfast I had a parade from 9.30 till 12. Then I did some pay things for **Guy**: counted out over £100 in loose silver. Then lunch at 2.15. After lunch **Guy** and I went to his Platoon headquarters, **Edouard, Rochford** and **Crichton** to take them their men's money. Back and had a shave then a cup of tea, while I typed out some things. Then I had to pay the people at Headquarters. I was angry. I paid part in £1 notes. By mistake I gave one man £4 instead of £3. We found out when we came to add up at the end – we checked the numbers on the notes and found that this fellow had notes numbered 031, 033 and 034. Number 032 was the missing note. However he was a dishonest rogue and swore that he hadn't got it. So of course we had to let it go at that and I had naturally to find the £1. However...

Next dinner and here we are. It has been boiling hot – the flies are beastly and the station possesses no natural or artificial beauty either in itself or its surroundings. **Dick** apparently took Billy the bull terrier to **Alfred** yesterday. He didn't however come on to me... That, dear, exhausts most of my news. Did I tell you we had all got pistols – quite small little things. We've all got the same – a Webley 32 automatic.

...As to leave. I don't think there's any hope of getting this for your birthday. The C.O. has given **Pulman** leave to go to Maidenhead next week to get married, but down here it is extremely difficult to get leave even to go into the town. The C.O. won't even let the medical Officer, who loafs about all day, go up one day to town to see how his practice is getting on. So I'm afraid darling, there's not much hope. It seems strange that we should be separated again on your 21<sup>st</sup> as on mine. But it is God's will and perhaps He is preparing some great reward for the pain of our separation now.

As for coming down dear, I don't think anything can be managed for the next two or three days - the trains will be nearly all troop trains. What passenger trains there are are hours late and crammed to overflowing, luggage vans and all. However I believe **Mrs Livingston** is coming down later on. We are very busy, but perhaps something might be fixed up – though the C.O. is not keen. When we go to Aldershot in about a fortnight I certainly hope to see you. So, dear heart of mine, we must go on bravely facing the uncertain future with a smile upon our lips ...

**13<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**The officers' horses are on their way; more men arrive; hopes for families to visit but the train are a nightmare:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Thurs. evening. 7.12pm

Thanks so much for your sweet letter of yesterday. I have not got a horse yet: **Moreing** is still collecting them at HQ. At any rate it [would] not be of very much use down here.

**Guy** has just told me that his wife and **Eugenie** [Noel] are going to try and get down here to-morrow by an 11.30 train. I don't know how they'll manage it. All ordinary passenger trains have been cancelled – there are two or three a day, fearfully overcrowded, always an hour or so late. Apparently, too, the Stationmaster does not know how any trains are going to run tomorrow. If they come it will probably mean a motor. As for your coming down to Fleet, I should love it and think that I should be able to manage it. Perhaps too you might be able to come on to Winchester to see **Edouard**. He is only a mile or two up from here, in a very pleasant spot and one can easily get a taxi here out to him. However, dear, these things are on the knees of the Powers that be – still, dearest, here's hoping and longing.

Last night I was up till 11.15, sorting out some Yeomanry that arrived from Somerset. There are a lot more coming in tonight. This morning I had a long parade and put some of my men through another test. Since lunch I have not been doing much – I slept a bit and filled up some records. Supper tonight is at 8.

Thank heaven darling I am very well – though it is intensely hot and the station and its surroundings also dull, hot and dusty. I simply long to see you again, dear heart, I wonder how soon. The time passes slowly without you ... God bless you dear and keep you safe and sound in good health and in good spirits... it is such a comfort to me to know that your staunch spirit is with me ...

**14th August 1914**

**Dollie's sister in law arrives in Winchester with a message for Arthur; poor Arthur is feeling the heat; the C.O.'s wife pays a visit:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station,  
Friday afternoon 5.41pm

I am sorry to hear you're not feeling quite up to scratch. Poor darling, if wishing and hoping could do it, you would be freed from your pain immediately...

Meanwhile, dear heart, I wrote to you yesterday about your coming down. **Eugenie** and **Mrs Livingston** are down today but I have not seen them yet. They arrived during our lunch and went to **Edouard** with **Guy** to have lunch there.

Last night after supper, I helped to detrain some Yeomanry fellows and then turned in about half past ten. To-day has been another scorcher. I have had rather a sore tonsil, from the heat and dust I think and so have not left the station. It is feeling better now D.G. I have been gargling and hope to have it alright by to-morrow. So to-day, dear I'm afraid, there's not much news. **Mrs Howell** came down to lunch in the C.O.'s motor. I miss you more than words can say, little darling: I long to see you again.

Apparently after being here for another fortnight we go to Pirbright, near Woking, for training under canvas and then perhaps into barracks at Aldershot. At any rate I shall be nearer to you and hope to see you oftener; hurray!

Darling mine, cheer up. There is a fine poem in this week's Punch that you should learn – by Owen Seaman; buy it. Well dear little heart, heaps and heaps of love...

PS: **Eugenie** has just given me your message, hurray!

**15th August 1914**

**Arthur and Dollie make arrangements for her visit next week; meanwhile thousands of troops are passing through Winchester:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station,  
Saturday afternoon 5.41pm

Thanks awfully for your long letter and the welcome news it contained. As for your coming down to Fleet next week-end: **Evie** had to come down to Winchester this morning about a man of his and I spoke to him about it. Apparently there is a small place where you can put up near him at the station there and I'm sure I could make some excuse to get up there for the weekend or at any rate for the Saturday.

About Tuesday or Wednesday, darling, it is rather difficult to say which is the better day... As for the trains – the passenger service for next week is unknown at present to any of the railway staff here, even to the Station Master ... At any rate I'll let you know as soon as I can find out, dear, for I'm dying to see you.

Last night **Eugenie** and **Mrs Livingston** stayed to supper and caught a train immediately after. I went up the line with **Sorley** to met **Edouard** at 10pm. But he was late at the rendezvous and as a storm was beating up, we returned without seeing him. It thundered and lightened badly for a bit but then cleared up. Today however we have had a steady downpour and a most depressing one at that – however it's all in the days work.

This morning being the Assumption I went to Mass at 7.15. I'm awfully sorry darling little girl that I couldn't get a note off this morning. I had an early parade which lasted all the morning. This afternoon I have not been doing very much. I typed out my orders for my section, had a rifle inspection and read the paper – also explained to the C.O. the working of our pistols. After I've finished this I hope to get some tea, then I'm going to try to get to Church for Confession.

The troop trains are hurtling through every few minutes. Thousands must have passed – so far about 730 train loads have gone down this way. It's awfully hard to realise things as they are ... and [I] find it awfully difficult sometimes to bear things cheerfully. But I suppose God's will must be done, and we must steel ourselves to say bravely "not my will but Thine be done"... I think of you always and pray for you, as I rejoice to think, you think of and pray for me.

**16<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**More arrangements for next week's visit; Dollie's brother Edouard is most friendly; Church parade; Arthur is unbearably homesick and missing Dollie:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station,  
Sunday even. 9.47pm

Thanks, dear, so much for your letter of yesterday. My tonsil is quite all right again D.G. About Wednesday, dearest, as far as I can see, it will do better than Tuesday as there is a chance of **Guy** going to town that day and if he does, **Edouard** will probably come in here for a day or two. I'm afraid I can't let you know about the trains as yet darling, but hope to be able to to-morrow.

This afternoon I footed it out to **Edouard** with **Guy** and **Sorley** at 3.30. We stayed with him to tea. The others came back about 10 to 6, but I remained talking to **Edouard** until 7.20 – which explains why I did not write to you earlier. We talked over various things including your coming on Wednesday and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Edouard** was most friendly and didn't want to let me go. I think that I shall be able to get along all right, as I [have] already written. Of course, if the worst comes to the worst, perhaps you might be able to come on to **Edouard**. But I don't think that we need anticipate any difficulty at all, dear.

This morning I went to early Mass and Communion. Yesterday evening I managed to get to Benediction and Confession. A great comfort. Prayers were offered everywhere in supplication because of the war. The men here went to the Cathedral this morning. While they were there **Guy** and I went to see some of our men who are sick in hospital, one with a sprained knee etc. They are awfully comfortable. The weather today has been glorious – a change after yesterday, which was most dismal.

I felt awfully homesick and miserable to-day, darling, and felt more than ever before that I couldn't bear another moment from you...



**17<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Arrangements for the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday weekend; Dollie's fears about Belgium;  
Arthur's hopes for the war ending in a few months time:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station  
Monday afternoon, 6.50pm

Thanks awfully dear for your long letter. I had begun to get a bit anxious as I didn't get it until late. But I appreciated it the more, darling... After brekker I came up here to the station: had a few things to see about – then parade from 9.30 to 12. From 12 to 12.30 I was teaching one of my Corporals. Lunch at one; afterwards I had to go into the town to fix up some bathing arrangements in the Baths here. I got back to the station, had a Rifle Inspection at 4, Tea and then read my paper for a bit. Then I had some typing to do... **Pulman** came in – he is going off for 4 days to-morrow and is to be married on Wednesday. That darling is all my news so far. Now let me answer some of yours.

First and foremost of course, dear heart, about the 22<sup>nd</sup>... I'll try to get to you for all the day Saturday, at least. As yet one does not know the trains, but we hope that after Wednesday a more normal passenger service will be arranged. As for Wednesday darling, if you think you'll be able to manage it, I should love to see you... But the times of arrival at and departure from here are liable to be from one to three hours late on troop train days. So if you think it's not worth it in view of Saturday – I'll understand dear. Don't think or imagine that I don't want you to come, darling. I'm simply longing to see you ...

We have just heard that we are only going to be allowed our tin box and valise at Pirbright. I must pack up my blue and other odds and ends and have them sent home. Darling, please don't worry about our being sent to Belgium. Even if we are eventually to leave the country after six months which is extremely problematical we shall probably be sent to garrison Gibraltar or Malta – if either, the former. But as things are at present, no-one knows what is going to happen. We and Kitcheners New Army and the National Reserve and perhaps even the Boy Scouts are only being prepared in case the war should last for years. If, as we hope, and it seems, at the least, probable, the German Army is smashed up in 3 or 6 months, there'll be no question of our going out of the country at all. So you see dear little girl, that there really is no cause for apprehension or alarm.

I am feeling better to-day D.G. my throat is perfectly all right. I wonder always how you are, little darling of mine and pray always for your happiness. God bless you darling. I am so proud of you. I long to see you once more and live for Saturday...

**August 18<sup>th</sup> 1914**

**A last minute change of plan for Arthur, but all should be well; a meeting with Edouard; young Sorely rocks the table.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station  
Tuesday afternoon, 3pm

Thanks for your dear letter. I received it safe and sound this morning. As for tomorrow dear, I've written to you about the trains. The only thing that annoys me is that I am to go down to Shawford – about 3 miles down the line – for 3 days to look after young **Crichton**. However, darling, it is almost better than Winchester. The only thing will be that you'll probably have to take a taxi from Winchester to Shawford – it is only a few minutes run. I'll fix up about lunch at Shawford. If you want any help, ask **Guy** – he is in the Ladies Waiting Room (now called "O.C. No 3 Coy") at Winchester, or any of the men, or the Station master. They are all great friends of ours and will do anything to help you. At any rate, let me know early what time you are coming and I'll try to come up to Winchester if I can possibly. I am longing to see you once again, darling. I do hope it will be alright about Saturday, if not tomorrow... I hope to be back by Friday and able to come up to you at Fleet dear.

Now for my news, little girl, I don't think there's much. Last night **Guy** and I and **Sorley** went up the line and met **Edouard** – he seems very fit. It was a glorious night – there was no moon, but the whole sky was clustered thick with stars. This morning after brekker I had a parade. This afternoon I changed and shoved some things in a bag and here we are. I am afraid this letter is awfully disconnected but young **Sorley** has been typing hard a couple of feet away and the whole table has been jumping.

I am hoping and longing for to-morrow I do hope you'll be able to manage it. If not, oh for Saturday! I do want to see you, darling, it's like a breath of heaven to think of it ...

**19<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Wednesday: Arthur and Dollie finally meet after 17 long days apart – so no letters were exchanged today.**

Photo - Shawford Station, Hampshire, where Arthur is based on this date.



**20<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**The day after Dollie's visit and Arthur longs for their next meeting; trouble in the ranks at Shawford:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

On the Down Platform  
Shawford Station  
Thurs afternoon 4.53pm

Thanks awfully, dear, for writing last night and letting me know that you had arrived safely. You must have been tired, poor little darling. It was awfully sweet of you to have come down darling. I can't say how I felt when I saw you at Winchester... Yesterday afternoon was just a bit of heaven ...Thanks awfully dear heart, once more and always for coming down and thanks so much for the cigarettes. It was very thoughtful and sweet of you to have brought them, dear and I do appreciate it so much.

After I had seen your train go out, little girl, I went up to the signal box to find out when my train was coming in. It was due at Winchester at 7.12 but it didn't arrive until 7.42. I got here about 8. We had our meal fairly late – a roast duck, potatoes and beans between the two of us – very good. After dinner I slept for a bit. At midnight we were just going out when **Crichton** had to investigate a charge of drunkenness brought against one of the sentries by a policeman here and a civilian. A trumped up affair, but one which took a certain amount of time to clear up. We set out at 12.45 and went up the line for a mile or two and back. I got to bed about 2.15. This morning up about 8.30 or 9 and brekker. Since when I've been occupied in routine work, reading the paper, etc.

We had some of the men's lunch at 12.45 and I've just had a cup of their tea. **Crichton** has got leave to go into Winchester for an hour or two and left at 5.15. He is perfectly unbearable – swears like a publican and giggles like a chambermaid. It's a wonder anything keeps going: there [would] probably be a mutiny if it wasn't for his Serj. who is an awfully good fellow. However - meanwhile I hope to leave tomorrow.

Well, dear little soul, I think that's all my news from here. This place is very quiet and peaceful. It has been quite fine and warm today ... I long for Saturday. Please heaven, I'll be able to come up to you early: I do hope I shall. Please remember me most kindly to **your Mother** and to all whom I know...

**21<sup>st</sup> August 1914:**

**It is the start of Dollies 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations and Arthur is able to join her and the family at Fleet, so no letter from Arthur today.**

**But back home in Hampstead another Arthur is a few days away from having his world turned upside down. Arthur Samut – brother of Maggie Agius – has made the long journey from Canada to do his bit in the war and is staying with the Agius family at the Grove, until his army commission is secured. He writes to sister Maggie:**

Belsize Grove, NW  
24<sup>th</sup> August 1914

My dear **Maggie**

I have just received your letter and will be very pleased to come up on Wednesday morning. All I have done so far is to write to the War Office for information regarding a Commission in the new army, and will not take any decisive step until I receive an answer which will probably be in course of two or three days.

The Agius are very kind to me and make me feel quite at home. I played tennis with **Dick** this afternoon, and feel quite “fatigued” after the little exercise.

I must stop here as they want me to take a hand at bridge, so Solong till Wednesday morning,

Your loving brother  
**Arthur**

**22<sup>nd</sup> August 1914:**

**Today is Dollies 21<sup>st</sup> birthday; Arthur is celebrating with her and the family at Fleet, so no letter from him today.**

**But back home in Hampstead, Arthur Samut – brother of Maggie Agius – is about to jump at the chance to join a prestigious regiment. He writes to sister Maggie:**

Belsize Grove, NW  
24<sup>th</sup> August 1914

My dear **Maggie**

I am awfully sorry to say that I will not be able to come up tomorrow morning as I enlisted today in the H.A.C. It is a splendid regiment, composed only of gentlemen, and if I had not joined this morning I would not have had another chance to do so.

**Daisy** and everybody think it is the thing. I will be training in London for a few weeks and will try to come up over Sunday.

Awfully sorry to disappoint you but it had to be done at once.

Am longing to see you

In haste

Your loving brother

Arthur

Private H.A.C.

**23rd August 1914**

**Dollie's long awaited 21<sup>st</sup> birthday weekend is over; Arthur hints at the joyous news to come:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Sunday after: 6.53pm

I've just written to **the Mater**. Found it very difficult to express what I wanted to say. I feel so tongue tied on paper. However I think I've expressed what I felt and wanted to say. I got in safe and sound last night D.G. This morning Church at 8 then I had several odd things to do. This afternoon a lot more jobs...

Well, darling and what does it feel like to be – I was just going to say “grown up” but I suppose I'd get my ears pulled, so lets say “21”. That's quite safe isn't it dear? I was happy with you little girl, yesterday at Fleet. My head is all awlirl over our news. My heart is full of gratitude – to you most of all, for loving me – to your **Mother** and **my Mother and Father** for the staunch kindness they have always shown us...

...I hope you've had a good day today – by now you'll be speeding back to town, the battlefield of our fate...

**24<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**A gruesome death on the railway line – the war becomes very real; Arthur's hopes for future happiness all hang in the balance ... what will their parents decide?**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Eagle Hotel,  
Winchester  
Monday even 7.40pm

Thanks so much for your dear letter of yesterday afternoon. I thought about you being at Fleet yesterday so much. I'm glad you got in all right after you had seen me off: it was awfully sweet of you, dear, to have come down to the station and have faced the return journey alone...

Now for my news. Last night I went down to inspect two tunnels on the G.W.R. that we are guarding. I left here about 9 and got back at about 10.25. Then **Sorley** and I took a train down to Shawford and walked back. As I got down to the hotel I found one of the Staff Serjeants talking to the C.O. and the Adjutant... **Major Samuel** had phoned through that one of his men had been killed by the mail train. Later the Serj. Major came down with more details... we all went to the station. **Sammy** brought the body in on an engine. The poor fellow had been struck by the step of the mail engine when patrolling the line and half of his head had been cut off. Death of course was instantaneous. We came back to bed. The inquest was held at 7pm this evening: the body will be buried with full military honours tomorrow. It has given us all a bit of a turn.

Today I have been with **Guy** up the line. We had lunch with **Rochford** and tea with **Edouard and Eugenie**. It is very close to oppressive. I had a bath when we got in and am now writing.

Well, dearest, so tomorrow is our day. I hope and pray that by this time tomorrow all will be settled for the right and that this will be my last letter before we are officially betrothed. Darling I am anxious and long for a happy wire from you ... The hours seem leaden. I long for news – good news – the best of all news to me and to you. Remember me most kindly to **your Mater**. I am awfully grateful to her...



**25th August 1914 [Arthur and Dollie become officially engaged.]**

**News from the Grove of the Samut in-laws; a search of the Cathedral; a military funeral; Arthur still waits for news from the parents – he longs to declare his love for Dollie to the whole world:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Tuesday after: 6.45pm

I am all anxiety and expectant on your news. How long, I wonder, before it comes, and then, what news it will be. Today is indeed a fateful day for us dear soul – I wonder – what is happening?

I got your letter and postcard all right: for which many thanks – also the cleaning rod, for which also, dear, thanks awfully. I am surprised to hear that **Maggie's** brother is over: which one it is – **Arthur [Samut]**? Or **George**? I expect the former, isn't it.

I was awfully sorry to hear that neither you, darling, or **your Mater** are feeling quite up to scratch. Probably it is only the weather and the change in journeying, to Fleet and back. I hope you'll both be in the top of your health tomorrow.

Today we have had an easy all. Last night the CO told me to turn in and not go down the line: so that I had a long sleep last night. This morning **Guy** and I had to go into the City. We went to the Cathedral and went all over it again and up on the roof of the Lady Chapel. I thought so much of the time when we saw it together, darling. We got back just in time for lunch.

This afternoon we had the funeral of the poor fellow who was killed. He was buried with all military honours, a firing party and the buglers sounded the last post as the coffin was lowered in the grave. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack and on that the man's belt, bayonet and cap and a cross and wreath of white flowers. It was very impressive. **Major Samuel** and **Stephens** came in for it. **Wheeler** has also been down today. So much for all our news. The news from Belgium is not very bright today, is it, dear? It is very trying to have no definite news as to where our troops are. Still we must be brave – I'm afraid the Country will need all her courage before the end.

Darling, I wonder what is happening at 45 now. Mind you write and tell me everything, dearest. I wish I was at home with you now. Still, thank heaven, I have a man's job to do and am qualified to fight for you, little girl, if the call should come. I am awfully proud and happy when I think of you, darling little girl. I hope soon to say really "my own" to the world and that you will, as you promised, be able to sign your photograph to me "Your own".

N.B.—This Form must accompany any Inquiry respecting this Telegram.

# POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.



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TO

Miss Noel 45 Compayne St  
Hampstead

Wire received thank God que  
je salue Arthur

**26th August 1914**

**Arthur is on cloud nine and just longs to be with his betrothed; he expresses his love and gratitude to Dollie, the parents, and God; for Arthur the war cannot end soon enough:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Headquarters  
Winchester Station,  
Hants  
Wednes. afternoon: 5.12pm

At last my own, really and truly and no-one can snatch you from me. Oh, darling, I am so happy. When I got your dear wire last night, we were just going to have dinner. I felt so excited ... I read and re-read your longed for message. I only wish I was with you, my own darling, that we might share these first days of our betrothed bliss together. O sweet heart of mine, my heart is too full for words. You are mine and I am yours and there's none to say us "Nay".... I hate every minute that keeps me from you.

There is so much for us to discuss. First of all dearest, I want more news. I have not heard from home. What did **the Pater** arrange with **your Mater** – tell me, dear, all that you know. Is he prepared to help us at all at the beginning. How long are we to wait and a thousand other things. Then too there is the question of having our engagement announced formally. All these things want deciding. I am feeling fearfully excited and can hardly write – forgive my incoherency. I am feeling overwhelmed with happiness and pride in you, my dear little fiancée. Darling I am full of gratitude, to you, dearest, most of all, for loving me. To **your Mater**, too and to **my Mater and Pater** for the way wherein they have stood by us and above all to GOD for his Infinite Goodness to both of us. Dear little sweetheart, I am so happy. I am longing more than ever for your daily letters. I'd like to have one every five minutes.

I hope that you have been able to see **the Mater** today darling mine. Let me know all she said. I would I could have been with you, dear, when you saw her. Oh, darling, I'm dying for the war to end that I might spend all my time with you... Please Heaven, we shall be going to Pirbright by the end of this week and I hope to get the chance of seeing you.

I have been quite busy all day to-day. Last night I went down the line, walked 5 ¼ miles in 1 ¼ hours – not so bad eh?

... I am most awfully grateful to **your Mother** for the way wherein she has stuck by us. Please thank her awfully. Well my little one, Au revoir...

27<sup>th</sup> August 1914

As the congratulations roll in, Arthur is kept busy acknowledging them; he longs to see Dollie; their movements meanwhile are uncertain as they wait for a regular Division to relieve them at Winchester:

*Arthur to Dollie*

Winchester Station  
Thurs. even. 7.25pm

Thanks so much, little fiancée, for your dear letter. I have had a very busy day today and am feeling a wee bit weary.

I have had letters from the **Mater, Edgar and Joe** – wires from **Joe, Evie** and **Pulman** – phone from **Edouard** – verbal congrats from **Algy, Major Beresford, Guy** and **Sorley**. I have written short notes to **Mater, Joe, Edgar, Pulman** and **Evie**. Everyone has been awfully kind and I am very, very happy in my little sweetheart. Only I do miss her so. **The Mater** wrote an awfully sweet letter. She is going to see a lot of you and do all she can for you, dear.

This morning I was very busy and this afternoon I went to Eastleigh with **Guy**. We walked back to Shawford and caught a train back here. We don't know when we are going to move. We're waiting for the Sixth (Regular) Division to come down from Cambridge to Southampton before we can move. I'm longing to get to Pirbright. I hope to be able to get leave at least once from there.

Well dear little soul, I think that is all my news. I'm feeling wonderfully proud and happy in you, darling of my soul. It all seems too good to be true. Thank God for it all. I'm feeling awfully grateful to **your Mater**. I want to get a line to her...

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 1914

The Engagement Ring: the inscription inside reads “Arthur to Dollie 25.8.14”



**29<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Arthur is moved to Hook as German-born Wolter has to leave the Territorials; more congratulations at their news; the usefulness of Boys Scouts; the Territorials may be heading for Gibraltar:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Hook Station L&SWR  
Sat evening 6.20pm

I dare say that you'll be surprised to see the heading and perhaps you are wondering a bit that you didn't get a letter today. The one explains the other, dearest. On Thursday night the C.O told me to come up to Hook, where **Pulman** is, to take **Wolter's** place. [Wolter is a German].

Well sweetheart, to begin my news at the beginning. I am awfully happy and everyone has been very kind. The **C.O.** rather pulled my leg, but **Algy** was awfully decent. We had a long talk together on Thurs. evening. He said that he envied me and was so glad that I was engaged ... and said that we ought to be awfully happy together.

On Friday morning I packed up - sent half my kit home. We have our valises now so I kept that and my tin box. I got to Basingstoke at 11.30. **Sorley** came with me and we rode up on the engine of a fast train - very exhilarating but very smutty! At Basingstoke **Pulman's** quartermaster serj. met me and we divided up the men's pay that I had brought. I got to Hook about 1.20. Went up to lunch. Found the **C.O.** there - he had motored up from Winchester. **Pulman** had his wife, sister, mother-in-law and brother-in-law staying at the hotel, which is a very pleasant place close to the station and is called "The Raven". I sleep on the station and am very comfortable.

After lunch I had a lot to do, gathering up the threads of my new (temporary) command - No 3 Platoon. **Wolter** came down with **Janet** to see the Col. and they congratulated me heartily. In the evening I went up the line; then dinner, then I went down the line. My portion stretches 1½ miles up and 2 ½ down so it's a good tramp there and back dear.

...What is putting me out, little darling, is that I hav'n't had your letters of today. So this morning I sent a Boy Scout into Winchester and am expecting him any minute. I have got your darling photo opposite me as I sit at my table in our orderly room here...

I got a very sporting letter from **Daisy** and a very sweet one from your dear **Mater**, crossing mine. I am awfully grateful to her, chiefly for having so darling a daughter - that's you dear - and next for having been so true a pal to us both. God bless her.

I don't know how long we are going to be on this job - it is very boring. **Pulman** tells me that the Adjutant told **Edwards** this morning that we are going to Gibraltar - I wonder it its true. I'll ring **Edwards** up and find out...

**30<sup>th</sup> August 1914**

**Great joy! The Brigade is to go to Malta; Dollie can spend the winter with Arthur's family there; a rumour the Russians are on the move – via Hook.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Hook Station  
L&SWR  
Hants  
Sunday afternoon 3.40pm

Thanks so much for your two dear letters: I received Friday's last night, sent on from Hook and Saturday's this morning. Yesterday late in the evening we had a wire from Winchester. Would we find out whom of the men were unwilling to volunteer for garrison service abroad. So **Percy Fordham** in his sidecar took me round to my posts. They were all willing to go. We thought it was to be Gib. However this morning more news came through: we have been asked as a Brigade to volunteer for garrison service at MALTA! If we go, as seems pretty certain, you must come out and spend the winter with one of the girls. So I am feeling happier about the future.

I was unable to get to Mass this morning which bored me – but still. **Pulman** had a church parade. Then he went out with the family in the motor. Soon after he left a shoal of important papers and wires came through from Winchester. I am anxiously awaiting his return. I have been very busy all day, preparing things against his return and I expect him to have a busy time when he does.

Last night **Pulman's** family came down to our Orderly Room. They saw your photograph darling, opposite my table. They were very sweet about it and thought you an awfully "nice looking girl"... I have been thinking about your coming down again, dear. I should simply love to see you. But our news of this morning rather upsets things. The men are to be granted three days leave in turns of 80 men per day, starting from today, to say "Good-bye". That seems to point to our being here another fortnight and I'm hoping that we officers will get some leave also. I think we are practically bound to get a certain amount if only to see about our kit. So altogether news seems more cheerful, sweetheart.

Please forgive this pencil but my ink has run out. **Sir Lionel Phillips**, the South African magnate lives near here. He came down this morning and imparted some ... information, which you'll probably hear of in the papers eventually... Last night a large number of trains passed up from Southampton with blinds down carrying Russian troops to Aldershot. Why or wherefore we here know not as yet – it seems very strange. However we are living in great days, dear heart. How strange that these days so great ... for us two, little sweetheart, should be days too of such fate for the whole of the civilised world...

God bless you. Remember [me] most kindly to **your Mater** and all...

**31st August 1914**

**No letter today – Arthur and the Territorials are preparing to leave for Malta at the end of the week.**

Arthur sends a telegram from Hook in Hampshire to Dollie in London, telling her he will be arriving at Waterloo at 1.30 today. Arthur has three days leave to spend with Dollie and family.

The Battalion goes into Camp at Regents Park. Arthur next writes to Dollie on the evening of **3rd September**, as his period of leave comes to a close.