

**NOTHING** is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

~~I am quite well.~~ ✓

~~I have been admitted into hospital~~

{ ~~sick~~ } and am going on well;  
{ ~~wounded~~ } and hope to be discharged soon.

~~I am being sent down to the base~~

I have received your { letter dated Wed 28<sup>th</sup>  
telegram .. \_\_\_\_\_  
parcel .. \_\_\_\_\_

Letter follows at first opportunity. ✓

~~I have received no letter from you~~

{ ~~lately.~~  
{ ~~for a long time.~~

Signature } Arthur  
only. }

Date 1-8-15

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]

**2<sup>nd</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur is anxious to hear from Dollie; after many moves, Arthur's company is now safely billeted in Estaires – although he doesn't think very much of the place! A rather revealing account of the men's makeshift ablutions in the local factory. The Officers have rather more of a sedate time - in single baths.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a billet (just 2050 yds from the enemy) Mon 6pm

I confess I am a wee bit anxious ... partly because I hav'n't been able to write properly for the last two days & partly because I have not heard from you since Saturday. I have your dear letters of Tuesday & Wednesday last – none since. I do hope and pray that you are all right, darling mine. Still, until I hear, no news must be good news.

We have been on the move a lot darling. We were relieved on Friday by the 69<sup>th</sup> Punjabis. I was busy all morning with their officers. They returned to relieve us soon after half-past three. But they only relieved my Company then. The rest of the relief didn't take place until dark, so that we didn't leave until about 9pm. We marched to Estaires, a fairly big manufacturing town about 5 miles back. Here we were billeted very comfortably, only rather far apart. I was in a big farm on the outskirts of the town. The town itself, dear, is rather squalid. Very French, of course. A fine church and an old Hotel de Ville, both of brick, part of the latter dating from 1612.

The day following our arrival (Saturday) we were very late up. In the afternoon we were busy getting the men bathed – and incidentally bathing ourselves. The baths, dear, are in a factory. You turn off the main road, past a long low wooden building which is styled "Soldiers Club", then over an open space, beyond which lies the factory. Half-way down is a "hair-cutting – before bath" establishment where four Tommies are cropping hair at abnormal speed...

The men file in & undress (don't blush) at benches along the walls. In the middle there are rows of tubs & several large oblong vats about 20 feet by 10 & 4 deep. The men wash and plunge about in there with wondrous joy. Then out they hop dry themselves, throw their dirty shirts away & run upstairs amid the remains of machinery with very little on save a pair of boots. Upstairs they get clean shirts & the seams of their clothes are ironed (to kill l---). Here they dress & go out into the world again clean! For the officers darling there are 5 ordinary long baths, towels, soap, brushes, sponges in abundance – Jove did I enjoy it...

We are in battalion reserve in a place called Rugby Road, near where we were before. We are packed into 3 houses, rather uncomfortable, but we are settling down rapidly. I am in a room with 3 of my officers, **Bailey, Ainsworth & Bateman**; the others are at the 1<sup>st</sup> Line...

I am fit & well DG. The weather is still a bit unsettled: very hot yesterday. Today has been brilliant too but we've had some rain & a little thunder this evening. I am anxiously awaiting news from you little darling mine. I hope you have been able

to fix things up with **Rosa** [Pulman]. Please remember me to your **Mother**, dear light of my eyes. I hope she's all right again by now. Well, dear I'm going to say Good-night for the **C.O.** wants me off on a job. God bless you & keep you.

**4<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**[Day after Bank Holiday in 1915] A wet time of it in ruinous billets, and too close to the enemy for comfort; meeting up with Kitchener's Army; hopes the Territorials will be posted back home; an urgent request for more tobacco from the family.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a billet (such a billet), 9.25am Wednes.

At last news of you, my beloved; three letters all together. I was so happy to get them. I suppose the Bank Holiday interfered with the posts. At any rate, its all right now – thanks awfully for them. I do love to hear from you ...

I have very little news to give you, dear heart, so let me get it off my chest. Yesterday was a brute of a day – continuous & heavy rain. Besides that we are so close up that we have to keep very quiet. Our billets are not worthy of the name. Just two houses more or less in ruins for the whole lot. The roof has had to be propped up in our room & down the road where I have some of my men, we've had to rebuild with sandbags.

There are a lot of K's men here. There is a division attached to the Indian Corps. One battalion is at present attached to our Brigade for instruction. There is a very persistent rumour that we are to be withdrawn in the fairly near future and either go to form a new Territorial Division or else be withdrawn to England. Unfortunately it is impossible to get any definite information. I hadn't meant to have spoken about it, as it's only a rumour but to have waited until we had definite news; but I'm afraid, darling mine, that it just slipped out!

The C.O. asked very kindly after you yesterday, darling. You are a darling ar'n't you? ... I'm expecting to hear your new address. I'm glad you'll be able to get away – for it will do you a world of good to be with **Rosa** [Pulman] – she has got such a great big motherly heart.

PS: By the way, dear, would you do me a favour, *please*, ask the family to send me out some more tobacco. Fryers Mixture – Original Cut – as I'm short. They'll send it in bond - please.

5<sup>th</sup> August 1915

[Dollie is away on holiday in Norfolk with Rosa Pulman]. A reconnoitre of the lines in the morning and in the afternoon Arthur and the Brigade are filmed marching down the Pont du Hem [Estaires – La Bassee road]. A more persistent rumour of the Territorials being withdrawn to serve in England; Arthur arranges for brother Edgar's kit to be sent on.

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a billet, Thurs. morn. 9.10pm

Good morning. God bless you, dear. We're all very late this morning & hav'n't had breakfast yet. **Wilcox** is still half sleep! I had two letters from you yesterday, dated Saturday & Sunday. Thanks awfully for them. They seem to make everything seem brighter & happier. God bless you. Thanks awfully too, little darling, for the magazines...

Yesterday morning I went out reconnoitring with **Bailey**. Sounds very fearsome, doesn't it? but it was only a pleasant stroll behind our lines, to see how the communication trenches ran. It was very hot. Then lunch in a great hurry, for we had to get into full kit & off to a place on the Estaires – La Bassee road called Pont du Hem – just a couple of estaminets, a few houses & a big crucifix. They abound here, at nearly every big crossroad. The great rush, dear, was for a photo. First of all we were taken, halted by the roadside. Then we were photographed (both an ordinary camera & a cinema) on the march – and finally a group was taken of us officers.

So home to tea – then hurried on to get ready for the working party. We had an early meal at a quarter to 7. I had **Wilcox & Lewis** up from the 1<sup>st</sup> Line & sent **Ainsworth & Bateman** in. The Brigade goes out on Sunday & the rumour seems to grow more persistent that we shall be withdrawn DV.

For the rest, dear heart, I think there is little more. I'm seeing about **Edgar's** things. **Major Beresford** has had a slight touch of flu. I have not forgotten about **Harry [Pulman]** – nor am I likely too. You may be sure that all that I can do or get done, will be done...



**Arthur sitting 3rd from left**

**6<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Return of the sick and wounded and a new Officer; Arthur pays the Company; the Brigade is coming out on Sunday, making the prospect of returning to England more certain. Kitcheners Army will take their place; flies, humans and unsettled weather heighten the mood of uncertainty for the future.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a billet, 9pm

... Thanks awfully for your dear letter of Monday last. I love to hear from you. By now too you are at Hunstanton. I am glad & hope you have a good time. Give my love to **Rosa**, God bless her big heart. She has in charge now all that I value in the world, my treasure beyond all price, that's you, my darling.

Life here continues much the same – very quiet. Yesterday 15 of our sick & wounded came back, including **Serj. Major Cooper**, who is my Coy Serj. Major. Also a new officer – **Ochs** – who has joined **Sammy's** Company. Yesterday I went through my pay sheets & paid the Company which took a certain amount of time.

Last night we didn't have a working party. However I found something to employ the men for a couple of hours. **Sammy's** Company went up to relieve a company of Leicesters. The Brigade is coming out on Sunday, hurray! & the chance seems growing more certain that we will be withdrawn especially as now a Battalion of K's is attached to the Brigade.

I'm sorry this letter is so sketchy, dear heart, but the interruptions, both by humans & flies are continuous – and I don't mean to miss the post at 10. The weather is very heavy and rather unsettled & one feels very restless, wondering what the future has in store for us. The men are still going off on leave 2 or 3 at a time nearly every day. They deserve it...



**The Coloured Cliffs at Hunstanton**





**7<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur is exhausted after a night's working party activities – thankfully there were no casualties; the pure joy of getting a letter from Dollie; tomorrow the Brigade will move back to La Gorgue for a week; a request for some photos of Dollie, currently on holiday in Norfolk with Rosa Pulman.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a billet, Rugby Road, Satur. morning 8.55

... I'm feeling awfully sleepy – we were out again last night on a working party till 2am. Same work as before only this time – as **Sammy's** Company is up – I had the Leicester Company he relieved in its first place.

Well, my darling, first of all thanks awfully for your dear letter of Tuesday. I was pleased to get it, especially as it came as a surprise. Yesterday afternoon **Johnnie Sutcliffe** and I walked down as far as the First Line Transport – about 2 miles down. On the way we met the Cyclist Orderly with the letters – we stopped him. There wasn't one for me. I was awfully disappointed. I always am if a day should ever pass without a letter from you (thank God and your dear heart, that very rarely happens but sometimes the Post Office does get the better of us). However, as we got back, I found upon the table the welcome site of an envelope in your dear handwriting. Joyful comfort for longing eyes. God bless you.

After tea the **C.O.** took me with him as far as the Leicester HQ. When we got back I tried for an hour's sleep but was continually interrupted. We had supper at 7, parade at 8 & we were out till 2. My luck held & we didn't have a single casualty DG.

**Bailey** is up at the front line with **Sammy's** Company learning – he is a good fellow – about 35 (he looks 23) with a wife & a girl of 5. He was in the Wiltshires for 8 years, was in S. African War, K.'s Army, then an attack of pneumonia, finally the 3/3<sup>rd</sup>, then here.

To-morrow night the Brigade moves back to La Gorgue for a week. Our fate still hangs in the balance.

I am very anxious little sweetheart to hear from you to-day. I am anxious about your journey down & want to hear how you got on & lots of other things. How **Rosa** is & her brother. What kind of place it is & heaps of things all about you two. Did you take the camera, by the way: if you did – use it a lot. I should love to see some photos of you ...

**8<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**The weather is humid and dull – and life in the trenches is currently very dull, waiting for the Ghurkas to relieve their Company later that night; Arthur earnestly hopes Dollie is having a lovely holiday with Rosa and wishes he could be with them – if only to protect the ladies from the discomforts of Liverpool Street Station!**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Rugby Road, Sunday morn 7.50

... Thanks awfully, dear heart for your letter of Wednesday morning. I am now looking forward to hearing that you had a good journey & arrived safe and sound. I wish that I could have been with you to shield you from all discomfort & worry. I know Liverpool St. It's a rotten place.

How is **Rosa**, dear. I hope she is fit & that you two get glorious weather. I'm awfully pleased, dear, that you've been able to get away. The rest & change will do you a whole lot of good DV. I was sorry to hear your **Mater** wasn't altogether herself yet. Please God, if the servants continue trumps & the weather bucks up, she will soon be absolutely fit again.

Here, darling, one day passes very, very much like another & if it wasn't for the fact that every 24 hours brings us nearer our future fate, life would be very dull. There is very little to do here. Yesterday we were very lazy and, although I was up early, we didn't have breakfast until half-past ten. I had lunch with the **C.O.** There were a few odd things that wanted doing, but very little. In the evening I was busy making a map.

The weather is still very humid & dull – “dull” expresses it exactly. We are all looking forward to getting out to-night. We are being relieved by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ghurkas. Unfortunately they cannot get here until 9 or half-past, so we won't be out until about midnight.

You see sweetheart mine life here just now is not fearfully exciting, and I'm afraid my letters, dear heart, must be dull, if not actually depressing... May you have a ripping holiday dear, with **Rosa**. I wish I was with you...

**9<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**A short note from Arthur to thank Dollie for her latest letters; he is most indignant to read that she had been upset by the train journey to Norfolk.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In billets, Monday 5.45pm.

... Lots of letters came from you yesterday to buck me up, one in pencil, written in the train, & two from Hunstanton. God bless you dear heart.

I was very angry & upset to hear of your adventure in the train. I can imagine what you felt: darling mine. I hate to think of you suffering the least inconvenience & cannot find words to say how I feel. Thank god you arrived safe & sound. I hope you're having a ripping time...

**10<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur and the men are feeling the heat; a description of their exit from the trenches and march back to La Gorgue at night; settling into the new billets; Arthur's fellow officers take his film home on leave to be developed.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Tues 8.5 am

... Yesterday was a beastly day, hot & steamy. I really think one of the most oppressive we've had. It tried to throw the weight off its chest by a few showers – but no good.

Let me give you my news, dear. We were relieved on Sunday by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ghurkas. We spent most of the day cleaning up &c. About 8 we moved out & up the road a little way, into an orchard. There we waited for the Ghurkas to arrive. As soon as they passed we were to move off independently. They didn't turn up until about 9.20 but we weren't long getting off the mark. The men marched very well & we did the 4 miles into La Gorgue in an hour & a quarter. The men are billeted in some schools – plenty of room for them. One of my platoons is in the remains of the School Chapel – it's awfully pathetic.

I've a room & a bed to myself, so has **Bailey**, my second. The others are in & near our mess room about 10 minutes walk from my room here. HQ are in a big house about 20 minutes up the road. I've just heard I have to be up there by 9, so I'll have to hustle & leave a description of La Gorgue to a later letter!

By the way, darling, **Rice, Lloyd & Ainsworth** left for leave the other day. They came up to get my film whilst I was out. Luckily my servant had the gumption to give them the right one. But I don't know what they will do with it. Probably have it developed & bring it back with them.

I am awfully fit & well DG but very hot! So, dear heart of mine, au revoir.  
Love to **Rosa**, God bless her...

**11<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Another short note from Arthur as he is busy settling the men into their new billets and working for the CO. [Dollie has left Norfolk by now and Arthur's letters are re-directed home to Hampstead].**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Billets, Wed. 8.25 am

... Thanks awfully little sweetheart for your dear letters of Friday & Saturday. Dear, I am glad you're having a good time. God bless you.

I had a very full day yesterday busy with the **C.O.**, baths, Company Orders, more work for the **C.O.** &c. So I am going to ask you little dear to put up with a short note this morning. I'll write at length this afternoon. This morning I shall be full up again.

... How I wish I was with you. With love to **Rosa**, dear....

**August 11th 1915 cont.**

**[Second part of a letter for the 11<sup>th</sup> begun in the evening]. A detailed description of the new Officers Mess – a quaint canal-side corner, trees, an island and a mill close by with the continual sound of rushing water; a hot and dusty route march; welcome parcels from home; Dollie plans to visit Seaford [Annecy Convent], where she was at school; a weird rumour that brothers Alfred and Edgar are returning to the Company – despite no confirmation from the Mater; dinner with the CO.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Wednes. 7pm

... Another dear letter to-day and a postcard too from Castle Rising (wasn't that where Edward II put his mother!) God bless your dear heart. I prize your news so much.

I wish you were here with me ... I am writing this outside our mess room. There are just a few paces between it & the edge of the lock & a line of trees, so we've brought out our table. It is an awfully pretty and quaint corner, out of the main traffic & very quiet save for the continual rush of water, overflowing the lock gate. I tried to sketch a plan of the place but it got too involved! As we sit under the trees, the river flows from right to left. Just in front it widens out into the big lock basin. Beyond that is the mill on a little island – a wonderful old place once worked by water & wind. But now steam has taken the place of the wind & a chimney the place of sails. But the old mill still stands, a wonderful place.

This morning we began parades again, went for a short route march. It was very hot & dusty dear, for though, thank God, the heaviness in the air has gone, a glorious sun has been shining all day... This afternoon I've been very quiet, working hard. This morning I paid the Coy, so I've been busy all day.

I had some parcels from home & the tobacco. Now let me answer your letters. dear. You'll forgive me having written about the mill, won't you, dear, before I started to answer your news. But somehow, the quiet & beauty of the spot overcame me and I wanted to share it all with you...

So darling, you write that you do not yet know whether to go to Seaford or not. I'm afraid I'm going to be a bit of a coward & plead that it is difficult to advise you from here. But let's just take things as they are, dear. It was the original idea, wasn't it darling, that you should go down to Seaford. Then various things cropped up – bad servants &c & you decided, quite rightly, that you ought not to leave your **Mater**.

As that was so, dear, we began to look nearer home and finally decided to speak to **Daisy** [Agius] and ask one of the priests of St. Dominic's. Isn't that so ... Now you see how difficult it is to give you advice, dear. For if you think that you can leave the **Mater**, & feel that you would be more at home at Seaford, then Seaford it must be...

So to turn to more mundane matters. We had a weird rumour the other day that **Alfred** [Agius] had written to **Lloyd** (who is now on leave) to say that he & **Edgar** [Agius] were on their way out here. I've had a letter from the **Mater**, but she didn't say anything about it. Is it true; because if they are on their way its no use sending their things home. There is no news yet as to when we go in again. Rumour says the 17<sup>th</sup>.

I told you **Algy** came over yesterday afternoon, didn't I dear. He was looking very fit & says he is very hard worked. He also said that opinion in GHQ is that nothing can be too good for the Territorials. He stayed to dinner with the **C.O.** & I had dinner up there too.



**13<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur hears of the Zeppelin raids on the East Coast [of England] and is anxious to know that Dollie is safe; the Quartermaster produces a gramophone for the C.O. and the “Destiny” waltz brings back happy memories of dancing with Dollie.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In billets, 8 am.

... I'm feeling a wee bit anxious for I've just seen that the Zeppelins have made another raid – Monday night on the “East Coast”. I'm longing to hear from you to-day & that you're all right. Yesterday's letter was Monday's, before the raid. Please God, it missed King's Lynn.

Yesterday morning usual parades. The company went for a route march under **Tealeaves**. I had to see the **C.O.** about two men.

After parade Company Orders then a few odd things after lunch, correcting pay books &c. After tea I went up to the **C.O.** about some work I'm doing for him. He was out but came in soon. I stayed there to dinner & came to bed about 10.10. **Brown**, the Quartermaster brought a gramophone back for the **C.O.** – a beauty. They played it all last night. Do you remember a valse called “Destiny” – how I thought of you, dear heart, & the happy times we've had. Please god there are many happier in store.

Well, darling, au revoir till after brekker. God bless you...



**14<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**[Second part of a letter begun on the evening of 13<sup>th</sup>] Arthur is worried as he receives a letter addressed in pencil from Dollie [she is a little under the weather]; a day of summer rain; Company matters take up most of Arthur's time; the Brigade is going in to the trenches again after the weekend – Arthur is riding up with the C.O. tomorrow to find out exactly where.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In billets, 8.40

I was so happy & thankful to get your dear letter to-day. I had rather a fright when I saw the envelope in pencil, & began to imagine all sorts of horrors. Thank God, you're all right ...

To-day, dear, started wonderfully fine; but it didn't last long. It soon clouded over & became rather oppressive & rained, summer rain. This morning we had the usual parade 9-11. Then I paid out a few more men & had company orders. I have been busy nearly all day since then, clearing up some Company matters & doing Company work, some of which at any rate ought to have been done by my predecessors in office.

The Brigade is going in again on Monday night, up near where we were before the Lonely Post section. I don't know quite whereabouts exactly we are going. The **C.O., Johnnie, Sammy** & I are riding up to-morrow morning to have a look.

No new yet of when we are going to be withdrawn. But honestly from what one can gather, it won't be very much longer – *please God*.

You see, little sweetheart, news is scarce. I live all day in my work. I work all day in your dear inspiration. If you only knew what a strength and comfort you are to me ...

**15<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur's shaving water is late arriving so he begins his letter from bed; a recce of the trenches for Monday's move up – to where they were before at Lonely Post – thankfully a quiet section of the line; Arthur gets ready for Sunday Mass.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In bed! Sunday morning 7.30

... Don't be alarmed to see I'm writing this from in bed. To tell the truth my servant is late with my shaving & washing water, so I'm writing this while I wait for him... I'm off to Mass & Communion at half-past eight.

Yesterday alas no letter but a postcard saying that you were going to lunch at King's Lynn. Many thanks dear one.

Yesterday morning I left at 8.30 to report at Battalion HQ. Then the **C.O., Johnnie, Sammy** & I rode up to see the trenches we take over on Monday. They are up where we were before in front of Lonely Post & seem very quiet DG.

We didn't get back until two feeling very hot & rather sleepy. After lunch I did some work then a cup of tea at 4. Afterwards I came up to the Church to Confession. Then I came in here and slept for half an hour. It was then 7.30 – so I went back to the Mess to dinner, and returned here to bed immediately afterwards.

Well, dear, I'm afraid I must come to an end or I sha'n't be ready for Mass. I hope by the time you get this, little one, that you'll be altogether yourself again.

**16<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Sunday: Mass in the morning followed by extraordinarily heavy rain; a fine and hot afternoon for inspecting posts near Richebourg; avoiding the shelling.**

**Monday: Arthur's Company are to go into the trenches tonight – and tomorrow he will be in command of an additional 100 men from K.'s Army; the morning shave curtailed by the unexpected re-scheduling of CO's orders.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In bed, 7.45 am Mond.

I was especially lucky yesterday for 3 dear letters arrived, from you, one of Wednes, written on the beach, Thursday's & Friday's. God bless you darling...I'm afraid, little sweetheart, that I cannot hold out any hopes of leave. It is all worked through the Division & leave is only granted once in 3 months... I'm as sound as a bell. So I'm afraid, dear heart, that there's no chance...

Yesterday, darling mine, was an extraordinary day. It began very early by being fine: then it began to rain, in showers, but I've rarely seen such heavy rain. Finally about midday it settled down very hot & fine. I went to church in the morning to Mass & Communion at 8.30. Then I went down to breakfast about 10. I lazed a bit after brekker. I was feeling awfully slack. Just before lunchtime – urgent message – wanted at the Orderly Room – about a mile away – so off I sprint.

When I get there I am told that **Sammy, I, Bailey & Newson** are to go to look at some posts being made near Richebourg. So we order our horses at 3.15. We rode down through Croix Barbee, where we have been billeted several times. But the place is fearfully knocked about now, dear.

We had two posts to visit and we had some little discussion as to which one to go to first. We made up our minds, rode up to the post & left our horses there. We met a Sapper officer there, who told us all about it. Then he said "Oh, the other afternoon, just about this time they sent 150 "crumps" (5.9 inch shells) into & round about here".

Cheery! Then we moved off to see the other post, about 600 yards away. We then started to retrace our footsteps to the first post where our horses were, when "whew" and a great crash. The blighters had begun to shell the place. So we started to get up to it by walking round a bit of the line. **Sammy** however got impatient & started to make a cut across the fields. **Newson** went with him. **Bailey & I** continued up the road. Luckily the Huns only put one over before we got clear. We got back all right, had tea about 6 & dinner at 8...

To-night, dear we go in for a bit. I believe to-morrow 3 officers & about 100 of the 6<sup>th</sup> Wiltshires ("K's") are to be attached to me for instruction. Isn't it priceless!

Our bit of line is very quiet. May it continue so DV. To-day I expect we will be pretty busy, dear, but there are several letters I want to write. I hope, darling, that your **Mater** is perfectly fit again by now – that you will have ripping weather.

2.15pm

... There is little enough of news, dear. I was shaving at 10 to 9 this morning when an orderly arrives. "CO's orders at 9 this morning, sir, instead of eleven!" Help! I rush to get up there not very late. Then down to breakfast about 10. After that up to my billet to get my valise packed. Then back again to an early lunch at 12.30.

This afternoon we are having a meal at 5.15 – parade at 6.45. **Bailey** has gone on ahead to "take over" stores &c. The weather on the whole is good DG though we had some rain just after lunch – the tail end of a storm...

**18<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**A muddy, night time trudge in to the new trenches; thankfully their section of line is “very quiet”; a rather smelly horse spoils the atmosphere; Arthur is a little put out that his work load is preventing him from catching up with his correspondence; the rumour persists that their Brigade are to be withdrawn – but the C.O., to his great annoyance, is unable to confirm anything.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a trench, Wednes even 7.20pm

... Thanks awfully, dear, for two letters that came up last night, both Saturday's. I'm going to keep them another day or two if I cannot get an answer off now... You'll understand I know ... for I want to give you my news first & I've been awfully busy. We came up on Monday night. It wasn't a very pleasant entry. A storm brooded & spluttered all day so that although it wasn't actually raining as we came in, the trenches were ankle deep in mud and there was nearly a mile of communicating trench to get through.

I am up near a farm called Chapigny (or, less *politely*, Stink Farm – the reason being a horse!) **Sammy** is back with the **C.O.** at Lonely Post. The trenches aren't all bad – very quiet DG & may they continue so! So we are pretty comfortable. Nonetheless, dear one, there's a great deal of work to do so I've been pretty busy. Yesterday the **C.O.** was up also **Ormesby**, the CO of the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Gurkhas – who is in charge of this section - & the **General**.

I've got a pretty fair dug-out & we actually have a mess room! with the crests of various regiments done neatly upon the walls in pencil. **Bailey, Tealeaves, Wilcox & Bateman** are with me. Tomorrow they (the three latter) are going to be relieved by **Lloyd, Lewis & Rice**. The Brigade is in until the 1<sup>st</sup> but rumours are rife that we are to be withdrawn. The **C.O.** is wild for they won't tell him anything definite. I was to have had 2 platoons of the 6 Wiltshires (K.'s) to teach. They were coming up last night at 8.30 but at the last minute it was cancelled.

I've not forgotten about **Rosa**, dear, please tell her if you have the opportunity. I'll try & write tomorrow but my time is by no means at my disposal. I had hoped as a last resource to have written this afternoon but a message came through that the **C.O.** wanted me, so I had to trudge down. It was about some work for to-night. To-morrow DV I'll be able to get a long letter off...

**19<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur writes a birthday letter to Dollie [it is her birthday on 22<sup>nd</sup>]; alas he isn't able to come home on leave – but looks forward to happier days, when they will be married and never separated again “ ... and we'll look back to this time of bitter separation and say ‘Do you remember the awful year of the *Great War*’ ”; Arthur sends Dollie a photo taken when he was last home on leave.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In the trench, Thurs even 7.15pm

... This is to wish you a very happy birthday. My God bless you, sweet heart of mine ... I only wish that I could have got home to you, dear queen of my heart, but I'm afraid, little dear that it does not rest at all with the **C.O.** It has to come through the Division & the limit is a week every three months. I am very disappointed.

... Please God, we are going to spend many many happy years together; and we'll draw near each other by our hearth, just you & I, dear, full of love & happiness, and we'll look back to this time of bitter separation and say “Do you remember the awful year of the “Great War”. Then we'll look at each other & the warm light of love in each other's eyes...

You'll see, dear, it's late, & the Corporal awaits the post. I've been busy to-day too. There is a lot that wants doing up here. Thanks awfully, sweet heart mine, for your dear letter of Monday last. You darling, thanks awfully. I'm enclosing some photos – one of you & me dear is ripping! Well darling, I must go – those beastly Huns! I'm going to write home to-night. So au revoir, darling, I send you all my love.

**20<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur dearly wishes he could chase Dollie's blues away; he remembers her smiling, walking to meet him with the dogs, Scottie and Pluto; Arthur has had a busy time of it recently and has to write this letter by candle light; thankfully his bit of the line is still quiet and they hope to be relieved at the weekend.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In my dug-out, Friday even 7.15

Thanks awfully for your dear letter of Tuesday last. I love to hear from you. I'm awfully sorry & unhappy that you're so dull, dear. I'd give anything to chase it all away & to see your lovable smile ... I can picture you coming down Compayne halfway to meet me ... and the dogs by you. Scottie bounding like a rubber ball & Pluto having a quiet look around for a stray bone.

I'm afraid I'm awfully wasteful of notepaper, dear, but you see I am awfully rushed & have to write by candlelight. I've been head over heels with work again to-day. There is an awful lot to do. I've my reserve platoon at work till 4 then half of **Sammy's** Company for one half of the night & and the other half the remainder of the time. It's work that requires constant & careful supervision. So I have to snatch what time I can for myself. Both the **C.O.** & the Gurkha **C.O.** (the latter twice) & the **General** have been up to-day.

Things are still very quiet on my bit DG. May they continue so. Yesterday **Lloyd, Lewis & Rice** relieved **Tealeaves, Wilcox & Bateman**. I'm hoping to be relieved by **Sammy's** Company on Saturday or Sunday night...

**21<sup>st</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur watches the sun set over his dugout and wishes that Dollie too was looking at the same sight on the eve of her birthday – in England; a description of the previous nights shelling by the Germans; the English return of fire causes some damage – if the abusive language was anything to go by; a further exchange of ordnance clears the wire for 20 feet; Arthur and his Company are being relieved tomorrow night to go back to Lonely Post.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In my dug-out, Satur even. 6.30pm

... So to-morrow is your birthday and you'll have "caught me up" once more – all this by virtue of a four months superiority. You darling, I wonder what you're doing. I would to God that I had been able to get to you, sweet heart.

I am sitting in my dug-out, looking out at the setting sun. How wonderful to think that you too, perhaps, are looking at him. Over that way lies the sea and England: England & you. What a ripping thought. I have your dear letter in my pocket, Wednesday. Thanks, awfully, dear, your letters help awfully to make this beastly separation bearable ... you are my inspiration – the mainspring of my life. God bless you dear.

Last night we had the usual working parties but the evening wasn't so quiet. The Germans away on our left grew jumpy and shelled fiercely, twice. It was a wonderful sight. Luckily the casualties were not very heavy. Last night we strafed a German working party about 5 times with rifle and machine gun fire – and I think did some damage, for they were rather abusive.

As a compliment in return their minenwerfer threw two mines at the point where the maxim had been – of course it had been moved. One didn't explode, the other burst among our wire, cleared it for twenty 20 feet, made a 2-3 foot hole and threw a bit of chevaux de frise about 15 feet long, 30 yards away on to a dug-out. [a portable defensive obstacle, typically a beam from which rows of sharpened stakes protrude, used in field fortifications or to close a breach in a wall.]

They immediately had 8 bombs & 3 shells back. Otherwise, dear, we've been very quiet here DG. May it continue. To-morrow night **Sammy** is relieving me and I go back with my company to Lonely Post. I am looking forward to it...



**24<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur is safely back at Lonely post aka “Kensington Gardens” and the officers are busy making themselves at home; the Channel is blocked so no letters have arrived from Dollie for the past few days; it is the eve of their engagement – one year ago today - and Arthur looks back on all the trails and tribulations they have faced together since then.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Kensington Gardens, 9am Tues

... So I'm back now in the (comparative) luxury & safety of Lonely Post. Outside my dug-out there is a little garden that **Bailey** & I trimmed and worked on yesterday morning before breakfast – “Kensington Gardens”. We came back here on Sunday night. **Sammy** relieved us with his Company. He was due up at 6, but didn't arrive until some time after 7.15. So we were rather late. However I'd sent **Bailey** on with some men to make all preparations, so we were not long getting settled down.

Jove, darling, it was a relief to get a long sleep at the proper time. **Bailey** & I are in a dug-out together, a big one & very comfortable with a neatly whitewashed interior. We slept, with one or two interruptions till 7.30 then we got up and worked: did up the garden & built a luxurious but permanent easy chair. Yesterday we were pretty well occupied getting things ship shape.

The post goes about 10, that's why I writing now. I'm going to write another after brekker. I'm hoping rather against fear that this letter little darling will reach you to-morrow. I was awfully disappointed the day before yesterday for the Channel was blocked and there were no mails in or out. I sent off a postcard dear in the odd chance of your getting it, but I'm afraid tomorrow must pass without your having a letter from me.

I am upset – for no letter of course from you yesterday. I'm hoping that buy now the passage will be clear again for I do want to hear from you. I just love to get your dear letters.

My thoughts are full of all that passed a year ago. Do you remember how hot it was, down on the line. How anxious I was, away from your dear side. Then you gave me the glorious news. God bless you dear heart ... If you could only realise my joy and happiness... This last year has been a strong year, dear heart, in its joys and in its sorrows. We have faced them hand in hand and Love has shown us how to accept them, the joys with a great & wonderful gladness, the sorrows bravely & with a stout heart... The way may be long, but, with God's help, and by your dear side, all will be right for us...

**25<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Today is the first anniversary of Arthur and Dollie's engagement; Arthur longs to be home – but longs even more for the day when he will make Dollie his bride.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Wed. morn. 7.45

... What a happy and joyous date this is, that marks the publication of our engagement. A date to be starred and emblazoned with red...

I am so proud to be your fiancé before the world. You're so brave and enduring, where much is hard and difficult, and one's surroundings seem monotonous or even harsh. Your dear example and your sweet letters comfort and strengthen me more than I realise, little helpmate, until a day passes without a mail. Then indeed everything seems dull & for the moment I feel physically sick with the disappointment...

I long to be back at your side. Happy day when I shall be with you again. I live for that day. May the day come soon. There is another day too dear, that I long for, with all my heart & strength... A day more glorious & happy than anything!...

**26<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Dollie has been to the Trocadero Club and sends Arthur a card; life in a dugout at Lonely Post is a little less dangerous than in the section of line they have just left – there are reports of the front being shelled and bombed; Arthur meets up with an old friend of his eldest brother, Eddy [ETA 2 – who died in 1904].**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In my dug-out, 7.30 am Thurs.

... Thanks awfully for your dear letter of Sunday, and the postcard from the Trocadero. God bless your dear heart. Life here is very much the same. We are up about 8, breakfast between 9 and half-past. There is nearly always something to be done most of the day.

Luckily the weather has improved and is now wonderfully fine but very hot. **Sammy** has been up in the line since Sunday night. He took over my bit of the trench and the 2 platoons of Wiltshires that I had the last day or two. It is rather a coincidence – did I ever tell you dear – that their Company Commander who was under my wing was called **Allen** and was a great friend of **Eddy's** (my eldest brother, ETA2)! I'm not a bit sorry we came out when we did for they've been shelled & bombed a bit since.

Well darling mine its now 8.30. The **C.O.** wants us at 9 and breakfast is "arrived". So I'm going to say au revoir darling. If the **C.O.** doesn't keep us I'll add more. Otherwise it means a separate envelope or I shan't catch the post. So darling au revoir...

**27<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**The weather is hot but thankfully the mail is now arriving regularly again; Arthur will be on the move soon – back to Neuve Chapelle – a place with many memories for him; apparently Dollie is very good at recitation! It seems people think the recent action in the Dardanelles may be the beginning of the end ...**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Lonely Post, 8.30 am Friday

... Thanks awfully for your letter of Monday. That came yesterday. The weather is broiling! And yesterday morning **Major Beresford, Bailey, Bobbie** and I had to go down to see our new bit of line – in front of Neuve Chapelle. The Indian Corps front is being reshuffled. Our bit is to be the bit between Port Arthur & the north. We go out tonight miles back to beyond Estaires, then up again to-morrow but only for 3 or 4 days.

It was hot going over yesterday – we were tramping from 9 to 1. All memories – all the Neuve Chapelle show – my birthday & your birthday cake – the show of May 1<sup>st</sup>. I hope now to get permission to go to **Harry's** grave. At any rate **Beresford** has promised that he will go.

The other night we borrowed the HQ gramophone. One of the records was a recitation by Bransby Williams, the “Green Eye of the Little Yellow God” dear. I longed for you so much he didn't recite it half as well as you do, dear, really.

No-one seems to have any idea of when this show will end. The Germans seem shy of another winter and people seem to think that things are developing rapidly in the Dardanelles. This if true will be the beginning of the end.

I think, little one, that's all my news. I live for your letters day by day. They comfort & encourage me beyond realisation. God bless you.

**28<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**A very quick line to Dollie – Arthur's Corporal is coming home on leave and bringing the note and used camera films to Dollie – with a request for 3 new films.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

La Gorgue

... Just a line. The bearer **Corp. Jewson** is just off on leave. He is bringing 2 films. You might get him 3 new ones (autographic Kodak vest pocket) please.

Heaps of love dear ...

**29<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur apologises to Dollie for the lack of letters recently – they have been very busy moving the Company up to the front at Neuve Chapelle.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a trench, nr Neuve Chapelle, 7.45pm Sunday

You must forgive me dear if its years since I wrote. You must forgive me too if this is only a short note. I've been awfully busy since we left Lonely Post.

I am awfully fit & well, and looking forward eagerly to a dear little letter to-night with the rations. God bless you, dear heart, you are such a help and strength to me; when I feel dull and weary when I'm tired or frightened – the thought of you, dear, braces me up & gives me fresh courage.... Pray for me, dear as I know you do, as I pray for you. May you be happy always...

**30<sup>th</sup> August 1915**

**Arthur is now back in the trenches in front of Neuve Chapelle, after a hot march from their temporary billet near La Gorgue. The Germans lose no time in shelling their working party, but miss them and instead kill two soldiers (and wound 17 others) stationed in the support trenches – the result of an unlucky ricochet off a nearby tree. Arthur visits the village of Neuve Chapelle on his way to HQ and describes the desolate remains as awful; Dollies latest cake offering is rapidly demolished and is much appreciated; a request for more writing paper.**

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a trench, nr Neuve Chapelle, Monday 5.20pm

... Thanks awfully for your dear letter of Thursday. It came late last night. I did appreciate it, dear heart. Let me give you some of my news dear. Last Friday night, as I told you, we were relieved – very happy too, for there's been a lot of "strafe-ing" there since we left. We got back beyond La Gorgue on the Estaires-Merville road. We were in bivouac in a large square field, round a farm where the **C.O.** was. It was a glorious night: they had rigged up a wagon cover and had our valises ready for us, so we were quite comfortable.

Next day, Saturday, was glorious but awfully hot. I had several things to see to, then got a lift in a motor ambulance to have my hair cut. We left in the afternoon about half-past 4, and marched for about an hour. Then we bivouacked in a field by the road for a couple of hours until it grew dark. The "cooker" came along with us and we had tea. At 7.30 we set off again. It was very hot and close and it rained a little. The way in seemed endless. We arrived finally all right, and got the relief through about half-past ten.

Yesterday wasn't so fine & it rained fairly hard in the evening, and grew cold with a wind from the North. The **C.O.** and the **General** were both round in the morning. They wanted some work done, so **Sammy** sent up a party in the afternoon. The Bosches must have caught sight of them from the Bois opposite. They fired a few rounds at us. Luckily they missed the working party – and their shells – pipsqueaks – were fruitless, save one that unluckily caught a tree near the support line and burst sideways into the support trench; killed 2 & wounded 17. Rotten luck, first day in, and a beast of a tree. We were pretty busy bandaging up, especially as the shell that did the damage was one of the early ones, and some more came over – luckily without doing any harm.

Last night was very quiet, rather cold & muddy. This morning **Beresford** came up. I went round with him then down into HQ through Neuve Chapelle. The desolation is awful! Since the morning I've been on one thing & another, sleeping this afternoon as much as possible but our guns have been going for the Germans away on our left where we [had] just come from. A small draft arrived on Saturday. I think its coming up to reinforce me to-night dear. **Tealeaves & Wilcox** are coming up to relieve **Rice & Ainsworth**.

That I think darling is all the news. Your parcel was a wonderful & almost instantaneous success. The cake especially suffered an early and speedy demise! God

bless you, dear, & your dear generosity – you are a darling. Remember me to all, won't you dear please. I suppose by now you've seen **Corporal Jewson** – my corporal, home on leave, with a message for you dear. He left on Saturday and I scribbled off a line hurriedly....

PS: Dear, this is my last sheet of paper. Could you get me another block please. Thanks awfully...



31<sup>st</sup> August 1915

Arthur is reduced to using “Rice” paper to write to Dollie; he and Dollie are seriously considering their future prospects now Arthur’s career in the Law has been interrupted by the war – but it is hard to settle things at a distance; rumours of a Gas attack are thankfully just that – rumours – as the wind is in a favourable direction for them; Arthur unofficially slips off to visit friend Harry’s grave – it is in a bad condition, with no cross erected yet; Arthur retrieves Harry’s cap, as requested, but fears the tattered sight of it may be too upsetting for widow Rosa.

*Arthur to Dollie*

In a trench, Neuve Chapelle, Tues. even. 6.25pm

... First of all please forgive the strange coloured paper. I ran short last night & borrowed this off **Rice**. I’ve asked them to buy me some locally to get on with... Next, dear heart, I’ve two letters to thank you for – you darling. Also two copies of the “Illustrated London News” – very, very acceptable.

I’ve been thinking a lot about what you wrote but this note is not going to be an answer. It’s a we bit hard to get things settled here in the trenches – its not been altogether a soft journey this time... You know dear how the **Pater & Mater** felt before this awful show. But then things were a bit plainer. I mean of course that my law was pursuing its normal course. Since I’ve been away from England, everything of course has been thrown out of gear ... it is difficult for me to plan out the future. I’m being very frank & beastly businesslike ... But these things have got to be faced & faced resolutely. I cannot express what I feel. You *know* – I just love you with all my power & strength. God bless you.

Now you must let me give you my news, dear – for the time is speeding and it’s getting very dark. I keep on getting interrupted. Since last night we’ve suffered alternate spasms of “wind-up” (funk) and cheerfulness. Especially this morning when the **C.O.** came round and said that we were expecting a gas attack on our left here. Also that our relief to-morrow was not coming off! Since then however more cheerful news – the wind DG continues to blow from us to the Huns and we are going to be relieved to-morrow. Cheers.

The weather is fine but cold. This afternoon I snatched  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour to visit **Harry’s** [Pulman] grave ... one side of the grave is rather overgrown. The heather is there, but the ribbon has faded nearly white. I did as dear **Rosa** asked and have **Harry’s** cap. Poor fellow. I’m going to show it to you before we give it to **Rosa** for its very torn & rather muddy and I’m afraid it will upset her *awfully*. So don’t tell her yet – unless you think it best dear. They’ve not put up his cross yet. I’ll worry them again...