

1st November 1914: Dollie will not sail for Malta until 7th November and the journey will take at least a week.

Arthur starts a diary – another wonderful family Sunday with meals at various sisters and Muscat Aunts and cousins – despite the awful weather:

Weather: Cyclonic and heavy rain squalls. Rain stopped about 10.45am; Gale. Mass (Parade 8.45) Brekker 9.45.

Church parade was put off till 8.45, so I had an extra long sleep till about 8 – which was all the more acceptable, owing to the weather without. About 8.30 I got across to the Library in between two rain squalls. Went to Confession and (later, at Mass) to Communion. Fr Verzin preached about the Holy Souls. After Mass he said arrangements had been made, or could be made – the point is immaterial – for an evening service. We fixed on 5.30 as the best time, subject to alteration. It is to be at Rabato, commencing on next Sunday. We got wet returning to the Mess after Mass.

After brekker I had a pipe etc. We had proposed to ride down to Sliema, where we were due at **Auntie Ters** [*Terasina*] for lunch, but owing to the weather we took a carrozin instead and went down via Attard and San Antonio. We left about 11.45 and got to **Marie's** ca 12.40. We stayed there for a bit, saw **Laura** and the children; then we went on to the **Muscats – Auntie Ter, Joe, Mary and Lily**. A big meal a la Maltese. We sat about a bit after – finally drove in to Valletta to **Inez** via **Mabel's** for the children's birthday tea (**Vera, Doris, Eugenie**). **Hugh and Ethel** drove with us. The party was to have been at **Mabel's** at Sliema, but as it was rather a rough day, **Inez** took over. Part of the front of the Casino was blown down.

We reached **Inez** ca 4.20. Tea en masse at 4.30. **Tony and Mabs** were there. There were letters from **the Mater** saying that **Dollie** and **her Mater** were coming out!!! After tea we had hide and seek. What a joy it is to shuffle off care for a bit and act and think like a child ... We also had a round of Old Maid! which wasn't quite so successful, owing to the over-zealous machinations of young **Jose**.

We left soon after that about 5.40, calling at the GPO in the way. The mail for Imtarfa had already gone up so we pushed on. It was almost dark, but the moon (nearly at the full) was glorious. The Citta Vecchia, as we drove close under it, presented a wonderful picture ... We reached the Mess about 7pm paid off the man 6/- cheap considering that we had him all day.

I found two envelopes from **Dollie**. I was so happy – I long for her news and I was especially anxious this time, after the wire I received on the 30/31st. The envelopes contained letters of the 18th, 20th, 22nd and 23rd October. I had a hurried change for Mess; the news delayed me.

Monday 2nd November

Dollie will not sail for Malta until 7th November : Arthur continues his diary – parades and pedicures:

Weather: exceptionally fine and hot

In the morning, reveille and parade as usual. We practised semaphore. After brekker we marched out via the N. bridge to judge distance. Priscots stayed behind – so the Amphidooda came out with me to take ranges. I put out the men with the sun in our eyes but against a distinctive background, green bush, skyline etc. We got back about 11.50 and had a foot inspection. The men's feet were very good; there wasn't one case where the feet had given trouble.

The afternoon parade was cancelled - we had Battalion parade instead at 2.30 – Swords and Puttees for a photo. Quarter Column Review Order facing the Guard Room, from the roof of which the photo was taken. After we had a "half holiday". So after going with **Edouard** to look over his quarters we came down and played tennis, **Harold, Guy, Edouard** and Self. As tennis it was rather weak, but I enjoyed the change, although I felt a bit stiff. **Guy** and I beat the others 6-1, 6-3. Then tea. After I changed.

Mess, light literature, soft music, a song or two and myself pacing the garden. It was a magnificent night... The drums made a confounded noise. Well eventually I went to bed. I thought a lot out there...

3rd November 1914

Dollie will not sail for Malta until 7th November : Arthur continues his diary – more bad weather and firing practise on the range.

Tempestuous Gales

Reveille 5.30. At early morning parade we did Semaphore again. We had decided to go out J. D. after brekker, but more trouble re Serj. Priscots so we worked at Indication and Recognition of Targets and Rapid Firing. Some of the NCOs are very weak at the former and seem unable to grasp what Indication of Targets requires.

At 11.30 Company Orders. There was not much to do. I paid off the Colour Serj for socks etc 3/1. We posted NCOs.

After lunch we marched straight out to Central Bridge. Serj P. did not come. I went on and took ranges with Amphi etc. We got back at 4.20 had a foot inspection – yesterdays remarks – I'm in a lazy mood. It's just on 10 and I've one or two more things to do. Tea, then more light Litt., a sleep, oh a glorious sleep from 5 .55 till 7. Bath. Mess. Band, a certain amount of unintelligent conversation and finally up here at 9.25. Since when I've been writing up this scrawl.

26th November 1914:

Dollie and her Mother are staying at the Imperial Hotel in Sliema; Arthur sends a note to say he got back to Imtarfa safely despite the torrential rain;

Arthur to Dollie

Malta, Thursday 1.30pm

... I've just been trying to get you on the phone, but without success. There is a terrible gale blowing – probably that has something to do with it.

I arrived up here all right, dear, last night. It took an hour and twenty minutes. The rain was terrible and the gutters were like torrents. Strange to say, though, in the fine intervals there was a bright moon.

Of the 3 Companies that went out to Melleha, two – **Harold Moore's** and **Alfred's** – came back about 4am this morning as there were only tents for one Company down there. **Edouard** remained. I have been busy all day. 7-8, 9-12.30 and again on parade at 2. So as the post goes at 2.30 I'm writing now. There is a glorious fire in the Mess, dear. I do wish you and I were in front of one and alone darling. I do miss you so.

About tomorrow, sweet, I think that we had better leave things as we arranged i.e. I shall come to you as soon after 4 as possible. I am longing to see you.

There's not much news, dear, except that in future, Thursdays are to be half-holidays as well as Saturdays! I long for tomorrow and you; thank Heaven, the time is really short, though it seems ages when we're apart.

I'm posting this, as **Alfred's** Maltese boy is going to fetch the horses...

28th November 1914

Dollie and her Mother are now staying at 5 Str San Paolo in Notabile; Arthur makes arrangements for a visit from the Pulmans:

Arthur to Dollie

Malta

Just a line. I expect to be over for lunch. I'm not orderly officer to-day so things are all right. I have got leave as required...

P.T.O: I've just had a reply from **Pulman** re tonight. He is awfully sorry, but **Rosa's** arm is not altogether recovered from the inoculation, so he is full of regrets at having to refuse.

However re this afternoon – he and **Rosa** are driving to San Antonio and if the weather keeps fine will come and call as they come back. They want you both in to lunch and tea some time next week, when we can show you the barracks.