

**1<sup>st</sup> October 1914**

**Part three of a long letter that Arthur writes to Dollie on 29<sup>th</sup> September; in this section – a long and tedious inspection by the General – another inoculation – and visiting the family of sister-in-law, Maggie Agius (nee Samut):**

*Arthur to Dollie*

... On Saturday I was Orderly Officer so my duties began at 6.30 with inspection of issue of rations, 7.45 men's breakfasts, then my own, 9 Guard Mounting. At 10.30 the General came round barracks. As I was Orderly Officer I had to accompany him round. We were several Officers, Brigadier, C.O., Brigade Major, **Wheeler** as Staff Captain, Doctor, myself the respective Company and Platoon Officers and several NCOs.

It was a weary business; we went into nearly every room and institute – about 100 barrack rooms, kitchens, latrines, Dry Canteen, including Reading Room, bar and general room, the buildings of the Serjeants Mess, Wet Canteen, Bath-house, Orderly Rooms, Quartermaster's Rooms, Doctor's Room, Tailors shop, Pioneers Shop, various stores, bread, meat etc. By this time we had taken an hour and three-quarters, I had to go to right back to the Wet Canteen on the usual daily inspection, then at 12.45 men's dinners. At 1.15 my own lunch. Besides which on Friday afternoon and evening and on Saturday morning the Company had to be paid. As it was, the last payment of the month and the accounts are balanced monthly. It was an unusually long job. Besides which we opened a Savings Bank for the men.

However on Saturday afternoon at two I was inoculated for the second time (it requires 2 doses for a sufficient safeguard) and promptly went to bed. Luckily I was not feverish though my arm was very painful. So on Sunday **Alfred**, who was among those inoculated, and I got up about 9 and went over to Citta Vecchia for Mass at the Cathedral at 11. After Mass we saw **Maggie's** mother [*Enrichetta Samut*], youngest sister [*Lena*] and young brother [*Frank*] who kindly took us in to their place there. They are very well D.G. **Maggie's** father [*Col. Achilles Samut*] is an Assistant Censor. We got back here for lunch.

Afterwards **Guy, Alfred, Bertie Mathieson** and myself drove over to Citta Vecchia, had a look at the view, then went into the Cathedral and finally went on into the Catacombs, which are very strange and – as most catacombs are labyrinthine in their wanderings - they say that they even run down to the Marsa and Quarantine Harbour 7-8 miles away. We were conducted round by a Maltese ... accompanied by two tiny children – his sons ... It was rather stuffy and the ceiling was annoyingly low so that it was scarcely ever possible to stand upright. We had tea at the Point de Vue Hotel of which the others will be able to tell you.

On Monday **Harold Moore** came in from his outlying post on the coast and **Harry Pulman** relieved him. **Evie** [*Noel*] who now has A Coy also went out. We are able to go out for a week at a time now – in regular rotation.

On Saturday we got into our kharki drill uniform. The men look very clean and smart in it. They don't wear puttees with. We wear breeches and light puttees if we have them, other wise the ordinary ones. Our buttons and badges which are of a

special pattern and which were ordered in England have not yet arrived. All parades are in helmets and shirtsleeves except the 5.30pm (or as it is now the 5 o'clock) parade when we wear tunics. I got rather a decent pair of shirts in Valetta of tussok very cool...

**2<sup>nd</sup> October 1914**

**Final part of a long letter that Arthur writes to Dollie on 29<sup>th</sup> September; in this section – the weather cools down - the geography of the island as seen from Imtarfa Barracks – Arthur speculates about the remainder of their war:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

The weather on the whole has treated us well. We've had one day's rain which was torrential, otherwise it has been moderately fine. Today is very cloudy and for the past few days it has been growing appreciable cooler. The views from this place are magnificent; on the west, we cannot see far. The barracks are built on a solitary hill with the Officers Mess at the N.E. corner. On the N. and E. the land stretches right away till it meets the sea, which we can see for nearly half the compass from Salina Bay down to Maddalena [*Madliena?*] where the hill shuts it off from view for an interval. Then it opens out again to Sliema, Valetta and round to the Marsa Scirocco [*Marsaxlokk*] and beyond. I'm afraid dear that these are names to you alone (would to heaven that you were here to see!) but the others will show you how they lie upon the map.

South there runs a deep and narrow ravine. Sheer on the hill opposite rise the great walls of Citta Vecchia, surmounted by the Dome and twin towers of its Cathedral. To the East another valley runs up and then a range of hills which blocks our further view. The view from my window is glorious right over to Citta Vecchia. The dawn is wonderful here and light that hovers over everything at sunset. The light is wonderful; it is more an atmosphere of delicately tinted colour than light, dear, and everything is reflecting in soft tones of grey, or pink, or pale blue, purple, mauve or gold – always one colour that varies with every sun, always soft, often subtle.

As far as every indication seems to show, darling we are to be the garrison of Malta till the close of the war. No one knows anything but the chances of our moving from here seem very remote. We are absolutely and entirely unfitted to go to the front at present. Whilst we are here we can do a certain amount of training as far as the early stages are concerned but from the very nature of Malta which is intensely cultivated and which offers no training ground of any sort or size whatever, it is impossible to acquire even a smattering of the all-important field training. It is different in England and as far as I can judge they are much more likely to train the great reserves accumulating in England – where they can train them and get them ready and send them before us, who cannot get our proper training. So it seems to me, darling, at any rate, and to others too.

Well darling little girl, I think I've finished all my news pro tem. I am very well and have an enormous appetite, but I'm feeling awfully strange and restless without you...I am longing to hear that you are coming out. Your photo is always before me ...

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 1914**

**Poor Arthur has not heard from Dollie for a few weeks now – the mails are so slow – he longs for her letters; Dollie's photograph is much admired, adorned by flowers:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Malta, Saturday 11.50am

I am in hourly expectation of a letter from you, as they say a boat came in this morning. So I thought that I would wait for your dear news before I wrote. However they say also that there are prospects of a mail out today, so I am just writing a brief note, hoping to catch it. I am longing for news from you, dear heart. The last letter that I had was of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. It seems so long ago. But by tonight please Heaven, I shall have heard.

The last two or three days have been quite uneventful. We have been following out the usual routine. Next week we begin a fresh time-table, but just as strenuous. Yesterday I took an easy off in bed as I had a stomach ache. But I was all right again D.G. by the same afternoon and have been on duty as usual. **Algy** came in to see me twice. Both he and **Harold Moore** admired your dear photo so much. I have fixed it on my inventory board with drawing pins, on my mantelpiece between two candlesticks, which are there more for ornament than use, as the whole place is lit by electricity. I also now keep a bunch of flowers near it; so far the beautiful pale blue flower of the plumbago creeper, which spreads over one side of our courtyard...

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**4<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Part two of the letter to Dollie written on 3<sup>rd</sup>: A fellow officer has had very sad news and Arthur does his bit to comfort him; brother Alfred and his Company are sent out to the guard position at 9<sup>th</sup> Milestone; Arthur longs to hear that Dollie it to come out to Malta:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

... **Algy** poor fellow is very dull. He heard on Saturday night that his young brother who was in the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, had been killed. He landed in France on the 10<sup>th</sup> and was killed on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The circumstances are rather sad as he had only been married six months... Moreover unless the poor girl is to have a son, or unless **Algy** marries, the family will die out. So altogether **Algy**, who was very fond of the poor fellow, is very depressed. Last night he had dinner sent up to his room so I went in and talked to him for a bit.

This morning C and D Companies, that is **Gilbert Reeves** and **Alfred**, went out to the outlying post at the 9<sup>th</sup> Milestone to relieve **Harry Pulman** and **Evie [Noel]** who have just come in. This morning too the **CO** had an inspection of Barrack Rooms at 10.30. We of H Company were in the last lines so we didn't finish until a quarter to twelve. This afternoon I want to get into Valletta for several things. This evening there is to be an informal concert in the Gym to which I expect the most of us will go. It is timed for 8.30 after Mess.

Now darling, how about you? I am most eagerly awaiting your dear news. Life is settling down here. I think more and more of you every day and hope with all my heart that soon I shall have the most welcome news that you are coming out here.

God bless you, darling of my heart, and keep you safe and well...

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

**Dollie takes her niece to Seaford for a week; Arthur and the Officers hijack the Imtarfa mail; an accident in Floriana:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Malta, Thursday 7.55am

...I am seizing this opportunity of writing to answer another budget of your darling news, your letters of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>. Thank you sweetheart from the bottom of my heart. I long for your letters. They come like flashes of the warming sunlight in the dark dreariness of our separation

But let me answer you first, dear. I am sorry to hear that your teeth have been giving you trouble. I hope that they are all right again, now dear... I must congratulate you, darling on the new blouse. I grow prouder and prouder of you with your dear little fingers, dainty and skilful... I am awfully glad to hear that you have the resolution to keep up your visiting the men's wives. I have already told you how pleased the **C.O.** is with you. I am more pleased and proud of you.

I didn't know that you had arranged to take **Yvonne** down to Seaford and to spend a week at the Convent. I suppose you are back by now and can only hope that the change has done you good darling. Do you remember us at Seaford. One night when we drove over to Eastbourne and again one afternoon when we did a record walk to Littlington, is it? And how we kept looking back to see if the carriage was in sight and down in the valley towards Littlington, where the stream runs through we saw a heron.

I had hoped, darling to be able to enclose some photos in this letter. I took them in on Saturday and the man promised to let me have them yesterday but they never arrived. I am sorry to hear that the ones we took in the garden at 45 weren't very successful. Get **Dick** to take some of you. I should love to have them.

And now sweetheart for some of my news. Last Saturday we had a very busy morning. The **C.O.** came round barracks. In the afternoon we had a parade immediately after lunch, inspection of Mess tins and then Edouard and I went on to the station, as there were several odd things that I wanted to do in Valletta. In the train we met most of our fellows. When we got to Valletta it simply poured – quite a young thunderstorm but we did nearly all we wanted. Harry Pulman came with us. As soon as we reached town we went to the Post Office. A mail had arrived but they hadn't sorted it yet and said it wouldn't get to us till the next day Sunday. However just before we came back at 6 we went and finding that all the Imtarfa letters had by then been put into one bag, we collared it and brought it up with us. So I got your darling news that night D.G.

In the afternoon we called on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion at Floriana and had tea there. Their Col and Doctor had a nasty accident the other day. They were driving in a trap with one of the horses that they had brought out from England when it bolted. The trap collided with a tramway standard: they were both thrown out. The Col was

severely bruised, the Doctor broke 4 ribs, one of which pierced his lung. However they are on the fair way to recovery.



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severely bruised, the Doctor broke 4 ribs, one of which pierced his lung. However they are on the fair way to recovery.

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

**Part two of a letter to Dollie begun on 8<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur is still working hard; a detailed account of a typical working day; thoughts of home and Hampstead; the flying corps is not for Arthur:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Malta, Thursday 7.55am

...On Sunday dear I slacked. We had Mass in the Men's Library at 8.30. I went to Confession and Communion. Thought so much of you, darling – do you remember one Mass in the Cathedral when neither of us felt well and you nearly fainted...

After Mass we had brekker. I slacked most of the morning. In the afternoon we played tennis hard. It is beginning to get dark quite early – about 6. How is it in dear old Hampstead? I wish I was with you, darling of my heart.

On Monday I had a very full day which has been the case this week as we are doing, among all our other work, a musketry course. Just for curiosity I wrote down my time-table. 5.30 Reveille, 6.20 go on parade, inspect rations at the Store and return to parade until 7.30; thence to the Cookhouses to inspect the serving out of breakfasts; get back to the Mess for my own brekker at 8.10; on parade again at 8.50, inspect the Guard and on parade until 10. At 10 attend at the Company Orderly Room. At 10.30 at the Battalion Orderly Room; at 11 parade till 12; 12 Company Orderly Room; 12.15 Inspect Canteen; 12.25 return to Company Orderly Room; 12.45 inspect Men's Dinners; back to the Mess by 1.20 for my own lunch. 2.15 Inspect rations, thence on to parade at 3-4; Tea at 4:10 then on to parade and inspect picquet 4.50; parade 5-6; 6-6.15 change for gym; 6.15-7 gym; 7-7.30 change for Mess; 7.30-9 Mess; 9.10 Company business; 9.45 up to parade ground for Tattoo; 10 Tattoo; 10.15 go round barracks to see that all lights are out; return at 10.40 to turn out the Guard; back to bed at 11. So you see sweet heart, we are having a pretty strenuous time and are on our feet all day.

On the days when I'm not Orderly Officer there is generally something to do that is not in the schedule and so I always come up to my room immediately after Mess and turn in. Occasionally I read a bit before getting in to bed but am generally too sleepy. So you may assure yourself, you little dear, as to my good behaviour...

So the days are slipping by. There is not much change save that now gym in the evening is voluntary and we have all taken up boxing instead. But we are all still the veriest tyros at it though there are one or two with past experience who box fairly well.

Yesterday the C.O. read out an order asking for volunteers from the Territorial force for the Flying Corps. Apparently if people are qualified in certain ways, age etc, they may volunteer. The CO then decides whether he will send their names forward to the Brigade Office. Finally the latter choose one man. Mindful of you darling, I did not send in my name. I don't expect the CO will want anyone to go from the Battalion but will rather that someone out of one of the other battalions gets the job.

The weather has been very variable. It generally rains hard at night. Yesterday was a real scorcher – apart from that the weather has been quite cool and windy.

**10<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**A trip to Valletta; the Officers set up their own photography shop; news of sister Laura and Alfred:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Saturday 8.30am

So here we are again darling. It is very trying not to have time to write a complete letter at one time, but to be continually interrupted and having to stop short and dash off on duty. Today however I hope to have more time.

This afternoon I have to go into Valletta again. We have decided to develop and print our own photos. There are several people in the Mess with cameras and we reckon that it will be much cheaper to do our own. So we are going to get material for a dark room and fit one up here in the Officers Mess – under the charge of a man in the Battalion who apparently is a professional photographer in civil life.

This morning the **C.O.** is going to inspect barracks again, so I expect to be fairly busy. We have a very strenuous programme again for next week. I have just had a note from **Alfred**, who is out on detached duty with **Gilbert Reeves**. He says that **Laura** visited him yesterday and that he is going over tomorrow for lunch. So I'll try and ride down to him and go along too.

The weather keeps generally fine – though yesterday we had a very heavy rainstorm about midday. My health D.G. is excellent. The air up here – we are about 600 feet up – is very pure and ones appetite is very healthy...

**11<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Part two of a letter to Dollie begun on 10<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur's continuing hopes that her Mater will bring Dollie to Malta for the winter; the photographer has let him down; Arthur feels so dull without Dollie:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Saturday 8.30am

...Yesterday we had a Mess meeting, but on nothing of any importance. In the afternoon we checked all the men's kit – rather a lengthy business.

Your dear photo is on the mantelpiece beside me as I write, flanked by two candlesticks and a mass of bougainvillea. I always keep some flowers near you darling. I am longing to hear that **your Mater** has decided to come out here for the winter. I'm sure the climate here, which is glorious, would do her a world of good, far better than the fogs and rains of town. I hear that some of the Officers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion have their wives coming out. So here's hoping – I pray hard that soon I shall have news that you are coming. God bless you, light of my eyes.

The photographer has not yet sent my photos. I shall have to see him this afternoon and find out why. It is a nuisance. I was anxious to see how they had turned out.

For the rest, little darling, I think there is no more news. I feel very depressed sometimes and always dull, to be so far away from you... Heaven knows, dear heart and thank Heaven for it, none could be closer in my mind and heart than you and I...

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

**Part one of a long letter to Dollie begun on 17<sup>th</sup> October: Poor Dollie is still having trouble with her teeth - Arthur is most concerned; he remembers happier days at Seaford:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday 9am

Thanks awfully for your dear letters of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> October. I long for the end of each week, dear, for a mail generally arrives on a Saturday and another on Tuesday. Your dear letters always come by the Saturday mail but this week they were two or three days late. There was an awful rumour that they had gone on to Port Said by mistake. Thank heaven, however, they finally arrived safe and sound. Thanks awfully darling, your darling letters come as a breathe of life to me.

I see from your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> that the dentist had hurt you. Darling I am sorry; I had been anxious about your teeth, when you spoke of several visits to Weller ... I hope and pray that the next time that you have to go, Weller will be able to do what may be necessary without hurting you in the slightest bit.

I am glad that the change at Seaford has done you good darling: please heaven the next time you leave London it may be to come out here. Remember me kindly, darling, to those I know at the Convent, to Mme O'Sullivan and to Miss Dorothy. How the names bring back the happy hours we spent at Seaford together, just you and I, my own darling: but we [*are*] going to be happier still, dear, you and I always together. I feel I love you more and more each day...

The Censor seems to have treated us very kindly, doesn't he sweetheart – none of your letters here have been opened.

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

**Part two of a long letter to Dollie begun on 17<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur's fellow officers have written for their wives to come out to Malta; Dollie's sister in law Eugenie is to travel out, so the prospects are good for Dollie's arrival:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday 9am

... Now darling I am going to quote you something that you wrote to me – on the 26<sup>th</sup>, you wrote “the **Mater** told **Eugenie** that if she went (to Malta) we would go with her” and again on the 27<sup>th</sup> you wrote “Of course, if **Eugenie** goes out to **Edouard**, I shall be able to come for certain”. Well, sweetheart, **Harry Pulman** has been pressing the **C.O.** for some time for permission to bring his wife out and last night he got permission. So he has wired and written for his wife, the **Colonel** has done the same for his, and **Edouard** for **Eugenie** and **Bertie Mathieson** for his wife. **Guy Livingston** too has written home on the same matter. So now you see darling how a glimmer of hope that I always had that you would come has burst into a great spark and I am longing to hear in the very near future that you are coming...

So dearest, if it is decided as I long for it to be, do send me a wire. I cannot express how excited I feel at the possibility – what a joyous one. What gives me more hope too dear, is that **your Mother** has not been feeling perfectly fit ... that she feels she ought to leave England. Here darling is her opportunity. The climate out here is ripping these next few months ...

**Harry Pulman** is trying to arrange for his wife and **Mrs Howell** to leave on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> – but that rather depends on **Mrs Howell**. I don't know what **Edouard** has written to **Eugenie**. She will be able to tell you and talk things over with you and **your Mater**. But the sooner, darling the better – though there's precious little need for me to say that – you darling...



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

**Part three of a long letter to Dollie begun on 17<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur is organising the Mess postal service – a subject dear to his heart! He describes a striking lightening storm over the island:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday, 1.30pm

... I had to rush off – Barrack Room Inspection and was busy until five to one; lunch at one and voila.

So now for some of my news. Last Saturday I went into Valletta with **Johnny Sutcliffe**. We are running our own dark room and having our films developed and printed by a corporal and private of “H” Company. **Johnny** and I bought various impedimenta necessary. We also bought some paint, blank visiting cards, ink, etc; the Mess was having a letter rack made by the battalion pioneers and I made out the name cards. I also got my photos from Ellis, but he had not done them well. I am enclosing what he did, but I am not pleased with them.

It poured with rain part of the time as it has done for the last two Saturdays, but we were in shelter. About 6 when we chased all over the town, trying to get what we wanted, we went round to all the shops gathered in our parcels and drove up. It was an extraordinary evening. In front of us the silhouette of the ridge of hills, crowned with the Governor’s palace at Verdala, Citta Vecchia and the Barracks stood out sharp and well-defined against a band of orange; higher a broader band of cloud stretched half way round our horizon and flashing through every few seconds, the reflection of distant lightening. Further above it was a calm and peaceful evening – the stars were very bright ...

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

**Part four of a long letter to Dollie begun on 17<sup>th</sup> October: A ripping bathe in the sea at Sliema and a wonderful Sunday with the sisters and their families; a not so wonderful journey back to Imtarfa in the mist:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday

... On Sunday we had a priest up here in barracks as before. I went to Confession and Communion: prayed hard for you, little girl, as I always do... After Mass and brekker, I changed into riding breeches and boots and rode down to **Alfred** on detachment at the 9<sup>th</sup> Milestone. I rode on one of the horses that **Alfred** has lent to him and the groom brought the other.

We went slowly, it was hot and the flies were troublesome. It took about an hour to get down. They were all very well down there. **Alfred** had some unpleasant mosquito bites, but he was getting rid of them. Thence we rode off to Sliema, to **Laura's** for lunch. We rode round the Grenfell Road which skirts the sea nearly the whole way round. It was a glorious day. The colouring was magnificent. The sea was a wonderful blue and the rocks are very red – brick red.

We got to **Laura's** about one and had lunch there. In the afternoon **Alfred, Hugh, Eddy** and I had a ripping bathe. We undressed in **Laura's** house then went along the road and down to the sea. **Alfred** disguised in a rug and I in a couple of towels – bathing dresses underneath, of course. In the evening we had supper at **Mabel's**. We saw **Marie and Frank**. They are both very well, D.G.

After supper we got out the horses from where we had stabled them and rode back to the 9<sup>th</sup> Milestone. It was a wonderful night but very dark and the effect of the searchlights all along the coast was rather weird. It was a sirocco – or hot and damp. We both got very warm. We reached the 9<sup>th</sup> Milestone about 10.20. When we arrived the groom said that he hadn't the key of the stable up here; so we left the horses down there and I took a carrozin (cab) up. It was very damp and the mist was so thick that one could not see more than a few yards ahead. In addition, the horse was very, very tired. However I finally got here at 11.30 and so to bed ...

**21<sup>st</sup> October 1914**

**Part five of a long letter to Dollie begun on 17<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur is in charge of the firing range; young Giles is to try for the flying corps; their work schedule is issued up to January 9<sup>th</sup> – so New Year will be spent in Malta:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday

... Our work this week has been even more strenuous than last. We have been continuing our musketry course. The last few days we have been doing some miniature range firing. We have a 30yd open air range – of which I am range warden. This afternoon I am going to buy some targets for pistol practice.

Do you remember darling that the War Office asked for one officer per brigade to volunteer for the flying corps. Young **Giles** has got the brigade job and they have sent his name forward to the War Office.

Our next programme of work is out and goes up to January 9<sup>th</sup> – chiefly preliminary work. We start on musketry on Monday. I am longing for news that you are coming out, darling little girl... Today there should be a mail in. I am longing for news of you, dearest. I have some orange blossom in front of me as I write – a present from Joseph the gardener. It is very strongly scented...

**22<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

Arthur last wrote to Dollie on 17<sup>th</sup> October. His next new letter will be available on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

**24th October 1914**

**Arthur is still pinning his hopes on Dollie coming out to Malta with the Mater soon; Dollie knits a scarf; a request for a new copy of their engagement announcement in the "Times" – the Mess servants cleared the last one away!**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Imtarfa, Saturday morning 12.25

... Thanks awfully for your darling letters from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>. I got them last Sunday night and have been seeking since then an opportunity of writing sooner than this.

First of all, sweet love, I am glad to hear that you are well. God bless you my darling, may you never have a day of sickness in your life. I was pleased that the opportunity came for you to get away to Seaford, for I feel sure that the change has done you heaps of good and tended to break the monotony and aching of the days of our separation. I live in hopes of hearing in the immediate future the joyful news that you are coming out – it would be heavenly – but since the time that I heard that **Edouard** had wired and written for **Eugenie**, my hopes have been raised to the highest pitch ... I only hope that when matters come to a head and require a decision, your dear **Mater** will say "Yes" and not "No"... The very thought of there being a chance of my seeing you fills me with an intense and passionate joy ...

I am almost excited about the muffler – you darling old thing. It's awfully sweet of you. The idea is so ripping, apart from the intrinsic value of the muffler. Believe me, sweet soul, I shall prize it as part of you, made by you with your hands ... God bless you, dear.

I want to ask you too, my own girl, to let me have a cutting of our engagement, announced in the "Times". I left the "Times" here for all to see and one morning the Mess servants cleared it away. They have no rule as to the length of time they leave papers in the Mess and so it is impossible to gauge it right. So, please darling, either send me one or bring me one when you come: preferably of course, the latter...

**25<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Arthur admired Dollies photographs – though no camera will ever do her justice. More Company work for Arthur as Dollie's brother Edouard has been inoculated; Arthur longs for news of Hampstead – he is so very homesick:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Sun 9.30am

Thanks darling for the photos; they are not bad; not nearly good enough of you, you sweet heart. I was awfully pleased to get them, though. **Evie** showed me the whole lot. Ours was quite the best of them, as he said.

So now dear for some news. First, sweet heart, I am sorry if there is any delay in my letters reaching you. The authorities refuse absolutely to say when the mails leave, so posting to catch a mail is out of the question. So what I do is write when I can which is generally Saturdays and Sundays. Our days in the week are full until 4.15pm. Then we have tea. Afterwards we have an hour or two free but this last week several things have cropped up. For example on Thursday we spent that time paying the men.

The Company are going strong – we have started a Sports Club, which also embraces gardening! And a Savings Bank, which I have under my charge. Some of the men are very thrifty. On Friday **Edouard** and several others were inoculated for the second time. He is quite all right again dear, but in the meantime I've had the Company on my shoulders. This week has been a very busy week for them as we begin to teach them preliminary musketry, of which they were very ignorant. Two or three days ago too I had to see the **Brigade Major** about the machine guns and to arrange as to their training, ammunition for range practices, etc. I have to draw up a programme, heaven knows when!

The weather has been extraordinarily fine this week; we've had one wet day but for the rest, it has been very fine and extremely hot. One day we were able to see Sicily quite distinctly. The nearest point is about 60 miles across the sea. So you may imagine, dearest, what the atmosphere is like. We seem so cut off from the rest of the world here – it seemed so strange to be able to see land within a moderate distance. My health D.G. has been exceptionally good out here. I only hope that you are well too sweetheart; if only you were out here, my happiness would be complete with you. Write and tell me everything about yourself, dear. What you do, what you wear. What is life like in town, the weather, the regulations about lights. What do people think of the war? How are all the family, your family, darling and mine ... **Dick [Agius], Pluto and Scottie [Dollie's dogs]**. I feel awfully homesick sometimes ...

**26<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Part two of a long letter to Dollie begun on 25<sup>th</sup> October: Arthur and Alfred visit sisters Inez, Laura, Mabel and Marie – and surprise their nieces at the Convent school – causing quite a stir:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Sun 9.30am

Last Saturday I went again into Valletta, there were one or two things I wanted to get. On Sunday we had our photos taken, a general group both with and without the General; then one of the Subalterns. **Alfred** and I went to Mass early up here. The photo was supposed to be at 10 but the man was half an hour late. We changed into our riding things then more photos. We finally left about 11.30 or 11.40 and riding down by a side road we reached Valletta and **Inez's** about 1pm. It was a very windy morning.

After dinner we went across to Sliema to the Convent, saw the children there – two of **Inez, Vera and Doris**, and one of **Mabel's, Eugenia**: caused quite a stir in the Convent. The girls were all very well. Thence we went to **Marie's** for tea, via **Laura**. They were all very bucked with your sweet letters to them. It was very darling of you to write, sweetheart.

After tea at **Marie's** we paid a short visit to an Aunt and so across to Valletta again to **Mabel's** for supper at 7 – and after supper we rode up again, getting back about 9.30pm. The girls are all very anxious to see you, darling...

**27<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Part three of a long letter to Dollie begun on 25<sup>th</sup> October: A visit to Hagar Qim and surprising the occupants of Qrendi; Sunday lunch with sister Laura; Arthur is still waiting for the news he longs to hear – that Dollie has sailed for Malta with her sister-in-law Eugenie:**

*Arthur to Dollie*

Sun 9.30am

Yesterday I had a very full morning. In the afternoon I rode out with **Sammy, Wheeler and Page** to see some prehistoric ruins at a place called Hagiar Kim, 6 or 7 miles from here. It was quite enjoyable riding: we left about 3 and got there at 4.20. We rode through a place called Krendi on our way. All the people rushed out to see us go through. The country is wonderful – the atmosphere so clear and the colouring possesses an extraordinary beauty – it is most picturesque. The ruins of Hagiar Kim are right up on a ridge overlooking the sea and Filfola, a great islet of rock that looks like a great jewel. The ruins are the remains of a temple built of vast blocks of stone, which are very worn away where they face the sea. We left about 4.40 and came back the same route for want of another. It was a glorious evening, darling. My heart was full of you sweetheart as it always is.

This morning **Alfred** and I went to Confession and Communion. We are due down to **Laura's** for lunch so expect to go off soon – but I [*am*] determined to write to you first, darling little girl, so that I can post it when I go down...

Darling, I am longing to hear that you are going to come out with **Eugenie**: I am hoping for news of some sort today though I fear it is too early... Life here without you is like food without salt – for you my love are the salt of my life... God bless you, dear and keep you safe. Please remember me kindly to your dear **Mater** and to all whom I know...



**28<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

**Arthur has heard that Dollie's sister in law, Eugenie, is due to sail for Malta very soon. He sends Dollie the following telegram:**

Text:            Understand Eugenie  
                     Sailing soon  
                     Wire news love Arthur