

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 home.

I have received your { *letter dated* Mon.
telegram .. _____
parcel .. _____

Letter follows at first opportunity. ✓

I have received no letter from you

{ lately ..
{ for a long time.

Signature)
only. }

C. S. S.

Date 2 Sept. 1915.

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

3rd September 1915

Arthur is feeling the loss of 3 more men dying of wounds, killed by the unlucky ricochet of the German shell last Sunday; the wet weather isn't helping his mood either; the Company have since moved back to billets behind La Gorgue – finding room for all the men was a difficult task, especially after a long, wet tramp in the dark.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, nr La Gorgue, Friday even 6.15

... I've heaps of letters to thank you for, dear heart and 2 days news to give you. I wish you could realise in what degree your dear letters have comforted and helped me especially these last few days. I've been rather in the dumps...

... The weather is very wet – it has rained now since Wednes. evening. You'll be sorry to hear that in addition to the two men killed by that shell last Sunday, 3 more have died since. One was **Serj. Newman, who got the D.C.M. at Neuve Chapelle. Another was a married man, Pte Wines** – they had only just joined us.

We were relieved on Wednesday night by the Manchesters. They didn't arrive until half-past ten, and we had a long tramp back, reaching here at 2.45am. It was simply pouring. There was shelter for about a third of the men only. We foraged around, found another barn & packed all the men in. Yesterday we spent settling down.

This morning, dear, I rode into Lestrem with **Johnnie & Sammy** to draw money. I got very wet. This afternoon I've been paying out. To-night there's a working party on. Luckily I'm not for it, though all the men are out. Tonight we are having a Company dinner at Estaires.

4th September 1915

A pleasant Company dinner breaks the monotony; hopes for more home leave but nothing is certain; Dollie checks with Arthur about going to a dance; the wind is blowing from the “home” direction, making Arthur wish even more to be back with Dollie; a bath, a lunch, some shopping in Estaires; fixing up a cinema for the men; a letter from brother Dick [in Khartoum] and a welcome parcel from the Mater.

Arthur to Dollie

Sat. 8.20am

... The dinner was a great success and made a pleasant break from the perpetual monotony of our usual evening meal. We had dinner about 7.45 & left at 10.30 ... The sun is shining to-day but I want you dear sun of my life – for things are dull & gloomy away from you. God bless you.

Johnnie Sutcliffe is trying to work the leave dodge, dear. I hope it will come off. Leave has now been the round of officers & **Johnnie** is now going to apply for those at the beginning of the list, although 3 months have not elapsed since their last lot. He is not very sanguine of success. But I hope it does come off for I'm only 4th or 5th down and I want to be with you ... The **C.O.** asked after you again the other day & wants to be remembered to you. I met the **Padre** yesterday & have fixed up for Confession to-day & Mass to-morrow DG.

Well darling, I think that's all the news. I feel this is a rotten letter. Forgive me dear. My thoughts & feelings keep on outstripping my pen and I'm continually stopping to recall myself to the words I'm writing. I cannot write one half of what I would say, or speak one half of what I feel ... so you must make up my deficiencies out of the store of your knowledge...

Saturday even: 8.50pm

Thanks awfully for your dear letter of Wednesday. Dear heart how I love to find that well known writing on the table waiting for me when I come in. Of course, darling, go to the dance on the 17th. I want you to be happy: I want you to enjoy yourself. You may be sure that on that night you will be in my thoughts in an especial manner and I shall imagine that I am with you once more, and picture us two together, dancing as we have so often danced, supremely happy in each others company.

The weather since I wrote this morning has kept fairly fine. There is a northwest wind blowing that brings showers in its train. Lucky wind, the “home wind” I call it – for it seems to blow straight from the sea and home and you – and I can feel the call of all I love in its breath. It makes me very homesick...

This morning CO's orders at 11... Then I went into La Gorgue with **Newsom**. We had a priceless bath, he drew some money. It was then about 20 past one so we walked into Estaires where we saw about a watch and had lunch at the local hotel – in the Hotel de Ville. Quite good.

After lunch we busied ourselves about a cinema for the men, backwards & forwards. Finally it began to rain, so **Newson** who was coming back here was left to complete the final arrangements. **Lewis**, whom we had met at lunch, and I turned back into Estaires for tea. After tea we came back here. I found your dear letter; also one from **Dick [Agius]** and a parcel from the **Mater**. God bless her. I then went into La Gorgue again for Confession... To-morrow I am going over to Mass at 8.30. So Good-night & God bless you...

5th September 1915

More welcome post from home and the “Fusilier Whisper” from Dick in Khartoum; a quiet day – Mass & Communion and breakfast with the Padre; a walk North with Beresford, away from the all too familiar scenery of the south – though Arthur’s spirits fall when they return to billets; Beresford has visited the graves of their friends killed at Neuve Chapelle and had the site tidied up; Arthur is in a reflective and sombre mood.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Sunday even, 8.30pm

... Many thanks for your dear letter of Thursday, also for the note by **Corp Jewson**. You dear – heaps of thanks. I also received the Illustrated London News – very much appreciated. **Dick** [Agius] sent me copies of the “Fusilier Whisper” – a fortnightly paper that they run out there – its very amusing.

To-day it’s been very quiet. This morning I went to Mass & Communion at half-past 8 in La Gorgue, then to brekker with the **Padre**. The weather was rather overcast, but later it cleared & grew quite warm. The old “home” wind is still blowing from the N.W.

On coming up here I met **Beresford**. He and I went for a walk. We are on two hours notice – so we couldn’t go far. We struck N. into new ground. I’m so sick of the country S.E. & W. after 9 months. We walked N. for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, until we could see the only hills that lie near our lines. Mont Cassel, Mont des Chabs & Mont Kemmel – the last only 6 or 7 miles away just across the Belgian frontier. I hated turning back. With every pace Northwards or Westwards one’s spirits seem to rise. However time pressed. We were back just before 1.

After lunch, dear, I have to confess that I started going through my kit and ended – asleep! But I enjoyed it. That occupied the afternoon until tea. After tea (and some birthday cake chez **Sammy**) I returned & finished off my things. The others of the Company are distributed between working parties and dinner at Estaires. Some of them were in the Gazette & they were baptising their second “star”....

There is no further news, dear heart. You’ll be glad to hear – have I told you before, darling – that **Beresford** managed to get up to **Harry’s** [Pulman] grave. It was beginning to get a bit overgrown, so he has fenced it in with wooden battens. He has done the same to **Bertie Mathieson’s** & the others. I am glad.

If it wasn’t for you, sweet heart mine, life would be awfully hard to bear out here. There is an unvarying monotony of danger, dirt, long march & reliefs, rest (or so called rest) chiefly working parties at night – another march & relief, dander & dirt & so on endlessly...

(Note - see 'Edgar' page on website for images of The Fusilier Whisper)

6th September 1915

Dollie's latest parcel arrives, with much needed writing paper; an excellent turkey lunch - a generous donation from a fellow officer; an afternoon ride north with Sammy in the September sunshine, including a glorious gallop along the River Lys.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Monday even: 8.45pm

I've heaps to thank you for to-day, a dear letter and a parcel, including this paper, most welcome. I was awfully tired of writing on – well, anything. Let me give you my news, dear. I turned in last night immediately after I wrote. I didn't sleep for a bit so read. This morning I went over to the **C.O.** about some men. Then back here to breakfast.

I spent most of the morning over at HQ watching the men parade &c. Lunch I had with **Sammy. Newson** had a stuffed turkey out, which was excellent. So back to HQ: COs orders at 2. I stayed over there talking for a bit then came back here.

At half-past 3 **Sammy** & I went for a ride – it has been a glorious day. We rode N. along the way **Beresford** & I walked last Sunday, and on beyond through a little village called [Le] Doulieu, with a big ruined church. Then S. again to the River Lys – that is much more canal than river.

We had a glorious gallop by the side of the river for nearly a mile. It was simply priceless, dear. We got in about half-past five. As a consequence I'm feeling rather sleepy! Good-night, & happy dreams. May God watch over you & protect you. Good-night! ...

7th September 1915

Two short notes to Dollie today as Arthur is extremely busy with Company business; the chocolates and tongue are already demolished; Arthur's Company Quarter Master Sergeant is going home on leave and is bringing Dollie yet another film to develop.

Arthur to Dollie

Tues 8.40am

... Good-morning dear. I only hope it's as fine with you as it is here. There is every prospect of a glorious day... I'm hoping for a clear day to-day. I have a lot to do; but I'm afraid I shall not have very much time to myself and you.

I've already finished the chocolates – they were good . Please thank your **Mater** awfully for the tongue. I shall write to **Rosa** [Pulman] & thank her for the charm.

Well, dear, I think that's all pro tem...

Just a short note: my Coy. Quarter Master Serjeant goes on leave to-day & takes this with him. I am enclosing a film to be developed.

I am very busy – have heaps to do to-day.

I am awfully fit DG but awfully homesick & dying for a sight of your dear eyes; my darling...

8th September 1915

Dollie makes sure Arthur has his winter kit ready for the approach of autumn – though the last 2 days have been hot in France; a rather damp night time reconnoitre for the C.O.; Arthur dreams of walking Dollie round the garden at her home, till the evening chill drives them inside.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Wednes 5.40pm

... I'm sorry yesterday passed without a letter, but yesterday afternoon the C.O. sent for me for a job that lasted till about midnight. Thanks awfully, little one, for your two dear letters, Saturday's two & Sunday's...

You thoughtful old soul, you darling, to have thought about my winter things. I have them out here, but it hasn't yet become cold enough for them. The last two days have been very hot. I'm wearing my thinnest things back here in billets. The wind has changed right round & is now from the south.

The Doctor has sent **Tealeaves** down – he has been fretting himself into a rotten state. Yesterday I was over at HQ most of the morning. In the afternoon the C.O. sent for me. He wanted me to do some reconnoitring. So I came back & changed. I took **Wilcox** with me. We had something to eat & left about half-past 4. It was rather damp. Your dear letters of Saturday have run a bit. They were in my breast pocket.

We didn't get back until close on midnight – very, very tired. I drafted a report & turned in. This morning, dear, I wrote out the report, took it over to the C.O. He was pleased I think. At 11.0 the C.O. had a parade and at 12 I had Company Orders. This afternoon I've slept a bit, read your letter & then tea – voila.

So now, little one, how are things with you. I love to detach myself from here & fly back to your side. It's a ripping evening, lets walk round the garden dear. So we go out of the morning room & across the hall. Pluto begins to bark – he wants to come too... Then down & we pace the lawn together ... So back & forward, full of happiness - Brrr. It begins to get chilly. We'll go in after the next turn.

Well dear, the others are waiting. They want me to go to Estaires with them to dine...

9th September 1915

A short note from Arthur before he sets off on a morning march; last night's dinner with fellow officers was a pleasant occasion – although it reminded him of happier evenings spent in Etaples – before their friends were killed at Neuve Chappell.

Arthur to Dollie

Thurs 9am

... Good-morning ... It's a wonderful day to-day but looks like being very hot & I've a long tramp this morning.

Last night we had quite a pleasant dinner at the common table of the Hotel de Ville. It reminded me awfully of our meals at Etaples – only last night there were only 5 of us. **Wilcox, Lewis, myself, Rice & Ainsworth.**

Well there's all the news dear. I pray for the day when I shall see you again. Remember me to **your mother**, please dear. So au revoir...

10th September 1915

Arthur is exhausted after the previous day's long trek in the heat and today promises to be another blazing day; a description of the surrounding countryside, with the farmers busy gathering the harvest in plain view of the Germans on Aubers Ridge; Arthur remembers the previous year, off Gibraltar, and how hopeful he was then that Dollie would join him in Malta.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Friday 8.10am

... Good-morning ... Thanks awfully, dear heart, for your letter of Monday. I found it waiting for me when I got in yesterday evening.

I was very hot & rather tired last night – it had been a blazing day & we were on the trek from 11 till nearly 6 & reckon we covered a good 15 miles – for we were walking fast most of the time. So I turned in immediately after dinner & slept the sleep of the just. To-day we parade at a quarter past 9. So I am anxious to finish this letter – as we haven't had brekker yet.

8.30 and exit brekker – it's another blazing day to-day. I wish we were together dear one, to spend these days with each other. The country that's so miserable in winter is looking fine. The trees have already begun to turn, the crops are in – they were reaped within 2 miles of the line & in clear view of the enemy on Aubers ridge...

It seems so strange to think of this time last year – we were on the Nevasa, down by Gib way. Miserable then too for I was miles from you & it seemed too good to be true that you should ever come out to Malta. But you did, God bless you...

11th September 1915

Arthur is worried that his regular letters are not getting through to Dollie; a meeting with a Chaplain from Downside [Dom Raymund Webster]; shopping and dinner again in Estaires; the glorious weather is making Arthur wish he and Dollie could share the days together; talk of a speedy end to the war; training replacement troops is keeping Arthur busy – the battalion is very under strength.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Satur. morn 8.45

...I was so pleased to get your dear letter of Tuesday yesterday afternoon – but I'm very upset that you hav'n't had news of me, dear, for so long. I cannot understand it – for whatever I've been doing, I've always tried to get at least a short note off. Please God, by now at any rate, you'll have had my news.

Yesterday morning we all were on parade from about 9.15 – had to march out to a place & got back about one. In the afternoon we paraded again 2.15 till about a quarter to 4. Then we, the officers of No2 Coy, went into Estaires – had a group taken. I hope it will be good.

After that, tea. At tea I met a priest from Downside, **Dom Raymund Webster**, a very decent fellow. He's chaplain to the Brigade of K's that relieved us at Lonely Post. We had quite a lot to talk over. After tea we wandered around, dear; I bought some coloured pencils & we bought some papers. We had dinner again at the Hotel de Ville & had a room to ourselves – quite a good meal – 3 francs. I left about 9 with **Lewis** – the others followed on.

Ainsworth is off on a 4-day machine gun course. The weather is glorious again but a bit cooler, I think to-day. The breeze from the S. E. has increased a bit. I hate these days when I am away from your side, little one. It seems such a loss – every moment in your dear company is a heaven in itself, dear sweetheart.

People are getting more confident of a fairly speedy ending to the war DV. But these Huns know their devilish trade well.

I've another fairly busy morning in front of me. There is always a lot to do, training half a battalion – though it's rather a young one. Our numbers are still on the wane, one way & another. I've about 73 fighting men left in my half-battalion. The large majority of those are under 20. There are only 21 left of the old G Company, 120 strong in Malta. It seems difficult to realise why they keep us here. There are always complications &c in reliefs, for example.

Well, little one, I think that is all. Please remember me to all...

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115

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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 _____
telegram .. _____
parcel .. _____

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received an letter from you
{ lately.
{ for a long time.

Signature }
only. }

Arthur

Date _____

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13th September 1915

Arthur is back in the trenches once more – hopefully for only 4 days – as he is in command of a rotten stretch known as the “Ducks Bill”; relief that the Zeppelins have left Hampstead untouched; the papers from home have not been getting through recently, but thankfully have started to arrive once more; the cross for friend Harry Pulman’s grave has been found again.

Arthur to Dollie

In a trench, Monday 4.45pm

... You see we are up again but this time I hope for 4 days only. We came up last night. But first of all, dear, I want to thank you for your dear letters. I have Wednesday’s, Thursday’s & Friday’s – also for the “Illustrated London News”.

Let me give you my news, dear, such as it is. On Saturday the photo-man came out and took various groups. I hope they’ll be a success – one of the Company, another of us, Company Officers, another of the survivors of the Malta mess. In the evening I went into La Gorgue to Confession: felt so happy. I seem to be nearer to you, dear, day by day. God bless you.

Sunday was another glorious day. In the morning I went to Mass & Communion at half-past 7. After breakfast, went round to HQ to discuss reliefs. Finally it was decided that **Sammy** & I should ride on in the morning to see the line and take over. So we left about 11. It was hot. We got up here all right & made the usual arrangements. The Battalion arrived about 9.30.

We relived the 2/2 Gurkhas. Both of our Companies are “up”, **Sammy** on the right, I on the left, I for my sins having a rotten bit called the “Ducks Bill” between Neuve Chapelle & Lonely Post. This morning & this afternoon we’ve been working. At present our guns are splaying H.E. on to their front line – otherwise a beautiful day. **Bailey, Rice & Lewis** are up this time.

Thank God, dear, the Zeps left Hampstead alone. Somehow I wasn’t worried for I felt all was all right. Please Heaven, He will look after you too in the future. I have written to **Mrs Wines**, dear. Poor woman, I can understand how you must have felt. [**Private George William Wines** (31) d. 1/9/1915; husband of Jennie Wines].

... About papers, sweetheart, I hadn’t received them from home for about 3 weeks. So I thought that they had been stopped. However, this week, they’ve turned up. I’m glad, for they’re very pleasing...

I’m doing the photos for you, dear. Incidentally you spoke of a rumour prevalent in England. As far as one can see, dear, that rumour is most likely true. We have all received special warning not to broach this subject, especially in letters – one has to be extraordinarily careful. Still we’re not all fools.

I am glad, dear heart, to be able to reassure you. Our gallant HQ Staff have found **Harry’s** cross again. I am glad, for though the **C.O.** took all responsibility for it via **Algy**, yet I hated to think of it being mislaid.

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I am quite well. ✓

(137)

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{ ~~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 _____
telegram ,, _____
parcel ,, _____

Letter follows at first opportunity.

~~I have received no letter from you~~

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

Signature } *Arthur*
only.

Date 14-9-15

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

15th September 1915

Arthur apologises yet again for not having written – he is so busy organising his rotten section of new trench up at “Ducks Bill”; letters from home – from the Mater, Pater and brother Edgar; successful results with the recent photographs; friend Harry’s grave is now registered with the Division so the site will be maintained; more night work but they hope to be relieved tomorrow.

Arthur to Dollie

In a trench, Wed day 5.45pm

... I’ve four dear letters to thank you for – 2 of Saturday, Sundays & Mondays. God bless you; they are so welcome, & cheer me up awfully. I was awfully sorry, dear, I couldn’t get you a letter off yesterday. I was on the go from about 7 in the morning.

There was a lot to do. I’ve a pretty rotten bit of line & we are working on it continuously, day and night. There is a very pleasing rumour that we are to be relieved to-morrow night. Meanwhile we are up all night & most of the day – sleep is a bit in the shadowy land.

Yesterday the weather wasn’t quite so fine. Today DG. has been very sunny. If it wasn’t for a certain amount of artillery activity, life would be dull. The photos you sent are good. I am very bucked about them. The proofs of the photos we had taken at Estaires have turned up. They ar’n’t at all bad.

No dear I hav’n’t heard from John. Both the **Mater & Pater** have written: & yesterday I had a letter from **Edgar** [Agius] I have spoken to **Beresford** again about **Harry’s** cross. He is going to see about it. He has also had it registered by the Division – which means that they mark it with a substantial cross & maintain it. So now there can be no question of it’s being overgrown through our inability to get to it. Besides which, little one, as I’ve told you, it has been enclosed with wood battens.

To-night more work. It’s a bit difficult for the nights are so dark. You see, dear, the time passes. Life out here is much the same. Its just 6.30 – time to stand to & for the post so I must rush. I’ve been rather interrupted...

16th September 1915

Arthur is in a pensive mood; a quiet time of it in the trenches; he notices the nights lengthening as autumn progresses and imagines being back home with Dollie; brother Tancred's ordination at Downside; a note from brother Joe.

Arthur to Dollie

In my dug-out, Thurs. even. 5.45pm

To-day I wasn't privileged to get a letter from you, but as I had 3 from you yesterday, I can scarcely complain, can I, dear! Thank God I'm still very fit & well; we bit fat perhaps – but there you are...

The last 24 hours has passed without note – work all night & half the day – Huns pretty quiet – occasional shell in the day time – otherwise nothing DG. Yesterday evening our gunners set fire to two houses behind the German lines opposite us. It was rather a ripping sight as darkness drew on.

The nights are getting very long now. We “stand to” at half-past 6 – and again in the morning at 4. Luckily these last few nights, last night in point of fact, the new moon put in an appearance.

Well, little one, how goes life with you? I live with you in every moment of our life. Sweet heart mine – my comforter. I yearn for the day when I shall be at your side again. May it come soon DV. But it can never come soon enough.

I've just written a short note to **Ambrose** [Tancred Agius] for the 19th & wished him our good wishes. I had just a short note from **Joe** [Agius] from the office. I wonder what you're doing now dear. Have you started fires again yet? I love to imagine you and picture myself at your side...

17th September 1915

The nighttime working parties are keeping Arthur and his men busy; a fatality amongst the Garhwals but thankfully an otherwise a quiet night; hopes that the relief will arrive tomorrow - but Arthur expects to be back in the trenches again fairly soon.

Arthur to Dollie

In the trenches, Friday 5.50pm

... Many, many thanks for two letters, Tuesdays & Wednesday's. I am glad to hear you went down to **Rosa's** [Pulman]. I hoped the weather kept fine & that you had a good time.

The last 24 hours have been much the same dear. We were very busy indeed last night – lots of working parties. The Garhwals had a man killed – shot through the head. The night was pretty quiet otherwise. To-day started very dull, but it has been a glorious afternoon. I've been rather sleepy. I was on the go all last night & had only about 3 hours sleep this morning. Since then I've been busy again, & so on to-night.

To-morrow DV we are able to be relieved but I don't think we shall be out long. I'd give anything for leave! I want to be at your side again, dear, sweet heart mine. Remember me to your **Mater** please dear. I've such a pile of letters to write. Heaven knows when they're to be done...

18th September 1915

Preparations for the move out of the trenches; a busy working night and a gloriously hot day; a gruesome reminder of Neuve Chapelle; German air activity; thoughts of a “normal” Saturday, back home with Dollie.

Arthur to Dollie

In my dug-out, Satur. am. 11.30

... In the ordinary course of events we go out to-night, back to our last billets. So I'm writing now, little one; for this afternoon there is a deal to do, and I'm sending my things on ahead.

It is another glorious day, though there are clouds about & very hot. Last night it was quite quiet comparatively – a ripping night. There was a moon until about half-past ten. As usual we were busy working. I turned in about midnight, feeling awfully sleepy. This morning, dear, brekker about half-past 8. Since when I've been on the prowl. This place is full of dead; mostly from Neuve Chapelle; so you can imagine their condition.

The German aeroplanes were more active to-day. They've had rather a rough time of it; 2 or 3 have been brought down near here. So they've been very chary of shewing themselves.

I wonder what you're doing now, little one, “paying the books”? I love to picture you at home & myself by your side. Saturday to-day: I can see us planning what to do this afternoon; and having loving strife, trying to do what the other wants. Dear heart of mine, God bless you...

20th September 1915

Arthur and Dollie are both feeling “dull” as the war continues to keep them apart – Arthur offers his advice and support; the Company is now back in billets and Arthur has already been to Sunday Mass in La Gorgue; Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener is in the area, inspecting the Brigade.

Arthur to Dollie

Monday morn. 7.10

... Thanks awfully for your letter of Thursday, dear – it came yesterday afternoon. I am sorry, little one you're feeling so dull. I'd give anything to be back with you ... I can realise all you feel, for I had a fit of depression about 10 days ago and felt absolutely “off”... Life seems awfully dull & hard to bear sometimes, dear: one has just got to stick it. We've got to bear these fits of the “blues” with a grin, though we feel like nothing on earth. And if we can't manage the grin, at any rate with a firm feeling inside that we're not going to give in to it.

Do anything dear, to try & get things off your mind. Write & tell me all – I understand. Don't just say when you're dull, “No I won't tell Arthur – it might worry him”. Tell me all...

Yesterday we spent settling down. Thank heaven, the weather continues glorious, but it's rather cold at night.

In the morning I went to Mass in La Gorgue at 10. In the afternoon the **C.O.** saw us – domestic matters – then I went in for a bath, but the place was full, so we walked round & back to dinner. This morning “**K**” is inspecting the Brigade. I don't know where. We parade at 9.15 – Brekker is at 8. There are COs order at 9. I think that's all the news this morning, little one...

22nd September 1915

Arthur writes from HQ; he is extremely busy but promises to write a proper letter later in the morning.

Arthur to Dollie

H.Q., 9.10am

... You must forgive just a short note to catch the post, won't you little one. I'm pretty busy. Yesterday alas no letter for the post was held up on the Channel. I'm simply longing for news to-day.

Thank God, I'm very fit. I do hope you are all right too, dear. If I could only be with you again. There's not much news. I'm writing a proper letter this morning after parade.

Till then, heart of mine ... Au revoir God be with you...

23rd September 1915

Arthur is delighted at receiving three letters in one day from Dollie; dinner at Estaires; a court martial in the Company; Kitchener promises to send much needed reinforcements to the battalion – which will mean trouble at home for someone! A brief spell at the front for Arthur – with the promise of more to come; he exhorts Dollie to remember “no news is good news” for the immediate future.

Arthur to Dollie:

In billets, Thurs. morning 8.30

... I couldn't write as I wanted to yesterday morning. There was a court-martial on one of my Serjeants and I had to hang about in readiness should they want me. They didn't finish till ten to one. I hurried away to lunch & was back again at ten to two: the **C.O.** wanted to see me & **Sammy**. I was so busy till tea & after tea went into La Gorgue to Confession. I'd met the padre & fixed things up.

After Confession I came back: had to see about some kit – then dinner. I turned in almost immediately afterwards very sleepy. This morning dear I've been over to Mass & Communion at 7. Then the **Padre** took me into brekker with him et voila. So you see, little one, I'm pretty rushed.

The mails have been very irregular lately – for two days I went without your news. Then yesterday I got 3 of your dear letters – Friday, Saturday & Sunday. I was bucked. You are a darling, dear.

I'm going to give you my news first. The weather has been & is glorious but not very “comfortable” sort of weather for its very warm by day & equally cold at night. On Monday we were reviewed as a Brigade en masse by “**K**”. We were drawn up in mass athwart a road S. of La Gorgue. Leicesters, then us, then the road: on the other side 2/3 Gurkhas, 39th Garhwals & 2/8 Gurkhas. “**K**” arrived in a magnificent car, with six more cars full of staff behind him.

He just walked round each battalion. He was very sweet to us, complimented the **C.O.** on his battalion, said he was very glad to hear we'd done so well. He asked why our numbers were so small. The **C.O.** explained that the 3/3rd wouldn't send men out. “**K**” got very wrathful, turned round to one of his staff. “Do you know anything about this?”. The fellow said “No”. Then **K** turned round to the **C.O.** & explained that he had arranged for the 3/3 to be recruited only to furnish us with men & that it was behind his back & against his orders that those at home kept the 3/3rd as a complete unit! So he has ordered us 345 recruits & there'll be trouble at home for some one.

After lunch the **C.O.** wanted to see **Sammy** & me. That evening at 5 we, Officers & NCOs, went up to the front to do a skeleton relief – back about midnight – very tired. It was a wonderful moonlight night – but very cold. I had my horse to meet me. There was a strip of ground on the way home where it was possible to gallop. It was priceless.

On Tuesday evening we had a Company dinner at Estaires – not bad. Pleasure chiefly because we were all there. Well, little sweet heart, its 9 o'clock & I am going along to HQ. I expect to be busy again to-day. There's a chance that we may move to-day again. One does not know yet. The mails are likely to be irregular in the future for a bit dear. You mustn't worry, just know that I'm all right. Remember always that no news is good news. Pray hard, little lover, I pray hard for you. God be with you. I'll try & write again to-day if I can possibly...

24th September 1915

“I am writing this on my knee, sitting in a dug-out. To-morrow is to see the biggest battle of the world’s history...”

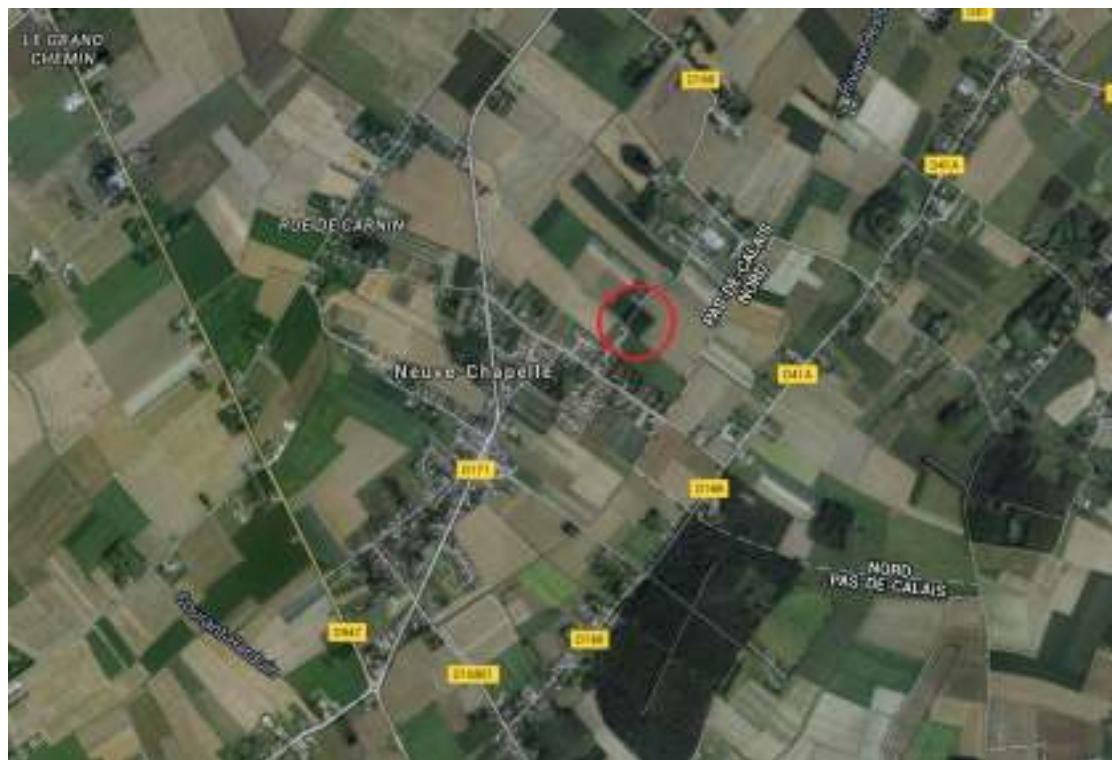
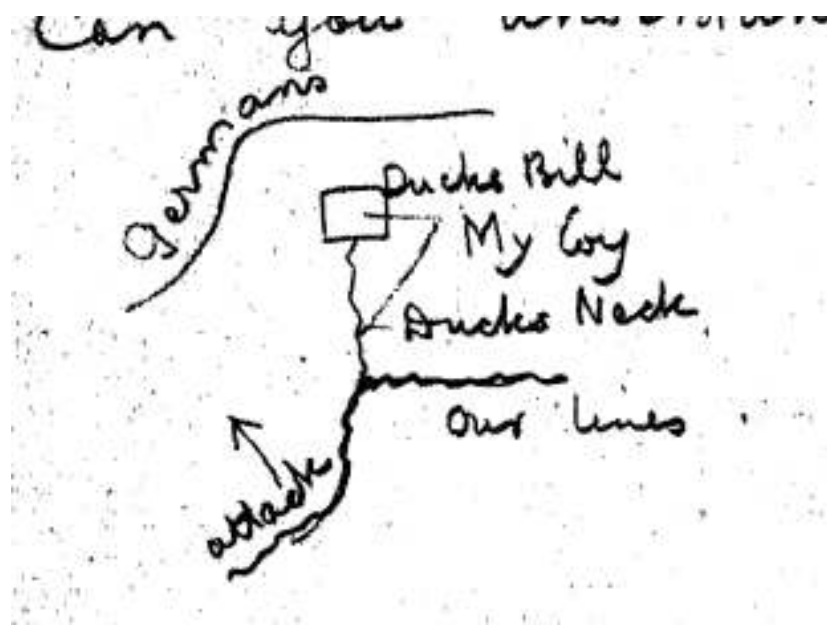
Arthur to Dollie

In the Neck of the Ducks Bill, Friday night 11.50pm

... I am writing this on my knee, sitting in a dug-out. To-morrow is to see the biggest battle of the world’s history.

The Allies in the West are going to assault the enemy. The French are putting in 60 Divisions – about 1,200,000 men & we are using the bulk of our troops. With luck by this time to-morrow the end of things will be in sight. The bombardment by guns, rifles, machine guns, bombs & grenades began four days ago. To-morrow morning DV the assault will take place, accompanied by the explosions of mines & smoke & gas. You see, we are to have a good taste of war dear. On our bit of front, just to the N. of Neuve Chapelle, the Meerut Division is to attack – the Garhwal & Bareilly making the actual assault. We are on the right flank of the Division & though not assaulting, have a very important job...

The Bill is only 80 yards from the Germans – about 100 from ours. We moved up last night from La Gorgue to bivouac at a rendezvous. A great storm rose that rendered the thunder of the guns dull, great fierce flashes of lightening & rain. We all got wet...



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. ✓

(198)

~~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 20.11.22 ✓
 { telegram „ _____
 { parcel „ _____

Letter follows at first opportunity. ✓

~~I have received no letter from you~~
{ ~~lately.~~
{ ~~for a long time.~~

Signature } *Arthur.*
only. }

Date 27.9.15.

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

28th September 1915

A graphic account from Arthur (now safely back in billets) of their part in the Battle of Loos – a violent storm the night before, an unexpected attack from the Huns damages a gas battery before the battle begins; heavy casualties; the C.O.'s dugout is blown up; a counter attack is expected at any moment. They are sick with disappointment as no support was forthcoming after the initial advance.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Tues. 8am.

I'm afraid it must seem years since you heard from me last. I started to write on Friday night but was unable to finish. I've heaps of letters to answer. God bless you & a ripping parcel, much appreciated. I gave the cigarettes to **Jewson**. He was very bucked.

Well little one, we've been through another show – a gigantic one that is being fought from beyond Reims to N. of us here. We are all sick with disappointment – our division got right through but no supports were forthcoming although they [had] been promised & the assaulting brigades lost very heavily getting clear.

On our divisional front, the attack was carried out by our brigade on the right & the Bareilly on the left. We held a place called the DUCKS BILL – a small redoubt only 80 yards from the enemy & 100 from our own. It was of vital importance for if it fell then the whole attack would have been enfiladed.

The show was preceded by 4 days bombardment & just before the assault by gas & smoke. Unfortunately the wind, what there was of it wasn't very favourable – so only smoke was used.

On Thurs. night we moved from La Gorgue into a rendez-vous, where we were to bivouac. On our march down however we ran into a great storm. It was a magnificent sight, only we got very wet. We managed to find some sort of shelter in an old farm DG. Next day we moved up into the trenches. I was to hold the DUCKS BILL, **Sammy** holding the line on my left. It was very slow & muddy work getting up the communication trenches. Early next morning we heard that the attack was to be at 6. At a quarter past 4, while it was still dark, the Huns chucked a great bomb into the Bill & blew in one of our gas batteries. All the men in charge & the officer, except two were gassed, also some Manchesters, up there to bomb & also poor little **Beresford**, three Signallers & about half a dozen of my men. My fellows behaved splendidly – though it was dark, & the place was full of gas & stumbling, coughing men. I'm awfully proud of them. We set about getting things clear & earthing up the rest of the gas up there.

Ten minutes before the attack, we blew up a mine under the Hun line; though about 800 yards away, the whole earth rocked & quivered. The assault was a wonderful success. Our fellows went slick through. The casualties were pretty heavy. The German guns were busy – nearly got the **C.O.**, blew his dug-out in & wounded his servant, his cook & two orderlies. We were lucky not having to go over. Our grenadiers did & the grenade officer – an awfully decent old chap called **George** was

killed. Our total casualties were 52, about 8 killed, as far as we can make out. The roll is being called again to-day.

For the rest of Saturday we just hung on, momentarily expecting a counter – attack. Next morning Sunday we were heavily bombed by minenwerfer, luckily not much damage. We were finally relieved at 2pm by the Dehra Dun. Yesterday we were busy getting clean &c, making reports. Well darling, the Corporal is waiting & I've to go to HQ so must write au revoir...

29th September 1915

A short letter from Arthur – he is pressed for time to write, but is fit; the weather is wet but soon they hope to be moved back for a rest and are very glad to be out of the battle.

Arthur to Dollie

In billets, Wednes 8.45 am.

... I'm afraid you must be merciful & wait a little longer for an answer to all your dear letters. I am very fit DG. the weather is pretty rotten – a lot of rain. However we're glad to be out, little else counts. Rumour has it that we go further back to-day or to-morrow. Jove, dear, I hope so.

So little loved one, au revoir, God be with you...

30th September 1915

Rumours of a move back to rest at Calonne; the weather has been awful but is now sunny and cold; the comforts of a log fire in the officer's mess; sister Daisy has been knitting socks; Dollie's letters have been a great comfort to Arthur during the build up to the recent battle.

Arthur to Dollie

Billets, Thurs. morning 7.55 am.

... Good-morning dear, God bless you. Thanks awfully for your welcome letter of Sunday. Yesterday the weather continued bad, very windy & heavy rain nearly all day. But this morning it is glorious, though cold – and I'm feeling happier for rumour has it that we are going back for a bit, probably to Calonne!

We've awfully comfortable billets here – very bare, but we have our valises & straw. A big room for our mess with a long table & a great open hearth, where these last two or three days we have had a log fire. I've a new Subaltern now, **Henri**: he arrived with **Abbott** 2 or 3 days ago. I've attached him to No7 Platoon (**Wilcox**).

News is scarce really. **Daisy** sent me a pair of home made socks that are excellent! I'm writing to thank her. I just live for your sweet letters ... especially these past 2 weeks & the culmination on the days around the 25th. Your dear letters have come to comfort & strengthen through all the days of work & anxiety that preceded the "show", through all the hours of incessant vigilance & danger during the business...

PS: I'm enclosing some photos for the collection taken by **Rice & Shack**