



*Cassel, Grande Place*



# **LINDSAY'S WAR LETTERS**

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## **THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED**

to John Seymour Lindsay's daughter Margaret; also to my wife Pippa and my daughters Kate and Jessica, my grandchildren Rowan, Laurence and Bella, John Geerts and his sons Richard and Gerald and their families, in memory of their father, grand-father, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

to the following who have helped with the production of this book:  
Bill Goss, Jessica Middleton, Kate Middleton, Pippa Middleton

## **FOR OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

by Paul Middleton, see [www.greatousebooks.com](http://www.greatousebooks.com)

## **PRINTED AND BOUND**

by Elite Publishing Academy, Hertford  
[www.elitepublishingacademy.com](http://www.elitepublishingacademy.com)

## **ISBN**

Typeset in Palatino and Century Gothic  
Designed and created in InDesign CC 2015



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*Saint Omer, Place Victor-Hugo*



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# Foreword

**J**ohn Seymour Lindsay DCM (JSL) left a fine record for us to read. He wrote hundreds of letters to Mildred his fiancée then wife, and Frank his brother, describing his experiences and feelings, sometimes candidly but more often hiding the reality. I have shown every letter with a full transcription.

The breakdown of the book into Chapters follows the same order as in the companion volume - *Lindsay's War a personal history*.

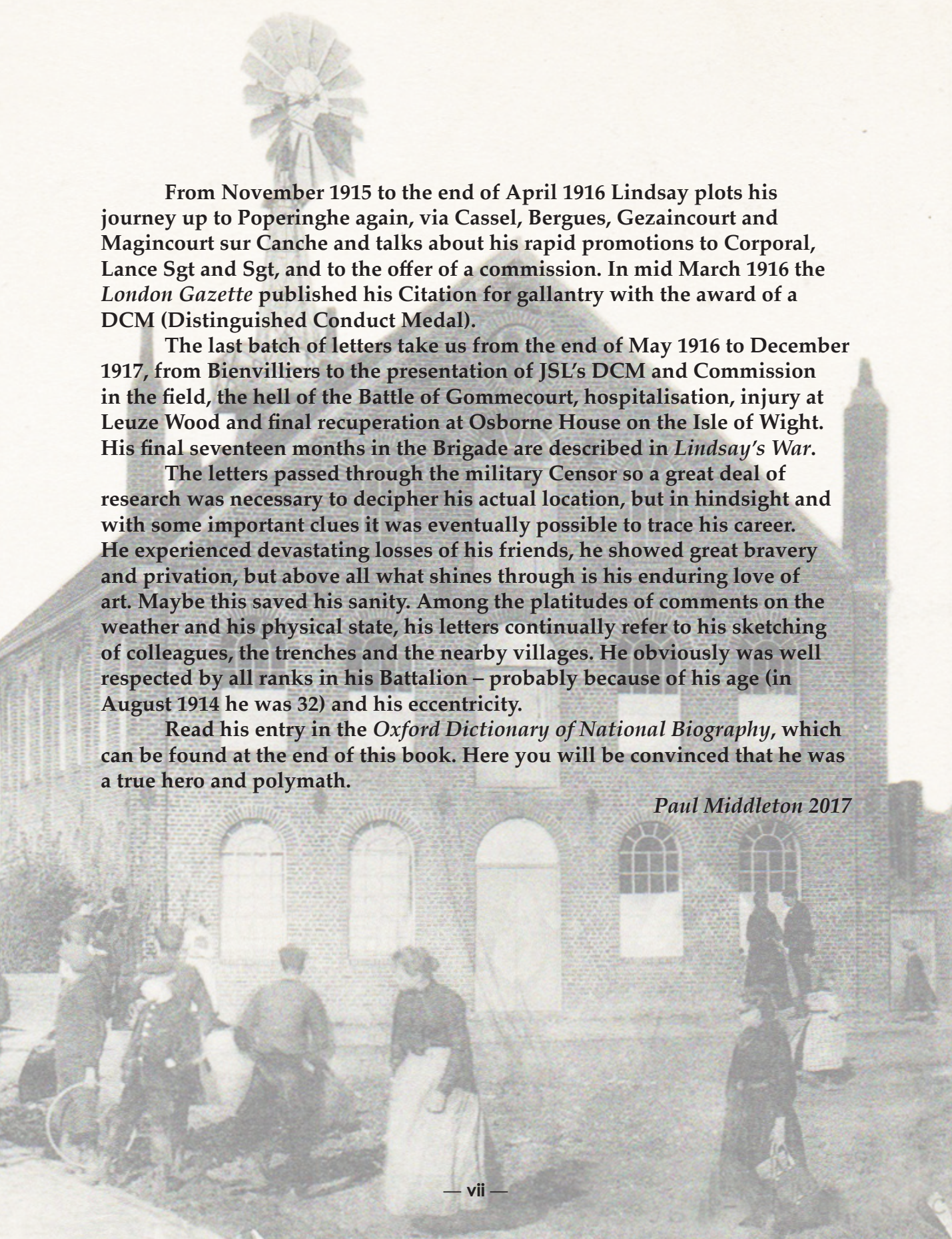
So Lindsay's journey through the First World War started with his September 1914 enlistment in the London Rifle Brigade, to training in the City of London, journey to Southampton and embarkation for Le Havre. After four week's further training France, he describes his journey to the Ploegsteert Sector in southern Belgium where he stayed until the end of February 1915, working three days in a week at The Barricade and building the Front Line trenches.

From mid February he describes further journeys up to the trenches and to the Barricade, his injury and recuperation, life on The Front at Ploegsteert, the horrors of gas and the Battle of St Julien in the Second Battle of Ypres, and finally his visit to hospital in Rouen. The nightmares of war come fully to the front in these extraordinary letters.

Between the end of May to the end of October 1915 Lindsay details journeys from his release from Hospital to a quick marriage in London, to training in Rouen, St Omer and Calais before moving up to the Belgium border and Cassel, Bourgbourg, Bergues, Wormhout and Watten, preparing for a new excursion to The Front.

*Caëstre, La Sortie des Ateliers de la Vannerie*





From November 1915 to the end of April 1916 Lindsay plots his journey up to Poperinghe again, via Cassel, Bergues, Gezaincourt and Magincourt sur Canche and talks about his rapid promotions to Corporal, Lance Sgt and Sgt, and to the offer of a commission. In mid March 1916 the *London Gazette* published his Citation for gallantry with the award of a DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal).

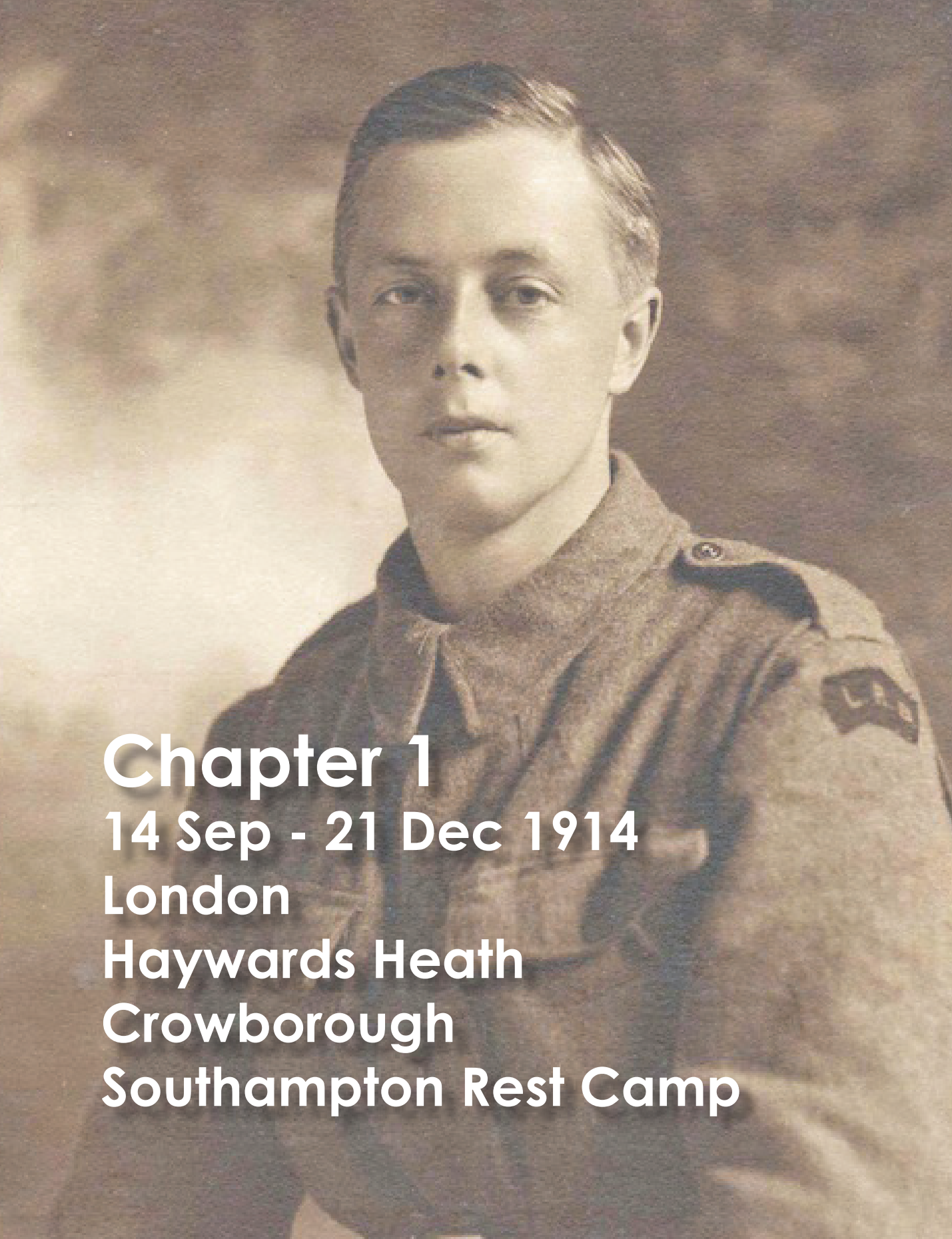
The last batch of letters take us from the end of May 1916 to December 1917, from Bienvilliers to the presentation of JSL's DCM and Commission in the field, the hell of the Battle of Gommecourt, hospitalisation, injury at Leuze Wood and final recuperation at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. His final seventeen months in the Brigade are described in *Lindsay's War*.

The letters passed through the military Censor so a great deal of research was necessary to decipher his actual location, but in hindsight and with some important clues it was eventually possible to trace his career. He experienced devastating losses of his friends, he showed great bravery and privation, but above all what shines through is his enduring love of art. Maybe this saved his sanity. Among the platitudes of comments on the weather and his physical state, his letters continually refer to his sketching of colleagues, the trenches and the nearby villages. He obviously was well respected by all ranks in his Battalion – probably because of his age (in August 1914 he was 32) and his eccentricity.

Read his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, which can be found at the end of this book. Here you will be convinced that he was a true hero and polymath.

*Paul Middleton 2017*





# Chapter 1

14 Sep - 21 Dec 1914

London

Haywards Heath

Crowborough

Southampton Rest Camp



# Preparing for War with the London Rifle Brigade

On 14 September 1914, John Seymour Lindsay (JSL) wrote a note to his brother Frank telling him that he had been drilling for some days in the City: *'We never know when we will go.'*

JSL started his training in Bunhill Row in the City, where the Regiment had been housed since 1893. The Headquarters were erected entirely from regimental funds, supplemented by contributions from members of the Brigade, from various City Companies and other friends of the Regiment. Since the formation of the Territorial Force the headquarters were shared with the Post Office Rifles.

Bunhill Row accordingly opened its doors for recruitment on 31 August 1914, despite the availability of only one officer, Lieut C Furze of the 1st Battalion; and many men enlisted on that and the days that immediately followed. Although the History (*The History of the London Rifle Brigade*) claims the establishment was reached by 4 September, the Silver War Badge (SWB) Roll, which shows the date of enlistment as well as discharge of men no longer fit to serve in the army, shows that the last recruits joined the Battalion around the 23 September 1914. That said the SWB Roll shows that the majority, all bar less than one hundred, had enlisted on or before 9 September. The Roll shows that most of the remainder joined on or near the 23 September so perhaps they replaced original recruits who were found to be unsuitable. There is quite a lot of anecdotal evidence that shows men with poor eyesight and others really unfit for service managed to enlist by one means or another in that first mad rush of enthusiasm, no doubt their unsuitability for military service revealed by more thorough medical examination a little later on. (*Thanks to Chris Ripplingale for this information*).

So began a new chapter in JSL's life and the beginning of over 40 months of service to King and country in the hell that was later to be termed *'The War to end all Wars'*. If only that were so.

In November 1914 he was placed in the 2nd Battalion 'O' Company, and on 27 November he was sent down into a billet in Haywards Heath at 1 Milton Cottages, Franklynn Road. A billet is a term for living quarters to which a soldier is assigned to sleep. Historically, it referred to a private dwelling that was required to accept the soldier. In his letter to Frank he refers also to *'an invasion scare'*.

The invasion scare was based on the events of 14 November 1914, when the 5th Battle Squadron transferred to Sheerness to guard against a possible German

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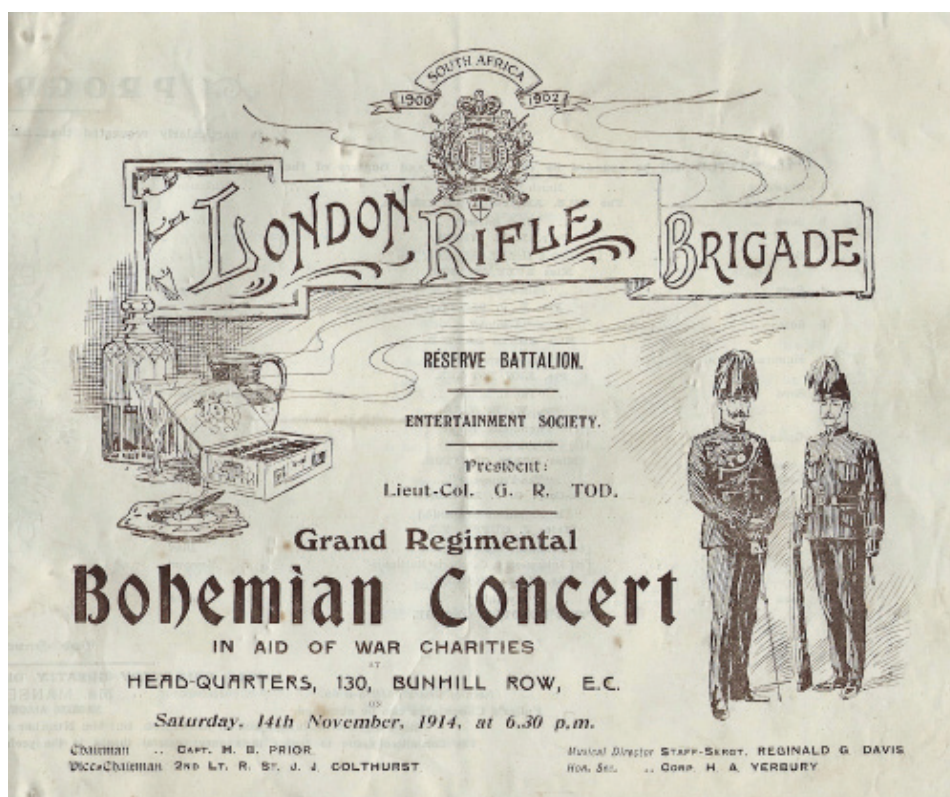
(left) John Seymour Lindsay, Rifleman 1006, London Rifle Brigade.  
Portrait probably taken soon after his enlistment into the Brigade either late September or early October 1914.



invasion. But on 26 November, HMS Bulwark was moored on the River Medway. She was taking on coal from the airship base at Kingsnorth, on the Isle of Grain. The ship had 11 magazines connected by passages that were packed with shells and cordite. At 7.50am, as the crew were having breakfast, an explosion ripped the ship apart. It killed 745 men and all 51 officers, most were killed instantly, including Captain Guy Sclater. German involvement was immediately suspected but the subsequent investigations pronounced the explosion accidental.

It is evident that on the 13 December Mildred must have visited him just before he moved on to the Rest Camp in Southampton. A day later JSL was convinced he was leaving immediately for the Front so he sent a postcard from his temporary billet in Crowborough, East Sussex to Frank and Trixie (*JSL's sister*). Later on that day JSL arrived at the Rest Camp in Southampton.

By this time in December, JSL had befriended Rifleman Hollis and his name constantly crops up over the months and years (*Ed: Hollis won his MC on 25 April 1918, his First Bar on 8 September 1918 and his Second Bar 28 August 1918 - an incredible young man*). They obviously became firm friends. They stayed in the Rest Camp until 20 December waiting for enough drafts of other regiments to fill the Transport. JSL wrote a letter a day during this time emphasising his optimism of his new way of life. To Frank he writes candidly about the appalling conditions in Southampton – a taste of things to come – little did he know it. But the (misplaced) optimism still shone through.





14 SEPTEMBER 1914  
129 Wardour Street  
Dear F(rank)

Yours and POO to hand and very many thanks first. I have been drilling now for some days in the City. We never know when we will go. Yes I was with a French firm Escaré and Denelle who are at the above address. Mr Escaré has been very decent to me - told me as I was chucking up my seat I was to count his house as my home he has paid my entrance fee to the Corps and I still work for them in old houses, I have done some today and to 9.30 and 5-9 for which I get money my pay is 3/- per day as I am off the strength. I get 1/- a day in camp. I have gone in with Escaré's son so I have a place. Jumpy Brown Harold's brother is in our Battalion I have not spoken to him yet. The Book is pro tem off. I have not seen Lane yet. Chock would be most acceptable Escaré will send anything on to me when I go but I will try and give you my address. Bill(a) is quite fit. Love to you and T.

Yours J

129 Wardour Street  
14. 9. 14.  
Dear F  
Yours & POO to hand  
✓ Very many thanks first.  
I have been drilling  
now for some days in the  
City. We never know when  
we will go.  
Yes I was with a French  
firm Escaré & Denelle who

are at the above address. Mr  
Escaré has been very decent  
to me - told me as I was chucking  
up my seat I was to count  
his house as my home he has  
paid my entrance fee to the  
Corps & I still work for them  
in old houses. I have done  
some today & to 9.30 & 5-9.  
In which I get money my  
pay is 3/- per day as I am  
off the strength. I get 1/- a  
day in camp. I have gone  
in with Escaré's son so I  
have a place. Jumpy Brown

Harold's brother is in our  
Battalion I have not spoken  
to him yet.

The Book is pro tem off.  
I have not seen Lane  
yet.

Chock would be most  
acceptable Escaré  
will send anything on  
to me when I go but I  
will try & give you my  
address  
Bill is quite fit  
Love to you & T. Yours J.



9 NOVEMBER 1914  
 London Rifle Brigade  
 2nd Battalion, 'O'  
 Company  
 My Dear Frank

Our first  
 Battalion has now gone  
 away and we expect to  
 go to camp in a day or  
 so. The work is hard  
 but I can do it quite  
 all right. We have been  
 served out with quite  
 a lot of clobber - one  
 pair of boots 2 prs socks  
 sweater 2 prs hands  
 and (?) 2 towels. My  
 Firm Escaré and Denelle  
 allow me 10/- per week  
 but although very useful  
 it doesn't go a very long

although ungrateful it doesn't  
 go a very long way. Then a lot  
 of things I have had to get  
 Tooth Togs (?) cutlery  
 plates & cup  
 haversack & no end of oddments  
 as well as various subscriptions  
 for we are quite a swaggy  
 lot. What I am in great need  
 of is a pair of summer shorts  
 with puttees we are expected  
 to get them on as the weather  
 warms.

Our Company is remade  
 tomorrow & appointments

London Rifle Brigade  
 2nd Battalion  
 "O" Company  
 My Dear F.

Our first Battalion has  
 now gone away & we expect to  
 go to camp in a day or so.

The work is hard but I can do  
 it quite all right.

We have been served out with  
 quite a lot of clobber - one pair  
 of boots 2 prs socks sweater 2 prs  
 hands & 2 towels.

My Firm Escaré & Denelle  
 allow me 10/- per week but

way. Then a lot of things I have had to get Tooth togs (?) cutlery plates and cup haversack and no end of oddments as well as various subscriptions for we are quite a swaggy lot. What I am in great need of is a pair of summer shorts with puttees we are expected to get these so as to save our trousers. Our Company is remade tomorrow and appointments are made I very much hope to retain my position as squad commander but it is a toss up. I have been passed as a Trained Man and have been drilling my squad and instructing in range firing. I am inoculated tomorrow ie Tuesday so I shall be knocked up for a day or two. Mr Escaré is making me very comfortable at his place at Thornton Heath. I hope Trixie and you are keeping fit what a damn good thing raw cocoa don't come from that swinish place Germany. How goes Henry (?) I got his last letter some time ago but he sent it to the wrong address and was still using that German Firms envelopes which I think quite mad I told him to chuck it when he was with me. Love to you both from us both.

Yours John L  
 I will put a photo by LG  
 Miller and let you and T  
 have one

I hope Trixie & you are keeping fit what a damn good thing raw cocoa don't come from that swinish place Germany. How goes Henry? I got his last letter some time ago but he sent it to the wrong address & was still using that German Firms envelopes which I think quite mad I told him to chuck it when he was with me. Love to you both from us both. Yours John L

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Found postcard in my Miller & Co. letter from 1914



1 Milton Cottages  
27.11.14. Franklynn Road  
Haywards Heath  
Sussex.  
Dear F.  
We have been billeted down here now  
for a week & shall probably stay some time  
our quarters are rough but clean & we get  
almost enough to eat. We are not allowed  
any leave as there has been an invasion scare  
which will probably pass off.  
I dig in with two very decent chaps.  
I am now enjoying two days off as I had my  
first Anti typhoid inoculation last night  
which makes you rather rotten at first.  
The "Chock" has been very useful on route  
marches & I am now starting the "fags".  
I am now right down on my army pay 8/2  
per week so a "donation" now & then is very  
welcome.  
Our first Battalion is in action & I hear one is killed  
& some wounded.  
I will write again soon.  
Love to Trixie & yourself  
& Posh the JL.

27 NOVEMBER 1914

1 Milton Cottages, Franklynn Road,  
Haywards Heath, Sussex  
Dear F(rank)

We have been billeted down here  
now for a week and shall probably stay  
some time our quarters are rough but clean  
and we get almost enough to eat. We are  
not allowed day leave as there has been an  
invasion scare which will probably pass  
off. I dig in with two very decent chaps. I  
am now enjoying two days off as as I had  
my first anti-typhoid inoculation last night  
which makes you rather rotten at first.  
The "Chock" has been very useful on route  
marches and I am now starting the "fags". I  
am now right down on my army pay 8/2  
per week so a "donation" now and then is very  
welcome. Our first Battalion is in action  
and I hear one is killed and some wounded.  
I will write again soon. Love to Trixie and  
yourself and Posh (Frank's dog). Yrs JL

14 DECEMBER 1914

1 Milton Cottages, Franklynn Road,  
Haywards Heath  
My Very Own Darling,

You were a very good brave girl  
last night it made things so much easier  
for me. I had to turn up at Headquarters  
this morning and get my full equipment  
and also had my second dose of  
inoculation. My arm is a bit stiff but  
not so bad as last time. I am inspected  
by the General Commanding tomorrow  
and will let you know when we go. It  
has been very wet down here today. I  
am writing this at Hollis's Billet as it  
is more comfortable than mine. I shall  
think of you at 10 o'clock tonight and  
every night. Goodnight My Beloved

Your Own Johnnie

14.12.14  
1 Milton Cottages  
Franklynn Road  
Haywards Heath.  
My Very Own Darling  
You were a very good brave girl last night  
it made things so much easier for me.  
I had to turn up at Headquarters this  
morning & get my full equipment & also had  
my second dose of inoculation. My arm  
is a bit stiff but not so bad as last time.  
I am inspected by the General Commanding  
tomorrow & will let you know when we go.  
It has been very wet down here today.  
I am writing this at Hollis's Billet as it is  
more comfortable than mine.  
I shall think of you at 10 o'clock tonight &  
every night.  
Goodnight My Beloved  
Your Own Johnnie

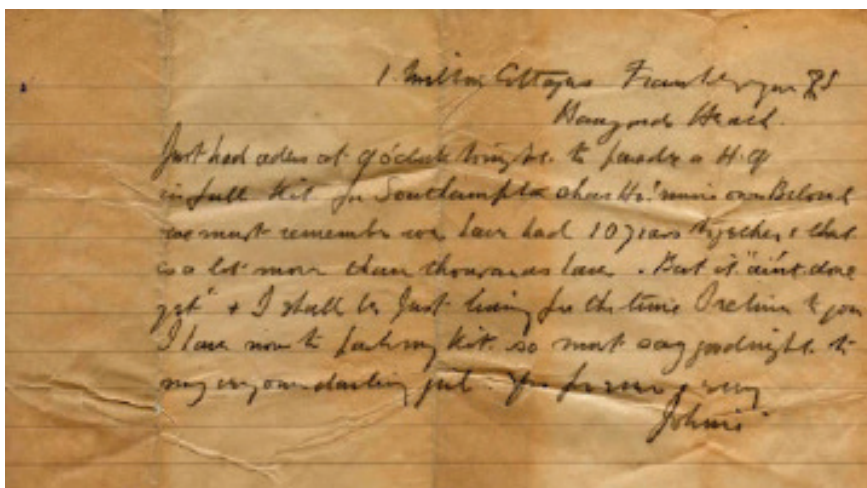
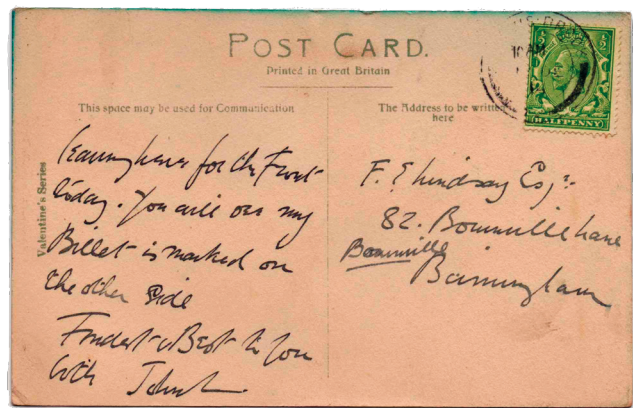




14 DECEMBER 1914 POSTCARD  
Jarvis Brook,  
Crowborough, East Sussex  
Leaving here for  
the Front today. You will  
see my Billet is marked on  
the other side. Fondest and  
Best to You both.  
John

NO DATE (PROBABLY MID DECEMBER 1914)  
1 Milton Cottages, Franklynn Road,  
Haywards Heath

Just had orders at 9 o'clock  
tonight to parade at HQ in full kit  
for Southampton cheerio! mine own  
Beloved we must remember we have  
had 10 years together and that is a  
lot more than thousands have. But it "ain't done yet" and I shall be just living for the time I  
return to you. I have now to pack my kit so must say goodnight to my very own darling girl.  
Yrs for ever ever Johnnie





Southampton. Rest Camp.  
14.12.14

My own darling  
Just arrived & am going to the rest camp  
In how long I don't know but will let  
you know my address.  
We had a great send off from Company  
The Colonel & Major Harvest both shook hands  
I was jolly glad when it was all over.  
Hollis was not picked but would come  
because I was going.  
We are just having tea at Lowman's Tea Shop.  
The weather has turned out grand.  
If you feel downhearted remember I  
am going to help Sedley fight for you  
& the King. Always from your own Johnnie  
Remember. NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS.

14 DECEMBER 1914

Southampton Rest Camp

My own darling

Just arrived and am going to  
the rest camp for how long I don't know  
but will let you know my address. We  
had a great send off by our Company the  
Colonel and Major Harvest both shook  
hands I was jolly glad when it was all  
over. Hollis was not picked but would  
come because I was going. We are just  
having tea Lowman's Tea Shop. The  
weather has turned out grand. If you feel  
downhearted remember I am going to  
help Sedley fight for you and the King.

Always your own Johnnie

Remember NO NEWS is GOOD  
NEWS all the boys are busy writin

15 DECEMBER 1914

Waterloo Station

(to: MEW)

Just off to Southampton I know  
you will be a brave girl. I hope to be back  
to you my own soon as the trouble is  
over what a time we will have! No time  
to write more. I will try to let you hear  
from me at Southampton. Goodbye my  
own Billa darling.

Always your (?) Johnnie

Love to EP she will look after  
you till I come back.

Waterloo Station. 15.12.14

Just off to Southampton I know you  
will be a brave girl.  
I hope to be back to you my own soon  
as the trouble is over what a time we  
will have!  
No time to write more. I  
will try to let you hear from me  
at Southampton.  
Goodbye my own Billa darling  
Always from your Johnnie  
Love to EP. She will look after you till I come back.



Rest Camp, Southampton  
16.12.14.

Mine Beloved

Still here waiting for enough drafts of other regiments to fill the Transport. F(rank) has sent me two pounds which is very useful down here as I shall sleep out & not under canvas at my own expense of course.

We had a route march today in full kit & I feel quite all right. ~~Now~~ We are having our photographs taken tomorrow including the Officers I will have it sent to you. Your very own Tommy Johnnie

I thought of your kiss at "last post" last night 10 PM.

I thought of your kiss at "last post" last night 10 PM.

16 DECEMBER 1914

Rest Camp Southampton

Mine Beloved

Still here waiting for enough drafts of other regiments to fill the Transport. F(rank) has sent me two pounds which is very useful down here as I shall sleep out and not under canvas at my own expense of course. We had a route march today in full kit and I feel quite all right. We are having our photographs taken tomorrow including the Officers I will have it sent out to you.

Your very own Tommy Johnnie

I thought of your kiss at "last post" last night 10 PM

16 DECEMBER 1914

Rest Camp, Southampton

Many thanks for 2 quid

Dear F(rank)

I am so sorry that I had to sub on you again but I arrived at the rest

camp and found I had to sleep in a tent that was drenched 4 blankets also wet plus a ground sheet ditto. I was obliged to stick it to look after the kit but slept in my great coat fully dressed boots and all and they did two route marches in full kit and have not taken cold. I have permission tonight to sleep out at my own expense! hence the want of cash. We are waiting for our Transport I will let you know when we go. We are 15 men and two officers and the first draft to reinforce the 1st Battalion which is considered a great honour as there are 1350 to choose from don't say anything to Bill about the wet camp. I was inoculated the second time this afternoon before I left Haywards Heath I was entitled to 2 days sick leave!!! such is the army. Sedley Williams (JSL's brother-in-law to be) is in the Battalion we are reinforcing in Trenches 150 yds from the Huns.

Much love to B and yourself J

Rest Camp Southampton  
16.12.14.

many thanks for 2 quid

Dear F.

I am so sorry that I had to sub on you again but I arrived at the rest camp & found I had to sleep in a tent that was drenched 4 blankets also wet plus a ground sheet ditto. I was obliged to stick it to look after the kit but slept in my great coat fully dressed boots & all & they did two route marches in full kit & have not taken cold. I have permission tonight to sleep out at my own expense! hence the want of cash.

We are waiting for our Transport I will let you know when we go. We are 15 men & two officers & the first draft to reinforce the 1st Battalion which is considered a great honour as there are 1350 to choose from don't say anything to Bill about the wet camp. I was inoculated the second time this afternoon before I left Haywards Heath I was entitled to 2 days sick leave!!! such is the army.

Sedley Williams is in the Battalion we are reinforcing in Trenches 150 yds from the Huns.

Much love to B & yourself J.



Rest Camp. Southampton

My Own Darling

I have the morning off & am  
down town getting one or two things & having  
a cup of coffee.

Still not sure when we are going

I may be in a few hours or days  
the all have our photograph taken  
today & I am having it sent on  
to you.

It will be the first draft to  
go out to the 1st at the front &  
to be in it is considered a great  
honour as they had 1350 to pitch from.

Many hugs Beloved Johnnie

17 DECEMBER 1914

Rest Camp,  
Southampton

My Own darling

I have the morning off and am  
down town getting one or two things and  
having a cup of coffee. Still not sure when  
we are going it may be in a few hours  
or days. We all have our photograph  
taken today and I am having it sent on  
to you. It will be the first draft to go out  
to our 1st at the front and to be in it is  
considered a great honour as they had  
1350 to pitch from.

Many hugs Beloved Johnnie

18 DECEMBER 1914

Rest Camp, Southampton

My Very Own

Yours this morning very many  
thanks. No I did not get Trixie's letter but

I will get it returned to you and then you  
can pay the little debts out of it. This  
morning it rained in torrents but cleared  
up in the afternoon. In the morning  
we drew our rifles from the Docks.  
We think we shall go tomorrow. I am  
glad the Purley Folk are alive to their  
responsibility so give them my love. Also  
much love to Churston and Leatherhead.  
I am having two photographs sent to  
you both being paid for one is of course  
for you the other for F(rank) and Trixie  
you can also get PC's of the group at  
3d each. Hollis Martin and myself have  
had our photographs taken together.  
The proof is going on to you I have not  
paid for it but if you want any you can  
buy them direct from Chandler and Co.  
Photographers Southampton. In the big  
group Hollis is on my left and Martin  
next but one on my right. Goodnight my  
darling Billa.

Always your own Johnnie

Rest Camp: Southampton

18.12.14.

My Very Own

Yours this morning very many thanks.

No I did not get Trixie's letter but I will get it  
returned to you & then you can pay the little  
debts out of it.

This morning it rained in torrents but cleared up  
in the afternoon. In the morning we drew our rifles  
from the Docks. We think we shall go tomorrow.

I am glad the Purley Folk are alive & their  
responsibility so give them my love. Also much  
love to Churston & Leatherhead.

I am having two photographs sent to you both being  
paid for one is of course for you the other for F. & Trixie  
you can also get P.C.'s of the group @ 3d each.

Hollis Martin & myself have had our photographs  
taken together. The proof is going on to you. I have not  
paid for it but if you want any you can buy them  
direct from Chandler & Co Photographers. Southampton.

In the big group Hollis is on my left & Martin  
next but one on my right. Goodnight my darling Billa  
Always your own Johnnie.



14/12/14. Southampton Rest Camp.

My Own darling.

Your letter with the Postal Order turned up tonight. I should like to return it as I am sure it was from F(rank) and T(rixie) but I am so hard up as I have had to pay for my bed and food that I may be unable to send much back. I expect to go tomorrow but one never knows. It has been raining this morning but is now fine. I am going over to see the proofs of the photograph I told you about yesterday.


I have bought an air cushion for 5/6 which I think will be useful. I shall not finish up this letter till later. We go down to draw kit at 2.20 and I think go off tomorrow Sunday. This is an awfully expressive place and I don't know what I should have done without the Postal Aides. I am having 4 photos of Hollis Martin and myself sent to you and also 2 large groups they are all paid for. You can if you want have a small one of me taken off like this but I guess you will have enough.

Goodnight dearest heart.  
Always your loving  
Johnnie

I bought a cannon cast by Bodley of Exeter I am having it sent to Wardour St and Mr Escaré will let you know when it turns up. I want you to have it.

19 DECEMBER 1914  
Southampton Rest Camp  
My Own darling

the photos I drew kit at 2.30  
And I think go off tomorrow Sunday.  
This is an awfully expressive place  
& I don't know what I should have  
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Hollis Martin & myself sent  
to you & also 2 large groups  
they are all paid for. You can  
if you want have a small one  
of me taken off like this but  
I guess you will have enough.



Goodnight dearest heart  
Always your loving  
Johnnie

Now I have some money I shall pay for them please let Trixie and F have one. Just back from seeing the CO. I have to parade at 2.20 to get our final equipment we may go tonight. I have bought an air cushion for 5/6 which I think will be useful. I shall not finish up this letter till later. We go down to draw kit at 2.20 and I think go off tomorrow Sunday. This is an awfully expressive place and I don't know what I should have done without the Postal Aides. I am having 4 photos of Hollis Martin and myself sent to you and also 2 large groups they are all paid for. You can if you want have a small one of me taken of like this but I guess you will have enough.


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19/12/14 Southampton  
 My Very Own darling  
 I shall not be able to write to you  
 in England for some time as I go from  
 here tonight, leaving camp at 8.45.  
 All my love darling and I know  
 you will always be a brave girl  
 40,000 troops have passed through  
 the docks today coming from Winchester.  
 I shall give Sedley your best  
 love.  
 Goodnight Billa my Sweetheart  
 Always Your Own  
 Johnnie  
 Love to EP

19 DECEMBER 1914

Southampton

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 you in England for some time as I go  
 from here tonight, leaving camp at 8.45.  
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Always your own Johnnie  
 Love to EP

(below) Taken in Southampton about  
 16th December 1914 on eve of  
 departure for France. The first draft of  
 fifteen Riflemen and two Officers from  
 the London Rifle Brigade. Lindsay is  
 5th from the left in the back row and  
 is sporting a moustache.





Southampton 20.12.14.

My Own Billa beloved,

Owing to many thousands of troops being moved out from here we were told late last night that we could rest up and so here we are still waiting around in our white tent. Your letter turned up today with the Missus' card I am so jolly glad you are going there. I am enclosing a card I had from Stewart. I do hope you will not spend a fortune on photographs. The folk at our billet are very kind people and looked after me A1. I shall keep a card ready to dump in the letter box when we are going off definitely. Till next time my beloved.

Always your own  
Johnnie

Give my love to all  
at Brighton Churston and  
Leatherhead

Tell next time my beloved  
always your own Johnnie

See my love to all at Brighton Churston  
Leatherhead

20 DECEMBER 1914

Southampton

Mine own Billa beloved

Owing to many thousands of troops being moved out from here we were told late last night that we could rest up and so here we are still waiting around in our white tent. Your letter turned up today with the Missus' card I am so jolly glad you are going there. I am enclosing a card I had from Stewart. I do hope you will not spend a fortune on photographs. The folk at our billet are very kind people and looked after me A1. I shall keep a card ready to dump in the letter box when we are going off definitely. Till next time my beloved.

Always your own  
Johnnie

Give my love to all  
at Brighton Churston and  
Leatherhead

21 DECEMBER 1914 SUNDAY

POSTCARD

Southampton

My Own

We are ready going tonight must be on the ship by 10 o'clock and start for France at 1am. I will write as soon as I can on the other side.

AYL (Always Your Loving)  
Johnnie

Southampton Sunday  
21.12.14

My Own  
We are ready going tonight must be on the ship by 10 o'clock and start for France at 1am. I will write as soon as I can on the other side.  
Ayl Johnnie





*S. A. Chandler & Co. London & Southampton*



(above) 19th December 1914 two days before final departure for France.  
London Rifle Brigade innocents ready for The Front - Rifleman Martin, Hollis and Lindsay.