

Sources in Local History
New Series Volume 24

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF
G. H. M. LINDSAY
THE KING'S OWN SCOTTISH BORDERERS
1910-1919

Transcribed by

Joan D. Mann

with an introduction by

Trevor Royle



in association with
The John Gray Centre, Haddington

The Correspondence of G. H. M. Lindsay
The King's Own Scottish Borderers 1909-1919

Transcribed by
Joan D. Mann

Introduction by
Trevor Royle

Edited by
Kenneth Veitch

First published in 2022 by
The European Ethnological Research Centre

University of Edinburgh
21 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9LN
Scotland

Text © The European Ethnological Research Centre.

The text is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution
NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Images © as credited.

Sources in Local History
General editor: Kenneth Veitch

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
Editing	iii
Abbreviations	iv
Family Tree	v
Timeline	vi
Facsimiles	xiii
Introduction	xviii
Letters	1
Appendices	225
Further Reading	227

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EERC would like to thank East Lothian Council Archives and Ludovic Broun-Lindsay for permission to reproduce copies of the correspondence, and Trevor Royle for contributing the introduction. The help of Fran Woodrow, Ruth Fyfe, Dr Hanita Ritchie and Bill Wilson of the John Gray Centre, Haddington, is also gratefully acknowledged. The portrait on the front cover shows G. H. M. Lindsay at Sandhurst in 1908 (aged 19). It is reproduced courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives.

EDITING

For the purpose of this edition, Lindsay's correspondence has been divided into three parts. Each one represents a distinct period in his army career between 1910 and 1919: the first covers January 1910 to March 1915, when for the most part Lindsay was serving with his battalion; the second, October 1916 to December 1917, when he was a training instructor mainly in France; and the third, January 1918 to December 1919, when he was a staff officer firstly on the Western Front and then in Italy. The notable gap in the correspondence between March 1915 and October 1916 can be explained by his presence in England, first as an invalid and then as an instructor, during which time he would have been able to pass news on to his mother in person. Other gaps that cannot be similarly explained and references to letters missing from the collection suggest that not all of Lindsay's letters to his mother have survived.

The correspondence has been presented in a standardised format. Headers provide the name of the recipient (and sender, when it was not Lindsay), and a number by which each letter or card can be identified. The salutations and valedictions have been reproduced as they appear in the originals, but the dates when the letters and cards were sent have been standardised and placed immediately after the headers. Although Lindsay was not allowed to reveal his location when on active service, information contained in the battalion's war diary provides a rough idea where he was during the early months of the war. When serving on the staff, he gave the number of the division, brigade or corps to which he was attached and from them it has been possible in some cases to identify his location. The names of these places have been put in [] to indicate that they do not appear in the originals.

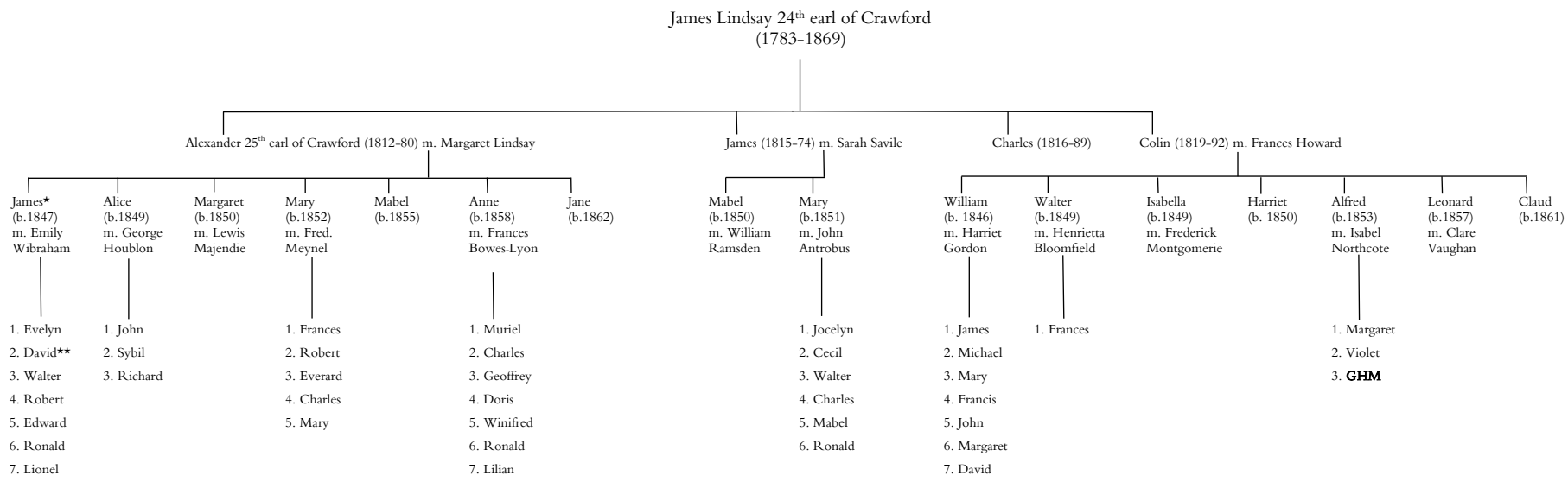
The original spelling and sentencing of the correspondence have been retained. Punctuation has been amended or added only where necessary for clarity. Words that are unclear in the originals and have been transcribed tentatively are given as [?word]; and, where necessary for sense, missing words are supplied in []. Sic has been used sparingly, mainly to indicate irregular spellings or constructions that might otherwise be mistaken for transcribal or typographical errors.

The correspondence contains abbreviations that were widely used in the British Army for ranks, regiments and other aspects of service life. While some of them will be familiar to readers, a list giving their expanded forms has been provided. All other abbreviated words have been silently expanded where their meaning is not in doubt. Expansion involving some degree of conjecture is indicated by [].

ABBREVIATIONS

AAG	Assistant Adjutant General
ASC	Army Service Corps
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station
C in C	Commander-in-Chief
CO	Commanding Officer
DAAG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant General
DAQMG	Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GS	General Service
GSO	General Staff Officer
HLI	Highland Light Infantry
KMPC	King's Messenger Post Card
KOSB	The King's Own Scottish Borderers
LG	Lewis Gun[s]
LGS	Lewis Gun School
MG	Machine Gun[s]
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
WO	War Office
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment

FAMILY TREE



* James Lindsay (1847-1913), 26th earl of Crawford. ** David Lindsay (1871-1940), 27th earl of Crawford.

Table 1. A simplified family tree showing G. H. M. Lindsay's descent from the 24th earl of Crawford.

TIMELINE

The following provides a summary of events relating to the 2nd Battalion KOSB from the declaration of war on 4 August 1914 to Lindsay's departure on sick leave on 17 December. Most of the information comes from the battalion's war diary, supplemented with information from R. V. Dolbey's *A Regimental Surgeon in War and Prison*, and *The K.O.S.B. in the Great War* by Stair Gillon. Specific mentions of the deeds of 'A' company, to which Lindsay belonged, have been included.

1914

4 August	At Royal Barracks, Dublin. War declared on Germany. Received orders to mobilise.
5-7 August	Preparing for departure.
8 August	Completed mobilisation, 700 reservists having arrived from the regimental depot in Berwick-upon-Tweed.
9 August	Standing by.
10 August	Paraded in Phoenix Park.
11 August	Undertook route march.
12 August	Standing by.
13 August	Boarded SS <i>Gloucestershire</i> .
14 August	Sailed from Dublin at 1 a.m.
15 August	Arrived at Le Havre and disembarked between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Spent night in wharf sheds.
16 August	Moved to No. 3 rest camp at Tréville.

17 August	Paraded at dawn. Returned to Le Havre. Entrained for Landrecies at 6.15 a.m.–9.15 a.m.
18 August	Arrived at Landrecies at 2.30 a.m. Marched to billets at Maroilles.
19–20 August	At Maroilles. Addressed by Major General Sir Charles Fergusson (20).
21 August	Marched to Houdain, arriving at 3.30 p.m.
22 August	Left Houdain at 5 a.m. and marched to the Mons–Condé Canal. Three companies (including ‘A’ company) took up defensive positions alongside Lock no. 4 at Les Herbières.
23 August	Battle of Mons. Came under heavy artillery fire before being assaulted by the Brandenburg Grenadiers. Halted German advance with rapid rifle fire. Received orders at sundown to retire. Arrived about midnight near Petit Wasmes and bivouacked for one hour.
24 August	Continued retreat. Bivouacked somewhere between Bavay and Saint-Waast.
25 August	Received orders to halt the retreat and take up defensive positions on the high ground south of the Le Cateau–Cambrai road. Arrived there about 5 p.m. ‘A’ company took up positions in partly prepared trenches on the right flank.
26 August	Battle of Le Cateau. Came under heavy artillery fire from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Retired, falling back on St Quentin. ‘A’ company turned and made a stand on the road for nearly an hour. Retreated and spent the night around seven miles from the battlefield.

27 August	Continued retreat. Arrived at Ollezy at 6 p.m. and put on outposts.
28 August	Continued retreat. Arrived at La Pommeraye at 6 p.m.
29 August	At La Pommeraye all day. Continued retreat at night.
30 August	Arrived at Jaulzy.
31 August	Continued retreat. Reached Crépy-en-Valois and billeted north of the town.
1 September	Called up before 7 a.m. to reinforce a firing line in fields astride the main road to Compiègne. Engaged enemy before being ordered to retire about 10 a.m. Continued rear guard actions until arriving at Silly-le-Long at about 6.30 p.m.
2 September	Marched to Cuisy, arriving at 11 p.m.
3 September	Marched to Coulommès.
4 September	At Coulommès, resting all day.
5 September	Left Coulommès at 12.30 a.m., and bivouacked near Presles at about 10 a.m., then moved to a nearby farm.
6 September	Received orders to end the retreat and advance on Germans. Marched to Villeneuve and halted.
7 September	Marched to Courtry and bivouacked at 1 a.m. Left Courtry at 10 a.m. and marched to Boissy-le-Châtel, and bivouacked.
8 September	Engaged enemy rear guard north east of Doue at 9 a.m. Bivouacked north of the Grand Morin.

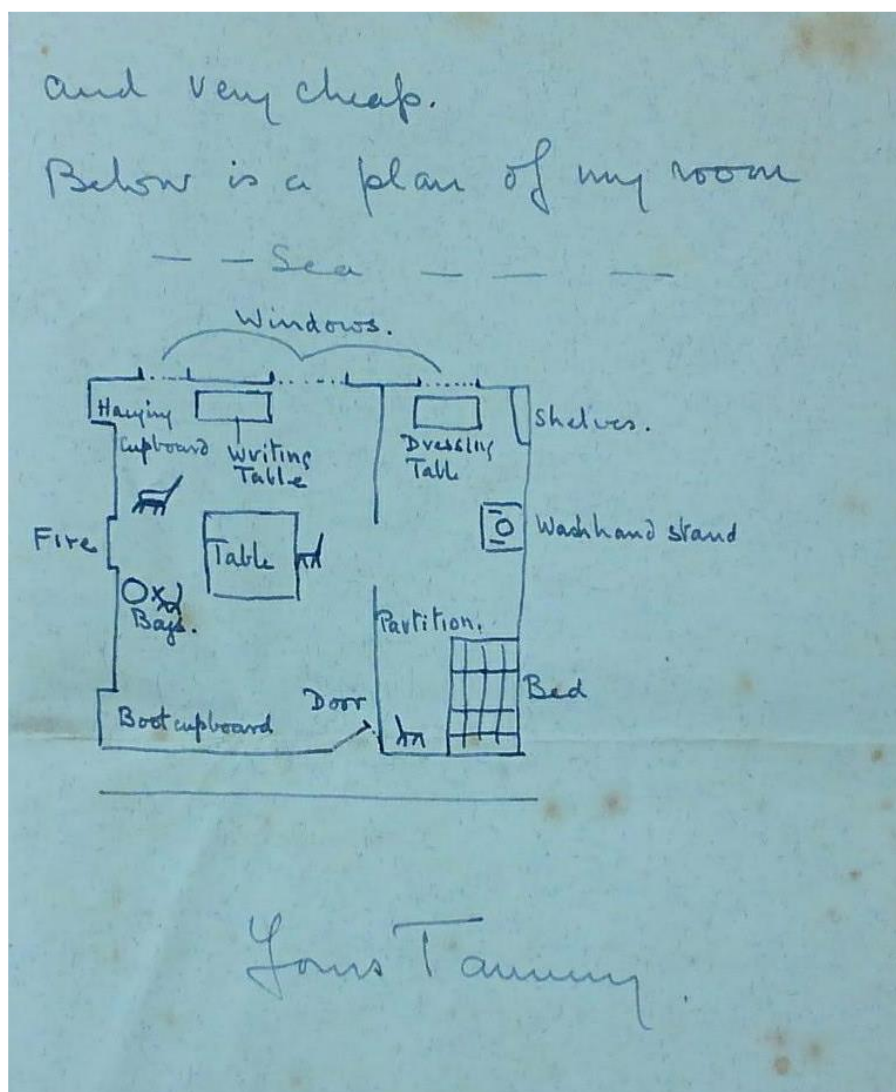
9 September	Advanced at 5 a.m. on Mauroy to engage enemy rear guard. Came under heavy shrapnel fire and forced to reform in nearby wood. Captured Saint-Cyr-sur-Morin in the evening and bivouacked at Noisement.
10 September	Crossed the River Marne at Saâcy-sur-Marne in the afternoon. Spent the night near Chézy-en-Orxois.
11 September	Marched to Hartennes, where Lindsay secured quarters in the farm for the men and in the chateau for the officers.
12 September	(The Battle of the Aisne began). Marched to Serches, and bivouacked.
13 September	Marched to Sermoise and rested. Marched in the evening to Missy-sur-Aisne.
14 September	Crossed the River Aisne by raft at 5 a.m. Pinned down by Germans, who had taken up defensive positions on the heights north of the river. Dug in after a day's fighting.
15-22 September	Near Missy-sur-Aisne, in and out of trenches.
23-30 September	'A' and 'C' companies at Ciry-Salsogne.
1 October	'A' and 'C' companies joined at Ciry-Salsogne by the rest of the battalion.
2 October	(The BEF began to move from the Aisne to Flanders in an attempt to outflank the Germans). At Ciry-Salsogne in bivouacs all day. Left at night for Violaine.
3 October	At Violaines. Left at night for Hartennes.
4 October	At Hartennes. Left at 6.45 p.m. for Largny-sur-Automne.

5 October	Arrived at Lagny-sur-Automne at 5.30 a.m. and rested there all day. Billeted at the nearby mill of Wallu.
6 October	Marched to Pont-Sainte-Maxence and rested there for four hours. Entrained to Abbeville. Marched to billets at Noyelles-en-Chaussée on the Somme estuary.
7-8 October	At Noyelles-en-Chaussée.
9 October	Left Noyelles-en-Chaussée at 4.45 p.m. and marched to Gueschart. Left Gueschart at 11.30 p.m. for Haravesnes.
10 October	Arrived at Haravesnes at 2.45 a.m., and bivouacked. At 2 p.m. bussed to Valhuon, arriving at billets at 7 p.m.
11 October	Began march to Verquin at 8.20 a.m. Billeted at a chateau in Beuvry.
12 October	Began march to Annequin at 5 a.m. to take up position in the line.
13-14 October	Engaged enemy in the vicinity of Annequin.
15 October	Relieved by French troops at 2 a.m. Marched to Beuvry.
16 October	Moved to Le Touret and rested in a farm. Moved to Richebourg at 7 p.m. and billeted.
17 October	At Richebourg.
18 October	Moved to Beau Puits at 4 a.m. Ordered to attack La Bassée. Dug in to defend ground gained.
19-20 October	In trenches at Beau Puits.
21 October	Withdrew to Lorgies.

22 October	At Lorgies. Retired to Richebourg.
23-27 October	At Richebourg, in and out of trenches.
28-30 October	(war diary blank)
31 October	Bussed from Merville to Wulverghem, arriving at 11 a.m. Advanced on Messines at 1 p.m. 'A' & 'C' companies in firing line. Engaged in house-to-house fighting in the east side of the village.
1 November	Ordered to withdraw from Messines. Retired to trenches east of Wulverghem. Billeted at Neuve-Eglise by 11 p.m.
2-4 November	At Neuve-Eglise.
5 November	Moved out of Neuve-Eglise at 6.30 a.m. to avoid shelling. Received orders to join 9 th Infantry Brigade at Ypres.
6 November	Marched to Ypres and on to Hooze.
7 November	Took over trenches in Nonne Boschen Wood at 2 a.m.
8-18 November	In the trenches at Nonne Boschen Wood. Shelled by enemy most days. Repulsed enemy infantry attacks (11, 14 & 17). Mortar attack (18).
19 November	Relieved and moved to billets at Hooze.
20 November	At Hooze. Left for Locre at 9 p.m.
21 November	Arrived at Locre at 4 a.m. and billeted.

22-27 November	At Locre for re-organising and re-fitting. Lindsay left for short leave (24). Addressed by Sir John French at 2 p.m. (27). Lindsay returned from leave (27). Marched to Neuve-Eglise (27).
28 November	At Neuve-Eglise.
29 November	Moved to trenches on the north side of the Wulverghem-Messines road, near Wulverghem, at 5 p.m.
30 November	In trenches near Wulverghem.
1 December	Relieved and moved to billets at Neuve-Eglise.
2-4 December	At Neuve-Eglise.
5 December	Moved to trenches at Hill 75, near Lindenhoek.
6-7 December	In trenches at Hill 75, near Lindenhoek.
8 December	Relieved and moved to billets at Dranoutre.
9-12 December	At Dranoutre.
13 December	At Dranoutre. Moved to trenches at Hill 75, near Lindenhoek, at 5 p.m.
14-16 December	In trenches at Hill 75, near Lindenhoek. Attacked enemy trenches.
17 December	Moved to billets at Dranoutre at 6 a.m. Lindsay goes sick with swollen feet and is evacuated.

FACSIMILES



Facsimile 1. A page from Lindsay's letter of 2 February 1910 with a plan of his room in Palace Barracks, Holywood. (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)



ROYAL BARRACKS
DUBLIN

22. 3. 14.

Dearest Mother

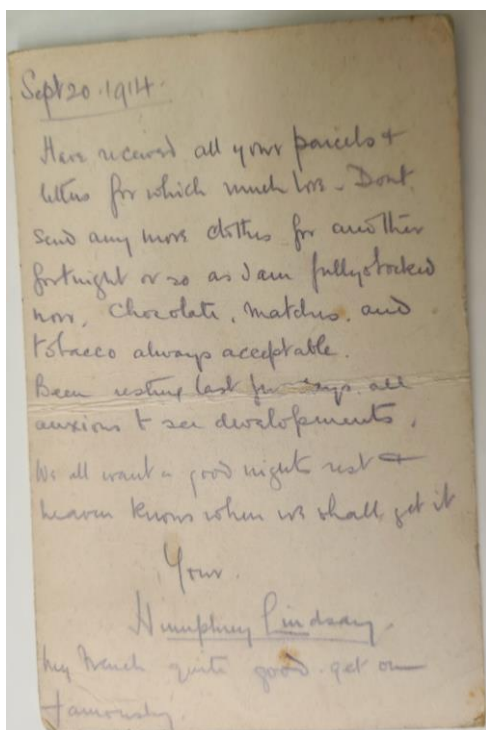
Excuse pencil but all the
writing tables are occupied.

We are going through a most interesting time
here but rather a serious one.

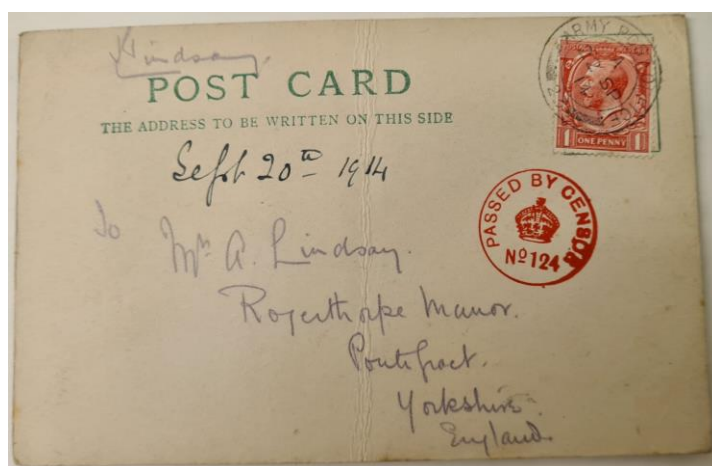
At 11.30 am this morning we were asked to
choose between accepting dismissal or going
to fight Ulster if necessary and our decisions
had to be in by 1 pm.

I happened to know it was coming; how will do
another time but all last night I thought it
out and so when I was asked I said I would
go against Ulster. There are many reasons
which I will tell you.

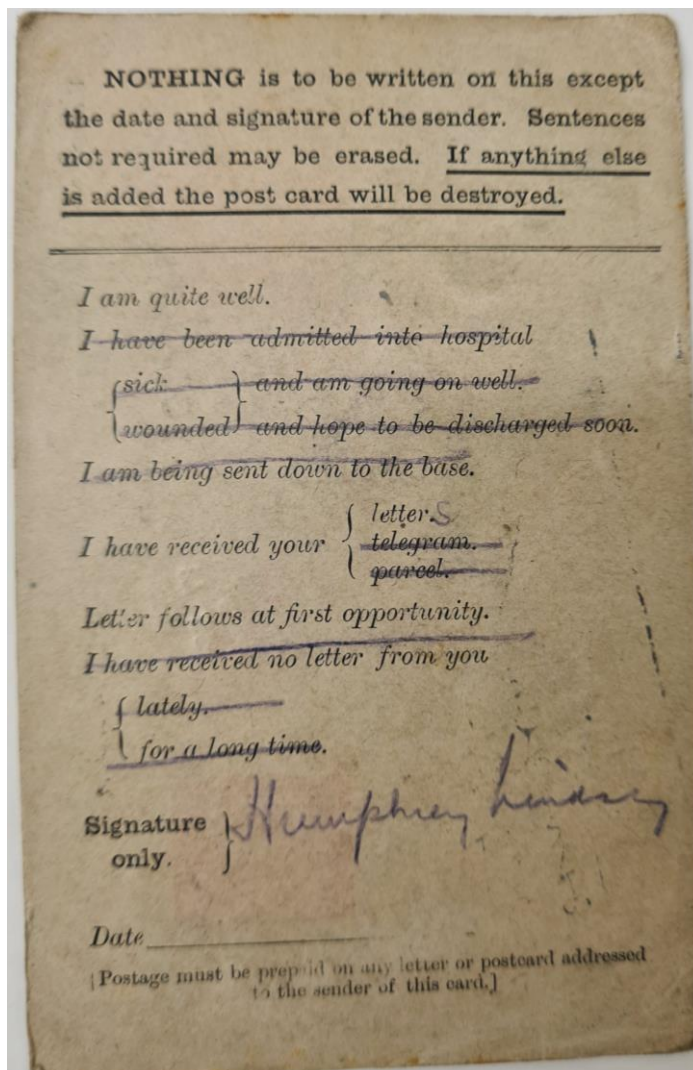
Facsimile 2. The opening page from Lindsay's letter of 22 March 1914 in which he sets out his reasons for not resigning should the army be deployed against the Ulster Volunteers. (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)



Facsimile 3. When this postcard was written on 20 September 1914, 'A' company was resting behind the lines near Missy-sur-Aisne. (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)



Facsimile 4. The address side of the postcard Lindsay sent to his mother on 20 September 1914, duly stamped as being passed by the censor. Rogerthorpe Manor was the home of Lieutenant-Colonel William Frecheville Ramsden, who was related to Lindsay through marriage (see Family Tree). (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)



Facsimile 5. An example of one of the field service postcards sent by Lindsay during the opening months of the war. These pre-printed cards enabled soldiers on active service to send quick messages home without the need for censoring. (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)

Head Quarters
Arquata.
A.P.O. L. I.
Haley.
Sept. 24. 1919.

Dearest brother.

I am back again from Stresa having spent my last week end with Anna and her sister. She has a delightful country place with beautiful things, in fact except for the stone floor it is just like an English country home.

On Sunday night we went back to Stresa for a ball given privately and all the girls wore the dress of the Louis XIV period. I can't tell you how charming they all looked. Anna did not wear a crinoline but a charming dress with full skirts and her done for the period. The room was too small for dancing in comfort unfortunately so we left about 2.30 am. I came back here to find that my boss had done nothing in my absence and whenever anybody came to ask about anything he said 'oh wait until Sunday comes back. He knows all about that.' It was a stupid thing to do as it showed him up so badly to the people who asked for things. Although most of the personnel & material will be out of here by about mid November I don't expect to get away myself much before Xmas. Anyway I am not counting on it and I don't really see that it is possible. Winter is on us like a drop scene for the moment though the natives quite expect it to turn hot again for a short period. The result of sleeping under a

Facsimile 6. The opening page from Lindsay's letter of 24 September 1919 in which his frustrations with his commanding officer at Arquata are made clear. (Courtesy of East Lothian Council Archives)

INTRODUCTION

George Humphrey Maurice Lindsay was brought up in a world that was already passing into history. He was born in 1888, within a decade of the celebrations mounted for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee to celebrate her sixty years on the throne. To mark Britain's paramount position, it had been proposed that the commemoration would be a 'Festival of the British Empire' and that turned out to be the central theme. It was the high-water mark of a century which had seen Britain increase her imperial holdings to become the richest, most powerful and most envied nation on earth. With her battleships, armies, colonies, and the money to finance them, Britain appeared to be an invincible power which could confidently face the world from the splendour of her island isolation. British commercial and financial supremacy was an acknowledged fact and it seemed that in every part of the globe British adventurers were either building railways and canals or opening up virgin jungles or avenging wrongs committed against their country, or putting other peoples in their place, or grandly ruling the waves.

It was known, in self-conscious imitation of the rule of Rome, as the Pax Britannica but this new imperialism was not just a commercial or administrative undertaking; it had also been adopted as a creed. The governance of empire was a sacred duty which had been given in trust. Quite simply it amounted to an insistence that it was civilised Britain's preordained role to bring light where there was once darkness, to rule the poor and the oppressed for their own sakes and to bring order and wealth to the underprivileged of the world. It allied itself to an aura of manliness which for the Victorian male seemed to represent the apotheosis of empire: the young district officer riding the desert plains of Sudan, the planter in Ceylon, the Guides' officer keeping vigil on the North-West Frontier of India, the railway engineer in Uganda, the miner reaping the earth's riches in Borneo or South Africa or the explorer just about anywhere opening up new routes or exploiting the ever-diminishing wilderness. All those characteristic types added up to an imperial ideal and fuelled a nation's imagination in a way that is impossible for subsequent generations to comprehend or even to digest.

It was a self-satisfied age – arrogant, smug, and mettlesome – and the mood found its apotheosis in the celebration laid on for the commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in London on 22 June 1897.¹ Its centrepiece was the largest military parade ever seen in the nation's capital: some 50,000 soldiers took part and as they marched or rode their colourful way to a service held outside St Paul's Cathedral by the west steps, it seemed to the cheering crowds that in front of them was assembled the pomp and power of

an empire destined to stay in being for decades to come. Here were colourful squadrons of lancers from India, mounted carabinieri from Natal, bush-whacking troopers from New South Wales, Highlanders marching behind pipes and drums from all over Canada, and a bewildering, even bizarre, medley of men in uniform from the more exotic corners of empire – kepi-ed policemen from British Guiana, camel corpsmen from Bikaner, Cypriot Zaptiehs and Dayak head-hunters from Borneo. Small wonder that even *The Times* newspaper felt free to break from its normally sober tones to claim in its editorial the following day that Britain possessed ‘the mightiest and most beneficial empire ever known in the annals of mankind’.²

Although the imperial edifice was real enough at the time and was believed by the British people to be a force for good – less so in the decades that followed – its lasting effect was largely illusory. Within two years of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee the empire received its first shock in South Africa in October 1899, when the resident Boer population declared war on Britain following years of confrontation and disagreement and the country was plunged into a lengthy and acrimonious war which soon reached stalemate. Although the British finally defeated the Boers in the field in 1902, the war shattered Victorian complacency by revealing the feebleness of the country’s armed forces and the perils of isolation in a suddenly hostile world. Drastic military reforms were instituted, and change was rapidly introduced but ahead lay an even greater conflagration which saw Britain plunged into its first great European conflict since 1815 with the inexorable descent into the First World War of 1914–1918. It was against this troubled background that Lindsay grew into manhood and committed himself to a military career in the British Army.

He had been born on 23 October 1888 in the heart of the British Empire at Coonoor in Tamil Nadu in India, where his father Alfred Lindsay (1853–1901) worked as a tea and coffee planter. One of three hill stations in the Nilgiri Hills – another was Ootacamund, known to the British as ‘Ooty’, which served as the summer capital for the Madras Presidency – Coonoor was admired for its temperate climate, which was ideal for tea cultivation, and for its sophisticated infrastructure including the world-famous Nilgiri Mountain Railway. Lindsay, who was called Humphrey by the family (although in letters to his mother Isabel Catherine Northcote he signed himself Tammy), was the third child and only son, his sisters being Margaret (b. 1884) and Violet (b. 1886). On his father’s side he was the great grandson of James Lindsay, the 24th earl of Crawford (1783–1869), an earl in the peerage of Scotland and a prominent landowner and coal mine owner in Lancashire. It is unclear why Alfred Lindsay became a tea planter in India – the need to earn a respectable living would have been one reason – but his time there was relatively short. He retired in 1891 and by the time of that year’s census he had returned to England. Ten years later he and his family were listed as living at 13 Montpelier Grove in Cheltenham where his household consisted of his wife, two

daughters, his son, a cook, a housemaid and a hospital nurse, the latter role suggesting that he was in poor health. Alfred Lindsay died on 2 April 1901 and probate records his effects as £4,027, 1s. 11d., a relatively modest sum which in today's (2022) terms was worth £512,620.³

By then Humphrey had been enrolled as a day boy at Cheltenham College, which he entered in September 1900 on the Military Side with the intention of making a career in the regular army. Within walking distance of the family home, it was an unsurprising choice as its fees were half those of older and more prestigious schools such as Eton, Harrow and Winchester and its curriculum concentrated less on Classics than on subjects such as mathematics and languages, which were considered to be more useful to aspiring army officers. The school had been established in 1841 to provide a sound education for the sons of the families who had come to live in the thriving Gloucestershire town, attracted by its spa facilities, Regency housing and genteel social life. From the outset the college provided boarding facilities and within a short time its reputation for getting boys into the armed forces and the elite Indian Civil Service had attracted entrants from all over Britain. The expansion of the Great Western Railway provided a further incentive to middle class families who wanted their sons to enjoy the kind of robust public-school education which had been made popular by Thomas Arnold at Rugby, especially through the influence of Thomas Hughes's novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857). What this amounted to was a thorough grounding in elementary subjects with an emphasis on the Classics, a reverence for the tenets of Christianity, an insistence on good manners and, later, a glorification of sport. Moreover, Arnold encouraged his prefects to maintain a code of discipline underpinned by the teaching of his own sermons and strict religious doctrine and they were used to supplement the teaching process. Although the system had obvious limitations, it was embraced enthusiastically by the Victorian middle classes and Rugby School spawned a number of imitations of which Cheltenham was one of the most successful.

Education at the college was divided into three departments or 'sides' – the Junior, the Classics and the Military. The last prepared boys for entrance into the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich for service in the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the Corps of Royal Engineers and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst for service in the infantry and cavalry. To get into either institution candidates had to score good marks in the respective entrance examinations and thereby win a high place on the entrance list. It was a test of some complexity. Eight subjects were compulsory – English, English history, geography, French or German, elementary mathematics (arithmetic), intermediate mathematics, physics, chemistry; and one subject was optional, a choice of French or German, Latin, Greek or higher mathematics, depending on what had been selected in the first group. A total of 14,000 marks could be scored overall but to scrape through the candidate had to gain at least 33 per

cent in all subjects except elementary mathematics, where the pass mark was 75 per cent.⁴ The emphasis in the humanities was focussed largely on the British imperial role and a recurring question from the English history papers of the pre-war period concerned itself with a subject familiar to Victorian minds: 'What is meant by the Eastern Question and how came Britain to be interested in it?' Overall, the army was looking for clear thinkers who could communicate logically and precisely. The general introduction to the paper left no candidate in any doubt about what was expected of him:

Irrelevance will be regarded as the most serious fault in an essay but incoherence, obscurity, needless repetition, diffuseness will also be regarded as grave defects. Bad grammar, the incorrect use of words and phrases, and serious errors in punctuation will be heavily punished.⁵

Today, the examination would be regarded as a rigorous test of general knowledge in a wide range of subjects and Lindsay was well prepared for it, having been soundly tutored by the masters on Cheltenham's Military Side under the direction of W. M. 'Scab' Baker, who directed a first-rate staff including W. G. Borchardt, the author of a well-known series of mathematical textbooks. 'The teaching Staff were an amazing mixture of all sorts of idiosyncrasies,' remembered one of Lindsay's near contemporaries, the future classical scholar Maurice Bowra. 'Some seemed to us definitely too old, and one sometimes wondered whether keeping order was considered more important than teaching a subject.' He added that, for the most part, the teaching was outstanding and consequently so too was the success rate.⁶ Between 1890 and 1912 when Baker retired, the total of successful candidates in the Woolwich and Sandhurst entrance examinations numbered 345. It was also considered a bad year in which Cheltenham did not gain top places in the lists, their closest rivals being Wellington and Clifton – of the 515 boys who left school to be commissioned in the army between 1900 and 1904, 108 came from Cheltenham, sixty-six from Wellington and sixty-four from Clifton.⁷ When Lindsay sat the Sandhurst entrance examination in 1907, he was one of twenty-eight successful candidates from Cheltenham.

All were embarking on their military careers in the wake of the disastrous Boer War when the need to introduce reforms touched every aspect of army life and exerted a powerful influence on its development over the coming decade. Military education was central to this process especially the strengths and weaknesses of the existing systems. Under the chairmanship of the Home Secretary Aretas Akers-Douglas MP (later Viscount Chilston), a parliamentary committee was given a broad remit to examine the system of military education, particularly 'whether it is desirable that Sandhurst and Woolwich should be maintained' and if so, whether the instruction should be 'purely Military and Technical, or whether it should be to some extent general, with

a strong Military tinge.⁸ While it was clear that neither institution had worked satisfactorily – Woolwich cadets had performed marginally better – it was conceded that both should be retained as there was no alternative solution. The army required an annual intake of 800 officers and the best way forward would be to reform the existing system of provision for want of creating anything that might be better.

As a result, the courses at both Woolwich and Sandhurst were expanded and modernised. To take one example, the committee found that instruction in tactics was inadequate with cadets only being given sixty hours of instruction per year with just half of that time being spent out of doors, an imbalance which was considered inimical to a military education. The examinations were similarly flawed: the tactics paper was worth only a small share of the total marks available (450 out of 3,800), and the answers were designed to be written in a way likely to encourage learning by rote rather than by exacting a thorough understanding of general principles.⁹ To address those problems the committee advocated raising the quality of the teaching staff by ensuring that all had passed through the army's staff college thereby ensuring a healthy competition for places – successful officers were denoted in the Army List by having the letters *psc* after their names. By the end of the decade, it was agreed that the levels of instruction had improved – tactics were awarded 950 out of 4,450 – and when Lindsay arrived at Sandhurst at the end of 1907 the course was eighteen months long with three terms. The commandant was Colonel W. B. Capper, who had served with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and had passed staff college. By then, too, the new syllabus had come into being as a result of the Akers-Douglas reforms although in the first term musketry, gymnastics and drill remained compulsory. In general, tactical instruction was placed at the centre of the course, alongside the allied subjects of military engineering and topography; and the centrality of firepower on the battlefield was emphasised along with the need for initiative, dispersion, and concealment, thus preparing cadets well for modern combat conditions. The innovations did not come with the exclusion of academic subjects: in addition to military history, French or German were taught and in his first term Lindsay was one of four cadets who received a Hornby Prize, which had been founded by Henry Hugh Hornby, a former president of the Cheltonian Society, to reward proficiency in French, German or English. It was worth £15 and was a welcome addition to his personal finances – at the time the annual fees at Sandhurst were £150.

Although it is difficult to be prescriptive in assessing the attitudes of several thousand young men in the period between the Boer War and the First World War, the available documentary evidence suggests that the Sandhurst Gentlemen Cadets (as they were styled) were well motivated and ambitious, hardworking, and keen to succeed in their chosen profession.¹⁰ One reason was the need to do well in the college's final examinations, which from 1906 onwards determined whether or not a candidate would achieve sufficient marks

to gain a coveted commission in the Indian Army. This was an important consideration. Competition for commissions was fiercely contested for not only was the Indian Army held in high popular esteem but pay was higher, promotion was more rapid, and expenses were lower; and as a result it could choose from the cream of Sandhurst's cadets.

Although Lindsay was never interested in following that route, it did attract his more industrious colleagues who were keen to achieve financial independence and a life of immediate active service both of which a career in India offered. One of these was an Anglican bishop's son from Northern Ireland called Bernard Law Montgomery, who was an almost exact contemporary, having entered Sandhurst on 30 January 1907. By the future field marshal's own admission, Montgomery's time as a Gentleman Cadet was blighted by lack of funds and he recorded in his *Memoirs* that he was 'doubtful if many cadets were as poor as myself'. Plunging himself into hard work, Montgomery was 'bitterly disappointed' to miss selection by an extremely narrow margin – only thirty-six Gentleman Cadets were accepted into the Indian Army in the summer of 1908, and he was not amongst them. Fortunately, he had a second choice, having been offered a place in The Royal Warwickshire Regiment he was duly commissioned in September 1908. Ironically, he was gazetted into its 1st battalion, which was then stationed in India, at Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province; this posting permitted him to draw active service pay and thereby end his reliance on financial subvention from his parents. The incident left Montgomery with a lasting suspicion of the Indian Army and its officer caste, which influenced his later life as a senior commander, but conversely from the Warwicks he admitted that he 'learned the foundations of the military art' and came to understand that hard work was the key to promotion.¹¹

It was around this time that Lindsay would have given thought to his own career in the army, and from the outset he would have understood that his choice would be governed by the amount of money that his widowed mother could afford to spend on it. For all Gentleman Cadets this was the decisive factor, and it determined their choice because each regiment in the British Army insisted on its officers having a private income, the amount varying from regiment to regiment. While the different levels were known and understood they were never advertised or even widely discussed. But the status and associated costs were real enough as the required sums had to supplement the officer's pay on joining as a 2nd lieutenant of £95 16s. a year. (In 2022 this would be equivalent to £10,140 in terms of purchasing power.) Most expensive were the cavalry regiments, which expected a private income of £1,000 a year to cover the costs of keeping at least two hunters and three polo ponies plus the expenses of maintaining that type of lifestyle while serving in Britain. (In 2022 this would be equivalent to £106,700 in terms of purchasing power.) Equally expensive were the Foot Guards – Grenadier, Coldstream, Scots and Irish – although, officially, these regiments considered £400 to be

the bare minimum for a young officer on joining. (In 2022 this would be equivalent to £42,700 in terms of purchasing power.) Other expensive regiments were The Rifle Brigade and those of the Highland Brigade.

Thus it can be seen that it would be extremely difficult to live off one's pay. Even in a less expensive regiment there were costs which had to be met. On joining his regiment an officer had to provide all his uniform to cover every eventuality. In a typical line infantry regiment this had to consist of full dress worn on ceremonial parades, patrol dress, mess dress for wear at dinner and military balls, service dress and field service dress. This could entail an outlay of £200 and while certain items of uniform could be carried over from Sandhurst it was balanced by an insistence that regimental tailors must be used, and these were invariably more expensive than commercial outfitters. In addition, the young officer had to possess suitable plain clothes as well as the correct clothes and equipment for sporting activities including field sports and athletic sports such as football and boxing. Then there were substantial running costs, the most important of which was the monthly mess bill, which in an average infantry regiment could be £10. This accounted for food and accommodation, a contribution to subscriptions and a modest amount of alcoholic drink such as an 'occasional whisky and soda before dinner or a glass of port after it'.¹² Few young officers, other than those with large private incomes, could afford to drink more than that with the result that heavy consumption of alcohol was the exception rather than the rule.

Bearing all this in mind, Lindsay's circumstances meant that he would have to plump for a reasonably modest regiment, one that did not expect a large private income while allowing him to live reasonably comfortably – with good reason they were often referred to as 'younger sons' regiments. This excluded the Foot Guards and some of the more expensive infantry regiments, but it allowed him to choose The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB), an old-established Scottish regiment which recommended a private income of £250 a year. There were also existing family connections, which was an important consideration applying to any regiment: a Lindsay forebear, Lieutenant-General John Lindsay, 20th earl of Crawford, had been colonel of the regiment between 1746 and 1747, and closer to his own age, a second cousin, Charles Antrobus, was serving in the regiment's 2nd Battalion; and on his mother's side of the family a great-grandfather, Charles Williamson of Balgray (1757-1808), Dumfriesshire, had also served in the regiment, then styled the 25th (Edinburgh) Foot, between 1775 and 1781. It was a sound choice for a young man in Lindsay's position. The KOSB was one of the oldest military formations in the British Army with a long and distinguished history. Not only did it have the distinction of being a 'Royal' regiment, but it had also never been amalgamated or disbanded during one of the army's periodic moments of change and reform – a distinction it shared with The Royal Scots, The Green Howards and The Cheshire Regiment.

The regiment had come into being in March 1689 at a time of political and religious turmoil following the short-lived reign of King James VII and II, who had succeeded to the throne in 1685. The new reign got off to a promising start but soon James began a reckless policy of promoting Catholic allies; slowly, an inner circle of Catholic advisors ring-fenced the king and the country became increasingly Catholic in complexion. As it did so the relationship between Crown and Church deteriorated, and a group of conspirators made contact with William of Orange and invited him to intervene to save parliament and religion.¹³ He began military preparations immediately after landing at Torbay on 5 November 1688 and went on to assume power in a sequence of events which came to be known as the Glorious Revolution.

In Scotland, however, not everyone was prepared to accept William as king and the opposition to the new order centred on a prominent Jacobite (as James's supporters came to be known): John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, who began gathering forces in his heartlands north of the Tay. At the same time the duke of Gordon seized Edinburgh Castle in James's name. With rebellion and the threat of civil war in the air, the Scottish Convention of Estates decided to take steps to raise a regiment numbering at least 800 men to protect the city under the command of the earl of Leven – this was the regiment which eventually became The King's Own Scottish Borderers. The order was encapsulated in an Act of Parliament dated 18 March 1689: astonishingly, by beat of drum, the regiment was raised within four hours and numbered 1,000 men. It was known as the Edinburgh Regiment of Foot or, following the custom of the day of naming a regiment after its commanding officer, the Earl of Leven's Regiment. By any standards David Melville, earl of Leven, was one of the leading Scots of his day. Through his mother Catherine he was the grandson of Alexander, Lord Balgonie, the eldest son of Alexander Leslie, 1st earl of Leven and one of Scotland's most distinguished soldiers. Leslie had served in the army of King Gustavus Adolphus during the Thirty Years War and on his return to Britain he had commanded the Scottish army which had fought alongside the parliamentary army which defeated King Charles I's Royalist forces at Marston Moor in 1644. His grandson David Melville had succeeded to the Leven earldom through his maternal grandfather in 1688 and was a committed Williamite supporter; he was also an experienced soldier in his own right having served in the army of the Elector of Brandenburg.

Leven's regiment did not have to fulfil its obligation to defend Edinburgh, but it was involved in General Hugh Mackay's operations in the Highlands to put down Viscount Dundee's rebellion, the decisive battle being fought at Killiecrankie north of Perth on 27 July 1689. Although this resulted in a defeat for Mackay's smaller army, Dundee was killed after the battle and his rebellion in support of James came to an end after his remaining forces were defeated at Dunkeld by the earl of Angus's Covenanting regiment, later The Cameronians. Both Angus's and Leven's regiments were destined to have long and glorious

histories and their stories reflect the gradual evolution of the British Army. Having been brought into the military establishment, Leven's Edinburgh Regiment saw service in Ireland and then in Europe, where throughout the eighteenth century Britain's main enemy was France, and their service reflected the different roles they played in those conflicts – the War of the League of Augsburg, the War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession,¹⁴ the Seven Years War, and the Napoleonic War.

War, the bringer of change, affected the development of the regiment and throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Edinburgh Regiment underwent several significant alterations of title which can be tabulated in the following way:

1751: 25th (Edinburgh) Foot
1782: 25th (Sussex) Foot
1805: 25th (King's Own Borderers) Foot
1881 (May): The York Regiment (King's Own Borderers)
1881 (July): The King's Own Borderers
1887: The King's Own Scottish Borderers

The innovations were progressive in that they maintained the regiment's original character and purpose as a line infantry regiment of the British Army. At the same time, they spoke to key demands such as the necessity of recruiting and retaining personnel, especially after wars ended and there was a clamour to save money by cutting back expenditure on the regiments. Between 1743 and 1751, King George II addressed the problem of maintaining the country's army by issuing three warrants which established the regiments as realistic corporate units by standardising matters such as uniform regulations, the use of colours and heraldic devices and, most importantly, by abolishing the primacy of regimental colonels. Henceforth, from 1751 onwards, infantry regiments lost colonel's names from their titles and were numbered in order of precedence with the creation of a regular establishment consisting of fourteen regiments of cavalry, three regiments of foot guards and forty-five regiments of foot (infantry). Under this system, Leven's Edinburgh Regiment became the 25th (Edinburgh) Foot and that remained its title until 1782 when it changed again as a result of a War Office decision to assign regiments to different English counties. At the time the 25th's regimental colonel was Major-General Lord George Lennox, whose family had links with the county of Sussex, being substantial landowners there, and he himself was its MP from 1767 to 1790. It was only natural that he should want his regiment to be linked to the county through its military title although opinion is divided about whether he or the regiment approved of the new title.

It was to be another twenty-three years before its title changed again on becoming a royal regiment: in 1805, by command of King George III, the 25th

was given the title of the 25th (King's Own Borderers) Foot. Its facings changed from yellow to blue to reflect its royal title and soon after this the regimental pipers were given permission to wear Royal Stuart tartan, another sign of royal patronage. During the nineteenth century the regiment served variously in the West Indies, Ireland, South Africa, India and Canada and in 1859 a second battalion was re-formed at Preston in Lancashire.

In 1868 the Liberals came to power under William Ewart Gladstone determined to create a modern professional army by introducing root and branch reform which would deal with the regimental system and bring order to what they regarded as years of chaos. The instrument of change was the new Secretary of State for War Edward Cardwell, a Liverpool barrister who was determined to drag the army into the modern age by pushing through fundamental changes including the abolition of the purchase of officers' commissions, the creation of reserve forces by reforming the militia and the standardisation of terms of service to allow soldiers to serve for six years in the colours and six years in the reserves (later seven and five). His most radical proposal though was the move towards a 'localisation' scheme for the army's regiments.

For some time the War Office had toyed with the idea of introducing a territorial system by which every regiment would be linked to its own local recruiting area. The result was the creation of sub-district brigade depots which paired 141 infantry battalions at sixty-nine brigade depots. Under this scheme in 1873 the two battalions of the 25th were brigaded at York as 6th Brigade Depot, the regiment being deemed to belong to the English military establishment. However, further change was in the air. At the time all infantry regiments numbered 1st to 25th and the two Rifle Brigade regiments (60th and 95th) had multiple battalions and plans were now prepared to provide all single-battalion regiments with two battalions through a process of amalgamation. Under a process begun in 1872 under Cardwell's direction and finalised nine years later by his successor Hugh Childers, the remaining single battalion regiments were to be linked with others of their kind to form new two-battalion regiments with territorial designations.¹⁵ Each regiment would also have local militia and volunteer rifle battalions consisting of part-time soldiers, the predecessors of the later Territorial Army.

Driving the Cardwell/Childers' reforms was the theory that one battalion would serve at home while the other was stationed abroad and would receive drafts and reliefs from the home-based battalion to keep it up to strength. As a result of the localisation changes, regimental numbers were dropped and territorial names were adopted throughout the army but, as happens in every period of reform, the changes outraged older soldiers who deplored the loss of cherished numbers and the introduction of what they held to be undignified territorial names, some of which bore no relation to the new regiment's past history.¹⁶ Being one of the twenty-five regiments which already had two

battalions, the 25th was not affected directly by the Cardwell/Childers' reforms as there was no need for them to link up with another regiment but far from continuing as before there was a radical change of name. Because the new brigade depot was situated in York, the 25th became The York Regiment (King's Own Borderers), a move that effectively divorced the regiment from its historical origins in Scotland, not least with the city of Edinburgh.

Inevitably this caused a great deal of resentment and the regiment complained bitterly about the loss of its Scottish status. Initially the War Office was unsympathetic. The general view was that Scotland was over-represented in the British Army and that recruiting would be a problem; the only compromise offered by the adjutant-general, the senior officer responsible for administration, was a change of location to Berwick-on-Tweed when the resident regiment, The Northumberland Fusiliers, moved to Newcastle. Eventually that sensible outcome was agreed and on 29 July 1881 the Borderers moved to the depot at Berwick-on-Tweed, which would be its final home. The only drawback was that the regiment would have no local militia or volunteer battalions and it was not until 1887 that the matter was finally settled. In that year the regiment's new title became The King's Own Scottish Borderers with its depot at Berwick-on-Tweed and the headquarters of its 3rd militia battalion in Dumfries.¹⁷ At the same time the regiment's recruiting area was designated as the counties of Berwick, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Roxburgh and Selkirk, with Wigton added later. The only changes were to the uniform: the red tunic of a line infantry regiment was exchanged for a Highland doublet, and trews of government tartan were now worn together with the Kilmarnock bonnet with dice-box border, introduced in 1864. As a result of the changes the 1st battalion became the overseas battalion and in 1875 moved to India, where it was stationed at Fyzabad in the kingdom of Oudh.

In February 1909 Lindsay was gazetted to the 2nd Battalion as a 2nd lieutenant, the junior rank of officer, and joined them at their base at Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow, where they had been on home service since 1906 following a lengthy and adventurous period of active service in Sudan and India. Opened in 1872, Maryhill Barracks was built to house an infantry regiment, a squadron of cavalry and an artillery battery and it was very much the focus of military life in the city until its closure and demolition in 1959. As the regiment's home service battalion its primary responsibility was to provide periodic drafts of men to keep the overseas battalion up to strength and it was accepted that its own strength would often be low. One consequence of the new system was that the pace of life in a home service battalion was generally relaxed, the atmosphere was free and easy, and on joining it Lindsay would have felt immediately at home. Most of his brother officers were from similar social backgrounds and had attended a handful of mainly English public schools; their fathers were in the army, the church or law and some may have been lesser landed gentry or were involved in business. All came from a small section of the

population, and all had similar interests. From an early age, through family upbringing and education, all had been raised to accept certain rules and customs, and so happily adapted to those practised by the regiment. For example, there were certain rules or shibboleths which had to be accepted by the young officer without question in the officers' mess. For the first six months of his service he was not expected to initiate a conversation with a senior officer, a woman's name was never to be mentioned and there was a ban on 'talking shop'. In short, during their early years in the army the 2nd Battalion KOSB was their home, and they were encouraged to treat it as such.

While the battalion was part of the British Army and had a specific role in its organisational structure, it was largely self-sufficient and was expected to act independently. It numbered around one thousand officers and men and was commanded by a senior officer in the rank of lieutenant-colonel who had usually but not always spent his entire military career in The King's Own Scottish Borderers. At the time of Lindsay's arrival, the commanding officer was George de Wet Verner, a product of Wellington College and a veteran of the earlier war in Afghanistan, who had been commissioned in 1879 and had received the command on 23 April 1906. He remained in position until 3 December 1910 when he was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel C. M. Stephenson. The commanding officer's immediate responsibility was the direction of battalion headquarters, where he was supported by his second-in-command, a senior major and two staff officers, the adjutant, a senior lieutenant or captain, and the quartermaster. The adjutant was responsible for organising the day-to-day running of the battalion and also for setting its general tone including standards of behaviour and discipline, while the quartermaster, always promoted from the ranks, was responsible for dealing with stores and supplies. Also present was the transport officer and a medical officer from the Royal Army Medical Corps. The battalion headquarters also included the orderly room, which was the office for a range of non-commissioned officers, and other ranks responsible for administration, stores, transport, signals, medical care and a range of other duties. In charge of the orderly room was the regimental sergeant-major, the senior non-commissioned officer, and a significant figure in the battalion hierarchy, second only in importance to the commanding officer in winning the respect of the soldiers.

Below the battalion headquarters the rest of the men were divided into four rifle companies, numbered A, B, C and D, each of which was commanded by a major or senior captain (known as the officer commanding), and which contained roughly two hundred men under the command of five officers supported by a company sergeant major, a company quartermaster sergeant, eight sergeants and 10 corporals. Lindsay was assigned to A Company, which was commanded by Captain L. D. Spencer. There was a further sub-division with each company containing four platoons, each commanded by a subaltern (lieutenant or 2nd lieutenant), and numbered 1-4 in A Company, 5-8 in B

Company, 9-12 in C Company and 13-16 in D Company. Each platoon had four sections of around a dozen men commanded by a corporal or lance-corporal. On its war footing the battalion also had a machine gun section containing two Lewis guns and sixteen men commanded by a senior subaltern, in this case Lieutenant J. B. W. Pennyman.

Every soldier serving in the battalion understood that it was an integral part of The King's Own Scottish Borderers but they also recognised that it had an operational role as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), which had been created early in the twentieth century to provide Britain's ally France with six infantry divisions and five cavalry brigades under the command of General Sir John French to repel any German attack in the West in the event of the outbreak of a European conflict. Briefly stated, the 2nd Battalion KOSB was part of 13th Brigade (Brigadier-General G. J. Cuthbert) together with three other battalions – 2nd Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment, 1st Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) and 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry – which itself was one of the three brigades in 5th Division (Major-General Sir Charles Fergusson) in II Corps commanded by Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. The BEF came into being as a result of the entente cordiale of 1904, the secret diplomatic understanding with France, and was part of the reforms instigated by Richard Haldane in 1908 when he was Secretary for War. When Lindsay was commissioned, it was understood, though never widely discussed, that his regiment might one day be fighting in Europe.

In his letters, mostly written to his mother, Lindsay is typical of a young man of his period. He attentively describes his many activities and recounts the people he has met or are his fellows in the officers' mess. There are occasional requests for domestic assistance and assurances about financial details; it is all very comforting and sociable with work hardly being mentioned at all. And until the battalion went into action in August 1914 there is no mention of the soldiers under Lindsay's command. Partly this has to do with the convention of not talking shop, even to close family members; partly, too, it is because he would have had very little direct contact with the men in A Company because orders were passed down through the chain of command via the non-commissioned officers. This does not mean that the officers did not know the names of the other ranks, nor that they did not speak to them in the daily round. On the contrary, this battalion had a fine war record, being in action in France and Flanders throughout the conflict, and this reputation could not have been achieved without the willingness of every soldier – officer or recently enlisted private – to work in common cause and to give their all regardless of rank, driven on by discipline, a sense of duty and mutual respect.

Glasgow was to be the 2nd Battalion KOSB's home until 1910 when it made the short voyage across the North Channel to become one of the resident battalions in Ireland, based at Palace Barracks at Holywood in Belfast. Because it was a home service battalion life remained relaxed while it was based in

Ireland (which also housed the headquarters of 5th Infantry Division), and officers were encouraged to make contact with local society, leaving their calling cards with the local great and good and accepting invitations to social occasions. It also entailed taking part in local sport with golf being particularly popular, and Lindsay became a member of several local clubs, playing nine-hole rounds with his brother subalterns. Having emerged as a good shot he also indulged his love of shooting and was a frequent guest at local shoots especially after his battalion moved south to Dublin in November 1912 to take up residence at the city's Royal Barracks; and in the summer of 1914, he felt sufficiently confident to rent a shoot on the Rathdonnell Estates for the autumn season. His career was not ignored: while in Dublin he was sent on courses to improve his efficiency at signalling and shooting; and in February 1913, he qualified with distinction from the School of Musketry at Hythe in Kent. Not only did this enhance his career prospects but the consequent added proficiency pay was a useful addition to his income.

This was a tense time in Irish affairs. Nationalist sentiments were on the increase with calls for independence being channelled through groups like Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. A home rule bill was due to be passed in 1912 which would have provided a parliament in Dublin, albeit with limited powers, but this was opposed by unionists mainly (though not exclusively) living in the six Ulster counties of Down, Derry, Antrim, Tyrone, northern Fermanagh and north and mid-Armagh. To support their beliefs, they had started laying plans to arm themselves and in January 1913 had formed the Ulster Volunteers to oppose Irish home rule. It quickly raised 100,000 members, many of them members of the Orange Lodge or former soldiers, who began drilling in the Ulster counties and preparing for armed confrontation. At the same time supporters of home rule formed the Irish National Volunteers, which was no less committed or professional in its aims. When it became clear that the unionists would resist any move which gave Ireland home rule, if necessary by using force, the tensions spread into the British Army's garrison in the country, at the time consisting of two infantry divisions and two cavalry brigades. Although the army was supposed to be apolitical, there was a good deal of sympathy for the Ulster Protestants and the question began to be posed: would the Irish-based regiments act against the Ulster Volunteers in the event of any outbreak of violence? Matters came to a head on 20 March 1914 when the General Officer Commanding Ireland General Sir Arthur Paget let it be known that any officer with family connections in the Ulster counties would be allowed to 'disappear' temporarily but that others who disobeyed orders would have to resign or be dismissed from the service. When the question was first put to 2nd KOSB all the officers bar the commanding officer, the second-in-command and the adjutant chose resignation. The matter escalated when fifty-nine officers serving under Brigadier Sir Hubert Gough in 3rd Cavalry Brigade at the large Curragh

garrison outside Dublin also chose resignation.

During the incident, which came to be known as the Curragh Mutiny, Major-General Sir Charles Fergusson, commanding 5th Division, kept his nerve and appealed to all British officers to rethink their position and his good sense helped to still passions. Ten officers in Lindsay's battalion had decided to hold out but Fergusson's intervention made them change their minds. However, the incident had revealed the strength of Ulster's unionist beliefs within the British Army and was to have lasting repercussions in the country. It was also not the end of the regiment's involvement in Ireland's affairs. In the aftermath of the Curragh Mutiny gun-running increased, with both sides importing huge amounts of rifles from Germany. While the Ulster Volunteers acted with impunity and were able to land 24,600 rifles plus ammunition through the northern ports of Bangor and Larne, steps were taken to prevent weapons being imported into the south and this led to confrontations with the security forces. The most serious incident came in the summer of 1914 when the nationalist supporter Erskine Childers, author of the novel *The Riddle of the Sands*, arrived at Howth in his yacht the *Asgard* bringing with him 900 rifles and ammunition. On 26 July the battalion diary recorded:

When most of the officers were out of the barracks, a telephone message arrived at about 3.30 pm to the effect that National Volunteers were landing rifles near Howth and that 100 men of the battalion were to proceed by tram at once to support the Police, taking 100 rounds a man and using force if necessary.

Despite police intervention the weapons were unloaded in half an hour and by the time the KOSB detachment arrived at Clontarf the volunteers had dispersed but a sizeable crowd remained to jeer at the police and the soldiers. As the detachment made its way back to Royal Barracks there were scuffles and outbreaks of stone-throwing which continued over the three-mile march back into Dublin. Tensions were high when the soldiers turned off O'Connell Street on to one of the quays by the River Liffey, named Bachelor's Walk, and as the violence increased the rear-guard wheeled to face the crowd. An officer who had just arrived gave the order for the crowd to disperse and in the confusion the men opened fire. It is not clear if the order was actually given or if by raising his hand for silence it was thought to have been given, but a woman and two men were killed and many more were injured, even though no soldier had fired more than two rounds. In the subsequent inquiry the government's commission concluded that the soldiers' reaction had been 'tainted with illegality' although it also noted Brigadier Cuthbert's observation that they 'acted with great forbearance and self-restraint under circumstances of great provocation'.¹⁸ It was a tense moment for all concerned and the battalion diary subsequently recorded that, 'the feeling against us [KOSB] in Dublin was very bitter and the battalion

was strictly confined to their barracks.’ Lindsay confirmed the atmosphere in letters to his mother (Letters I.10-12), admitting that he ‘wouldn’t leave barracks now without a revolver in my pocket’. He was also astute enough to recognise that the problem had been exacerbated by ordering armed infantrymen to act in support of the police without having any agreed or workable policy; it was a grim foretaste of future problems involving the security forces in Ireland. Inevitably, the incident cast a long shadow over the regiment and for many years nationalists in Ireland would refer to the KOSB as The King’s Own Scottish Butchers.

Coming on top of the Curragh Mutiny, the Bachelor’s Walk shootings reinforced an idea in nationalist minds that the government favoured the unionists but the resultant storm was soon to be overshadowed by a greater tempest taking place in Europe, which was almost sleep-walking into a conflict that would involve Britain, France and Russia on one side and Germany and Austria-Hungary on the other. Four days after the shooting incident, as Britain drifted into conflict with Germany, Lindsay’s battalion began preparations to put themselves on a war footing by rapidly expanding their strength and calling up men from the Regular Army Reserve, a process known as ‘mobilisation’ – reserve service was an obligatory part of a soldier’s engagement. However, mobilisation of the 2nd Battalion caused not a few problems, not least for Lindsay who was acting as adjutant in the absence of Captain R. C. Y. Dering (who was getting married), as over 700 reservists had to be moved to Dublin from the depot at Berwick-on-Tweed. Despite the logistical difficulties the move took only four days and embarkation for deployment in the BEF in France began on 13 August with the battalion travelling from Dublin to Le Havre on board the Bibby Line passenger ship SS *Gloucestershire*. Once in France 5th Division deployed north of the Mons-Condé Canal with 13th Brigade on the right, occupying the line St Vaast-Gommegnies. From there the division marched north into Belgium towards Mons, described by the regimental war historian as ‘a poor battlefield’ but it was one that they had to defend by force of circumstance.¹⁹ The speed and aggression of the German attack led to the defeat of the French Fifth Army on the Sambre, a move that left the BEF isolated in their pre-arranged positions. Bearing down on them from the north were six divisions of General Alexander von Kluck’s First Army. French agreed to hold the position for twenty-four hours and his men began digging in for the expected onslaught, using the features of the mining area with its spoil heaps and buildings to enhance their defences.

The expected German assault began on the morning of 23 August and for the attacking enemy infantrymen it was a sobering experience. Trained to fire fifteen rifle rounds a minute, the British regiments poured their fire into the advancing German lines with predictable results – the rate was so rapid and concentrated that the Germans believed they were facing machine-gun fire. When the elite 12th Brandenburg Grenadiers attacked the 2nd KOSB in their

position along the line near Lock 4 they presented irresistible targets and their casualties reflected the lack of tactical guile. Serving with the Brandenburgers as a company commander was the novelist Walter Bloem and in his account of the fighting *The Advance from Mons 1914*, he lamented the loss of his ‘proud, beautiful battalion . . . shot down, smashed up – only a handful left . . . our first battle is a heavy, unheard of heavy, defeat, and against the English [*sic*], the English we laughed at’.²⁰ By the end of the day the attack had faltered as exhausted and frightened Germans attempted to regroup but despite halting the assault the BEF was obliged to retire towards the River Marne and in the coming days its regiments were to receive increasingly high casualties. During the operation orders did not always get through to everyone and the bulk of C Company was obliged to surrender after being surrounded and outnumbered. Particularly unfortunate was the officer commanding Major A. E. Haig who had been wounded in the shoulder and awoke from the anaesthetic to find himself in enemy hands.

The Great Retreat towards the River Marne, as it was known, took the German Army to the outskirts of Paris and the BEF suffered further casualties on 26 August when II Corps turned to face the advancing Germans at Le Cateau some 30 miles from Mons. It was the British Army’s biggest set-piece battle since Waterloo and their 55,000 soldiers faced German opposition which numbered 140,000. Smith-Dorrien’s three divisions, supported by the Cavalry Division, were able to hold the line by dint of their superior fire-power but by evening they were outnumbered and only a German failure to press home their advantage allowed II Corps to resume their retreat. Even so, the casualties were heavy – 7,812 killed – and gave a stark indication of worse things to come. Exhausted by the battle and the summer heat the BEF continued to pull back amidst rumours that the war was lost and that the French government had evacuated Paris for Bordeaux. It was a time of confusion, when the fog of war seemed very real indeed as the battle-weary infantrymen continued to sleep-walk through the French countryside – as Captain R. V. Dolbey, the medical officer of 2nd KOSB, put it in his memoirs:

In a dream we marched, unconscious of the towns we passed, the villages we slept in; fatigued almost beyond endurance; dropping for sleep at the five minute halt that was the reward for four miles covered. All companies, dozing as they marched, fell forward drunkenly on each other at the halts; sleeping men lay, as they halted, in the roads and were kicked uncomplainingly into wakefulness again.²¹

For the men of the KOSB ahead lay the next battle, on 13 September, when they reached the River Aisne where the long retreat ended and the allies were able to counter-attack. This marked a new phase of the operations and signalled the end of a war of manoeuvre as both sides struggled to fill the gap

between the Aisne and the Channel coast before it was exploited. This was known as the 'Race for the Sea' and it ended in stalemate with the only gap in the line being the wastes of the Flanders plain, an unprepossessing region peppered with names which soon became dreadfully familiar to the soldiers who fought over it – Ypres, Passchendaele, Messines, Langemarck, Vimy, Arras. The style of the fighting was also changing as the armies faced one another in the fields of Flanders. Trenches were dug, barbed wire obstacles were thrown up and field fortifications constructed; the German plan to encircle Paris had finally been blunted in the mud of Flanders and as autumn gave way to winter the weather got worse with cold nights and pouring rain cutting up the sodden ground. As it did so the physical conditions in the hurriedly constructed trenches deteriorated leaving the men in muddy dugouts and water-filled trenches, hardly the best preparation for facing the shock of battle.

However, despite the hardships facing the men on the ground morale remained surprisingly high and Lindsay's letters written in October and November remained upbeat and optimistic. Partly his attitude reflected the tenor of the times and his role as a frontline infantry officer, partly too, he would have been anxious not to cause undue concern at home where his mother was living in the Gloucestershire village of Oddington but mainly, he was providing reassurance that his battalion was more than holding its own against a determined enemy. Even when he reported in late October that he had gone ten days without washing or shaving he remained cheerful and was proud of his bushy beard (Letter I.50). Only with the arrival of the first snows of winter in mid-November did a sense of despondency creep into his letters and he began to wonder how he might use his contacts to engineer a transfer as a weapons instructor, musing that his distinction at the Hythe musketry school should count for something. After almost four months continuous action much of it spent under fire, his downbeat mood was only to be expected. Shortly before Christmas he was also suffering physically and admitted that as he was experiencing difficulty moving, he was seeking medical help (Letter I.80). He was diagnosed with frostbite in the foot and sent to a base hospital at Versailles before being returned to London, where he found himself in Lady Evelyn Mason's Hospital for Officers at 16 Bruton Street in Mayfair. Lady Evelyn was a cousin, being a daughter of James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th earl of Crawford. At the outbreak of war, she had volunteered the property with thirty (later fifty) beds as an auxiliary hospital and served as its commandant throughout the conflict.

Lindsay spent Christmas in hospital but he clearly used his time away from the battalion to good effect. Having been promoted captain in June 1915, he was appointed (in December) assistant instructor in the Machine Gun Corps (MGC) at their base at Strensall Camp and training area in North Yorkshire. The new formation had come into being in October 1915 to harness the destructive firepower of the machine gun and to devise new tactics for the

soldiers in the front line. It also required the British Army to replace the obsolescent Maxim gun with two weapons, the tripod-mounted Vickers heavy machine gun and the shoulder-held light Lewis gun, which was capable of firing 700 rounds a minute, and to accomplish all this the frontline infantry battalions needed fully trained gun crews. The new corps also had to employ first-class instructors and a training centre was formed at Belton Park near Grantham and a base depot (Machine Gun School) established in France, first at Wisques near St Omer and then at Sainte Cécile-Plage, near Camiers, in June 1916. The latter establishment, better known as Le Touquet, was to be Lindsay's home as an MGC instructor until the spring of 1918 and it was to be the defining experience of his war. For a start it entailed a change of uniform to regular army khaki, and to his initial dismay he was no longer obliged to wear either his KOSB Leslie tartan trews or his Tam o'Shanter bonnet although he kept the latter to wear off-duty. His transfer to the new corps as an instructor probably saved his life by taking him away from the Western Front, where the life expectancy of junior infantry officers was not encouraging; it also exposed him to one of the lesser-known operational areas of the First World War.

Situated on the channel coast of northern France, Le Touquet was refashioned as a golfing and gambling resort through the enterprise of two English entrepreneurs John Robinson Whitely and Allen Stoneham, who formed Le Touquet Syndicate in 1902 thereby transforming the flat and sandy area into a lucrative and popular resort which gradually attracted wealthy and well-connected patrons, reaching its zenith in the 1920s when it became a magnet for the English 'smart set' centred on the playwright and wit Noël Coward. At the start of the war Stoneham offered the area to the British government and it became the site for two major military hospitals as well as the Army's machine gun school. Lindsay made a point of getting to know Stoneham and was soon a regular visitor at his house (Letters II.3, II.20, II.22). Even before the height of its post-war fame Le Touquet was an enviable location, far enough from the frontline not to be dangerous yet close enough for the war to be ever-present. Nearby was the town of Saint-Omer, which was used as the first headquarters for the Royal Flying Corps in France, and the entire area had a sizeable British presence with associated social life.

During his time at Le Touquet Lindsay's duties were far from onerous. His work at the machine gun school involved practical instruction and the preparation and delivery of a regular series of lectures on this new form of warfare. It took up much of his time but there were other diversions. As England was a short distance away, there were possibilities for taking leave and he was also sent on short staff courses to Hythe and to Cambridge which allowed him to see friends and family. This was an important consideration at a time when young army officers were only granted leave every three to six months and Lindsay's letters make frequent reference to delays in the system. However, the relaxed ambience at Le Touquet was similar to his early days in the army in

Ireland when young officers were encouraged to take part in the local social scene. The amusements at Le Touquet reflected the local topography – swimming, tennis and golf being the main attractions. And there was no shortage of female company as the presence of the local military hospitals ensured a preponderance of young women working for the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), which had been founded in 1909 to provide unpaid support for the armed forces' nursing services. Lindsay's letters make frequent reference to attending dances or dinner parties with VAD partners, most of whom were middle class or upper middle class. He was a popular guest at these occasions being young, energetic, well-mannered and possessing a good singing voice.

While Lindsay enjoyed a reasonably carefree lifestyle in 1916 and 1917 it did not follow that he ignored his military career; far from it. He was mentioned in despatches in December 1917 and was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in June 1919. Presciently, he must have realised that the MGC did not have much of a future as it was raised for a specific wartime purpose which was being met as the conflict progressed and was therefore expendable once hostilities ceased. And so it proved. The MGC was disbanded in 1922 and with it went most of its records with the result that it exists only in historical memory. Besides, Lindsay's mind was fixed on furthering his career through work as a general staff officer and following several false starts and a period as brigade major in 111th Brigade as part of 37th Division he found employment at the end of the fighting in Italy in November 1918 serving as a staff officer in XIV Corps, which comprised three infantry divisions – 7th, 23rd and 48th.

It was one of the lesser-known battlefronts. Italy had started the First World War as an ostensible ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary: through the Triple Alliance of 1882 (renewed in 1906) it was bound to both countries but using diplomatic sleight of hand it had managed to evade responsibility for meeting its obligations by claiming that the alliance only applied to a defensive war. In any case, the country's armed forces were in no position to make any serious initiative: its army could make no intervention in France and Flanders and its Mediterranean fleet was outgunned by the British and French navies. Knowing that Italy retained hopes of regaining territories in Tyrol and Slovenia which had been lost in the Austro-Italian War of 1866, the British spent a good deal of diplomatic effort in wooing Italy with promises of territorial aggrandisement should they throw in their lot with the allies. In vain did the Germans counter by promising to return the territory which had been annexed by Vienna. Encouraged by King Victor Emmanuel III, the Italian government signed the secret Treaty of London on 26 April 1915 committing themselves to join Britain, France and Russia in return for the territory held by Austria-Hungary and the Dodacanese islands in the eastern Mediterranean, which had been lost to Turkey in 1912. A month later Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and put its 875,000 soldiers on a war footing.

From the outset the Italians were at a serious disadvantage. Not only was the army mostly composed of reservists but it was chronically short of equipment. One example will suffice for many of its shortcomings: its thirty-six infantry divisions and two Alpine army groups possessed only 600 machine-guns. On top of that lack of materiel, the army's senior commanders had to grapple with an unpromising strategic situation. Italy shared a mountainous frontier with Austria-Hungary from the Tyrol in the west to the Julian Alps in the east, a precipitous region 375 miles in length which contained some of the highest mountains in Europe. At the western extremity lay the Trentino with its high mountain passes and in the east the valley of the River Isonzo gave way to the high plateaux of the Bainsizza and the Carso, an area which the official history of the Italian campaign described as a 'howling wilderness of stones sharp as knives'.²² Worse, the Austro-Hungarian army had seized the high ground, forcing the Italians to remain on the defensive in the Trentino sector and limiting its offensive operations on the Isonzo front.

Under the overall command of General Luigi Cadorna, a martinet with a profligate disregard for men's lives, the Italian army opened its account on the Isonzo, using its skilled Alpine troops in the vanguard. Cadorna hoped that a rapid advance would surprise the enemy and the weight of the attack would take his army into enemy territory. It did not turn out that way. Most of the Austro-Hungarian regiments were militia formations but they fought with great doggedness and despite four Italian offensives the year ended with the Isonzo front stabilised and with 121,118 Italian casualties (killed, wounded or missing). Coupled with the German/Austro-Hungarian victory over the Russians at Gorlice-Tarnow that same year, the balance of power shifted on the eastern and Alpine fronts allowing Germany to concentrate its efforts on the Western Front in 1916. Field Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Austro-Hungarian chief of staff, used this advantage to good effect by launching an assault on the Trentino front aimed at the lagoons of Venice. Following a massive artillery bombardment the Austro-Hungarian army went into the attack on 15 May and managed to advance ten miles before Cadorna's forces were able to regroup. Having stemmed the enemy assault the Italians returned to the Isonzo front, launching four attacks before the year came to an end. None of these brought any strategic result other than to tie up Austro-Hungarian forces which might otherwise have been employed on the Russian front.

The following year brought disaster at the Battle of Caporetto, which was fought between 24 October and 12 November on the Trentino front and resulted in massive Italian losses – 30,000 casualties (killed, wounded or missing) and 250,000 taken prisoner. It was accompanied by a disastrous slump in morale that finally led to the sacking of Cadorna and his replacement by General Armando Diaz. The scale of the defeat encouraged the Allies to respond with five British and six French infantry divisions being despatched to the Italian front, which was stabilised on the River Piave to the north-east of Venice.

Amongst them were two Scottish battalions, 2nd KOSB and 2nd Gordon Highlanders, which took part in offensive operations against the Austro-Hungarian army during the winter of 1917-1918. The KOSB returned to the Western Front in April 1918 and were replaced by 10th Black Watch, but the Gordons saw out their war in northern Italy, taking part in the successful repulse of Field Marshal Boroevic's attack along the River Piave north of Treviso. Food shortages and industrial unrest across Italy fed a belief that revolution was in the offing, but the formation of a coalition government helped to steady the situation and, shorn of much of their German support, the Austro-Hungarian armies failed to make any headway. The final battle was fought at Vittorio Veneto where British troops served in the Tenth Army under the command of the earl of Cavan; an armistice brought the fighting to an end on 3 November 1918.

By then Lindsay had reached Italy and had taken up his new position as a brigade major in 143rd Infantry Brigade which was part of 48th (South Midland) Division. In that position he was the brigade's main administrative officer and carried out duties similar to those of an adjutant in an infantry battalion, albeit on a larger scale. One of his principal tasks was helping to wind down the division's deployment in Italy at the end of the conflict mainly by overseeing the process of demobilisation, which he found a "tiresome job" as the army struggled to return 11,000 conscripted soldiers from the Italian front to civilian life in Britain.²³ As the Italian front also included Albania, which had been occupied by Austria-Hungary in 1916 with an administrative capital at Shkodër (Scutari) in the north, it came within the Allied area of post-war responsibility and in the summer of 1919, Lindsay managed to engineer a visit to the country. On his return to Italy he set about learning Italian and threw himself into local social life as well as taking the opportunity to pursue his interests in Italian culture and architecture, especially in Venice and Rome.

Lindsay left the army in 1921 with the rank of brevet major and that same year on 26 July he married Edith Christian Broun Baird, a niece of General Sir Charles Fergusson of Kilkerran, who had commanded 5th Division at the outset of his own army career. On his marriage Lindsay changed his name legally to Humphrey George Maurice Broun-Lindsay and entered public life. Between 1924 and 1929 he was Unionist Member of Parliament for Glasgow Partick; he held the office of Vice-Lord-Lieutenant of East Lothian between 1949 and 1964 and was appointed knight in 1947; he was also elected a member of the Royal Company of Archers, the sovereign's bodyguard in Scotland.

Trevor Royle
Edinburgh

NOTES

- ¹ Morris, J. *Pax Britannica: the Climax of an Empire*, London, 1968, 21–34. The opening chapter ‘The Heirs of Rome’ provides a spirited and colourful description of the Diamond Jubilee commemoration.
- ² *The Times*, 23 June 1897.
- ³ National Archives, PRO RG 13, National Census 1901, Cheltenham subdistrict.
- ⁴ Sandhurst Archive, *Exam Papers 1900–1908*, RMC Junior Division, December 1906.
- ⁵ Royle, T. *Glubb Pasha: the Life and Times of Sir John Bagot Glubb, Commander of the Arab Legion*, London, 1992, 26–28. Glubb was a near contemporary and fellow Old Cheltonian who pursued a career as a Royal Engineer officer serving mainly with the Arab Legion in the Middle East. The exam he sat was similar in scope and subject matter to that undertaken by Lindsay.
- ⁶ Bowra, C. M. *Memories*, London, 1966, 36.
- ⁷ Morgan, M. C. *Cheltenham College: the First Hundred Years*, Chalfont St Giles, 1968, 70–71.
- ⁸ *Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the Education and Training of Officers of the Army; Together with Appendix*, London, 1902, 10–11.
- ⁹ *The Making of an Officer: or, A Boy’s Life Told in His Letters*, Winchester, 1916, 46. The young officer’s name was Arthur Burnell, who served in The Rifle Brigade.
- ¹⁰ *Royal Warrant for the Pay, Appointment, Promotion, and Non-Effective Pay of the Army: 1914*, London, 1919, 160–161.
- ¹¹ Montgomery, B. L. *Memoirs*, London, 1958, 26.
- ¹² Baynes, J. *Morale: a Study of Men and Courage, The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915*, London, 1967, 15–50. The opening chapter of Colonel Baynes’s study contains an accurate picture of the physical make-up of the 2nd Battalion The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) in 1914; it would have been very similar to that of the 2nd Battalion KOSB when Lindsay joined.
- ¹³ As the son of Charles II’s sister Mary, William had a claim on the throne (as did his wife Mary, who was the daughter of James VII).

- ¹⁴ During the War of the Austrian Succession the regiment served in the forces commanded by the duke of Cumberland which defeated decisively a Jacobite army led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart at Culloden in April 1746.
- ¹⁵ Brereton, J. M. *The British Soldier: a Social History from 1661 to the Present Day*, London, 1986, 74-77.
- ¹⁶ For example, the 24th (2nd Warwickshire) Regiment emerged as The South Wales Borderers simply because its depot was based in Brecon in Powys, while The East Lancashire Regiment was formed by an amalgamation of the 30th (Cambridgeshire) Foot and the 59th (2nd Nottinghamshire) Foot.
- ¹⁷ Previously the formation had been the 3rd militia battalion of The Royal Scots Fusiliers, but it had always been known as The Scottish Borderers Militia.
- ¹⁸ Parliamentary Papers, Cd 7649, 1914, *Royal Commission on the circumstances connected with the landing of arms at Howth on 26th July 1914, Minutes of Evidence; with Appendices and Index*, 5-7.
- ¹⁹ Gillon, S. *The K.O.S.B. in the Great War*, London, 1930, book one, chapter one.
- ²⁰ Bloem, W. *The Advance from Mons 1914: the Experiences of a German Infantry Officer*, London, 1930, 39.
- ²¹ Dolbey, R. V. *A Regimental Surgeon in War and Prison*, London, 1917, 31.
- ²² The official history of the campaign in Italy is Edmonds, J. E. and Davies, H. R. *Military Operations: Italy, 1915-1919*, London, 1949.
- ²³ To address a shortfall in voluntary recruitment, Britain had introduced conscription in 1916 by passing the Military Service Act which made provision for single men aged eighteen to forty-one to be called up for service in the Army. Later the measure was extended to married men and the upper age range increased to fifty-one.

PART ONE
1910-1915

1. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Palace Barracks, Holywood

29 January 1910

Dearest Mother,

Just time for a line before Mess. It was a fearful job getting away from Glasgow.^[1] I was loading baggage from 11.45 till nearly 2 o'clock. I just had time to dash into the gunners mess and have a snack before I went on parade for our march out. We got down to the boat and of course we had several idiots among the men who had got drunk. I ordered three men out of my Company with arrest and altogether we had about 25 prisoners on board. The men were fearfully crowded but it was a blessing in disguise as it was freezing, about 30'. We went off amid cheers and shouts and slipped down the river. It came on so foggy however that we had to tie up having nearly collided with 3 other vessels. We had dinner and at midnight we had another shot at starting but got no further than Clydebank about 3 miles from Glasgow where we remained till morning.

In the morning it was quite clear and we left about 9.50; we all had comfortable nights. It was lovely crossing by day and seeing all the hills in snow. I had no idea how close Ireland and Scotland were up here, only about 13 miles. I saw Ailsa Craig.^[2] We had quite a rough sea in the channel but I never felt ill. Other officers held together with great difficulty. Mrs V^[3] and a Captain Doig's^[4] wife were on board.

We got in here at 5pm and reached Barracks about 7 so we were 24 hours late in arriving. The roads are like ice and men slipped and fell every yard. The Barracks are splendid and we have awfully nice rooms divided into a bedroom and sitting room by a partition. The men have very comfortable rooms and the married men are luxurious. The drawback to my room is that being in two parts I have to get 2 more carpets or walk on bare boards. I did not write home for the nice one as they do get so knocked about travelling. Being on the ground floor I have to have curtains or be exposed to the Public.

Can you make me 3 opaque window curtains 30 inches by 24 green or dark red will do for the colour. It cost me about £2 to get the heavy curtains and the rugs.

Best love,
Tammy

I will get my pass book and let you know about the £50.

¹ The 2nd Battalion KOSB had been stationed at Maryhill Barracks in Glasgow.

² A granite islet 10 miles off the coast of South Ayrshire.

³ This is perhaps the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel George de Wet Verner. He was the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion KOSB when Lindsay joined. He served with the 7th Battalion KOSB in World War I and died on 10 October 1915 of wounds received at the battle of Loos.

⁴ Captain John A. Doig, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

2. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Palace Barracks, Holywood
2 February 1910

Dearest Mother,

It is very nice of you to make me my curtains. My windows are 40 inches across not 30 as I thought and I will have them run on tapes.

We have practically settled in now and shall be very comfortable. My room is now very cosy. I have a scotch terrier by the name of Boys living with me while his master is on leave. He is a quaint little devil. He waits for me to get into bed then trots across the room and puts his head in through the curtains and sees that I am properly tucked in and all right for the night then returns to his basket.

I have written to a man about a spaniel dog on C. Jack's advice so I hope he will be a success. There is a most sporting 9 hole golf course here which I shall join. It is quite near, only 10 mins walk and very cheap.

Below is a plan of my room [*see Facsimile I*].

Yours,
Tammy

3. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin^[1]
22 March 1914

Dearest Mother,

Excuse pencil but all the writing tables are occupied. We are going through a most interesting time here but rather a serious one. At 11.30 this morning we

were asked to choose between accepting dismissal or going to fight Ulster if necessary and our discussions had to be in by 1pm. I happened to know it was coming; how will do another time but all last night I thought it out and so when I was asked I said I would go against Ulster.^[2] There are many reasons which I will tell you.

1) If all or even 50% of officers go the Bill falls through but what of the prestige of the Army? And our own self respect.

2) Even if the officers are reinstated can we expect the men to follow us in future labour troubles when they are against our own pals.

3) Secret Service information says we are on the eve of an enormous labour upheaval, if the officers have gone the Army is at an end and who is to prevent Mob Rule.

4) Steps have been taken so that for any blood to be shed Ulster must strike first. This is against her interests as she at once puts herself in the wrong.

5) The King has expressed his approval of the measures ordered.

These points were brought out by Sir Charles Ferguson^[3] and if you think them over you must see that DUTY and Self-respect are on the side of the army hanging on. So now you know all about it and don't forget what I say of the coming labour troubles.

I will write again tomorrow.

Your Tammy

¹ The 2nd Battalion KOSB had moved from Holywood to Dublin in November 1912.

² The Ulster Volunteers had threatened to rebel if the Third Irish Home Rule bill, which intended to provide Ireland with self-government within the United Kingdom, was passed by parliament. On 20 March 1914, a number of officers in the British Army threatened to resign or accept dismissal rather than deploy against Ulster. For more details, see the Introduction.

³ Sir Charles Fergusson was the GOC 5th Division in Ireland. He was the uncle of Lindsay's future wife, Edith Broun Baird.

4. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
23 March 1914

Dearest Mother,

I wonder what you are thinking of my decision. I know you have always wondered what would happen and I have never discussed it with you. In a case of this sort the decision must be made individually between man and his maker. I still don't think it will come to anything, at the same time one must take other things into consideration. We undoubtedly shall fall on worse evils if the Army allows its back to be broken and it has shown its disapproval of what is expected of it in no uncertain way from the highest to the lowest. At the same time, after hearing Sir Charles Ferguson I have no doubt in standing by him and the Service. Naturally there is not a soul who will go willingly but I think now that the issue has been straightforwardly put, that a large number will do their duty although it is damnably unpleasant. My idea is that after the hesitation of 95% officers even though they decide to remain, the Government daren't use us forcefully. You must get out of your head that we are doing this for the Nationalists or Redmondites^[1] because that is not the issue.

Yours,
Tammy

If the Battalion goes North, I remain here with my recruits.

¹ The Redmondites were named after John Edward Redmond, an Irish Nationalist politician, barrister and MP at Westminster. He was the leader of the moderate Irish Parliamentary Party (1900-18), and of the paramilitary organisation the Irish National Volunteers.

5. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
27 March 1914

Dearest Mother,

There is not much undercurrent of excitement going on here but we all realize that we are by no means out of the wood yet and are all waiting for the developments.

I suppose 50% of the fellows would have sent in their papers but we never really got as far as that. We were all so confused at the way things were put to us that no one really understood what was happening. You see everything was verbal^[1] and as we all said “let us see the original” and of course there wasn’t one. You need have no fear of any of us actually fighting against Ulster. We are all willing to go north and help to keep the peace, but every one of us would sooner face court martial than give any order to fire. It is only by studying the papers that we are beginning to get a glimmering of what was going on.

I wrote to Jim and had a very nice answer from him.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ The Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in Ireland had received no written order from the Government to mobilise his troops against a possible Ulster uprising but appears to have reached the decision after meetings with the Secretary of State for War.

6. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
29 March 1914

Dearest Mother,

No fresh developments have taken place here since I wrote you last.

Yes I have been over and sang twice with the governess. She is splendid in the way she hauls me up and makes me go right. I have got a new song called “my ain folk”.^[1] It is rather pretty and the governess put me through it. I lunched with the Doves today, they may not be quite quite [*sic*] according to Lady Rathdonnel^[2] idea, but it would be hard to find anyone nicer than the old man and his daughter. If I can get to Baleek in June for the tail of the Mayfly fishing they have asked me to look them up.

I dined tonight at Mrs Taylor and Colonel Taylor;^[3] he commands the A.S.C. and lies in the same barracks. I sang there tonight.

I expect to go to Kilbride^[4] again on Monday 6th and shall remain there until the end of May. Has Lady Rathdonnel asked you over at all.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Subtitled 'A Ballad of Home', 'My Ain Folk' was a song written by Wilfred Mills with music by Laura Lemon. It was published in 1904.

² Probably Katherine, wife of Thomas McClintock-Bunbury, 2nd baron Rathdonnell.

³ Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Taylor, Army Service Corps.

⁴ Also known as Manor Kilbride, a village in County Wicklow, not far from Dublin.

7. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
2 July 1914

Dearest Mother,

I have been spending the p.m. playing golf at Portmarnock with Holme, Bell and Pennyman.^[1] Unfortunately we had to dash back as it is a guest night. Not having been playing for some time I did not play well. My driving was all right but my approaches rotten. I am going to play golf and picnic with the Browne Claytons on Saturday at Malahide about 12 miles from here. I don't really want to go but they have been so kind in wanting me to go out to them I must go. Tomorrow I am playing tennis at the Arnotts.

While I have been doing adjutant these last 10 days I have got a much firmer grip of things. I found Dering^[2] most fearfully behind hand in the office so I got everything up to date. One morning I found all the subalterns fearfully slack coming on parade so I ran them all in before the C.O. They got their tails twisted and had to wake up.

The lady who looked at my palms could not tell me much by lamp light and I did not have time when I went out to tennis to get at her. But if she looks at them again I will let you know. One thing she said was that I was extraordinarily difficult to know and that very few people would understand me. Also I was very sociable and made friends but that I never went out of my way to seek people but that they came to me.

Dering and his lady have £500 at the outside to live on and no one in the Regiment who knows her, likes her. In fact I should say he has done for himself. Cobden^[3] is not married yet and does not know when he will. It rather depends on the Home Rule question when it comes off. The Vernons I know are not in the least queer but very nice and Jack Vernon's old mother is a dear and loves being ragged.

No more news so am off to bed.

Your Tammy

¹ 2nd Lieutenant Ronald H. P. Holme, 2nd Lieutenant Ronald P. M. Bell, and Lieutenant James B. W. Pennyman – all officers of the 2nd Battalion KOSB.

² Captain Rupert C. Y. Dering, adjutant of the 2nd Battalion KOSB. He died on 18 April 1915 from the wounds he received at the battle for Hill 60.

³ Captain Hugh Cobden, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

8. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
18 July 1914

Dearest Mother,

I am so glad you are having a nice time at the Bungalow. Yes I have finished Jack^[1] some time ago and forgot to let you know. It is a tragic story, but a most everyday occurrence I should think.

I am sorry to say there is absolutely no chance of me getting any leave until I come on long leave about December.

We have to find a huge draft in September and so I have to push recruits through a high pressure in order for Companies to have any men to work with next spring. It is an awful bore. Of course it is a great help getting 3/- a day but there are distinct drawbacks to it. However my time is nearly up^[2] and then if I don't get Adjutant I think I shall pull out for the Gippy Army^[3] or marry and settle down vide horoscope.

You asked me in a former letter if I was getting fresh fruit. The answer is bananas and dates and bread and butter pudding. One night I turned round and asked the mess sergeant if we could not have roast chestnuts and walnuts. He never saw the joke and said quite seriously he would see if he could get them.

Yours,
Tammy

I got to Kilbride on 27th.

¹ Perhaps the novel *Jack* (1876) by French author Alphonse Daudet.

² Lindsay would have completed his regulation six years with the colours in 1915.

³ The Egyptian Army, which at this time was commanded and largely staffed by British officers.

9. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
27 July 1914

Dearest Mother,

Of course you are all horror struck to see my Battalion has fired on the crowd.^[1] We were ordered out to meet and disarm 2000 National Volunteers. God knows why they wanted to embroil the soldiery but they have done so now with a vengeance. Naturally our men could do nothing and were being fired at with revolvers. They started home and were followed up by an enormous crowd hissing and hooting then they started hurling bottles and large stones. We stuck it for a long time until in sheer self defence we had to make charges or we should never have got home at all.

As we came up Quayside they got worse and several men were badly hurt and any number were cut about. The men who had behaved admirably were naturally getting to the end of their endurance. Bottles and rocks still came hurtling down and the crowd got nearer and nearer, any warning officers tried to shout were not heard and ignored and then came the final act when we fired.

The damn slum crowd get so accustomed to attacking soldiers and getting no punishment that they seem to think they can go to any lengths. Well this time they got bitten and although it is sad I don't think anyone feels he was not justified in acting as he did.

At 9.30pm the same night they tried to attack barracks and fired revolvers over the wall. No one was hit, but I had to spend the night on guard and found it damned uncomfortable. Of course some of our senior officers may get court martialled but I have no doubt of their acquittal. We shall flit from here any moment but where to no one knows.

Bloodshed of sorts was bound to come. You cannot go on calling out regiments armed to the teeth and expect them to be bullied by a cowardly crowd indefinitely. If we don't make the government work nothing will.

Yours,
Tammy

¹ For the events of 26 July, see the Introduction.

10. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
29 July 1914

Dearest Mother,

We are still here but momentarily expecting orders to move.^[1] We shall certainly be sent to England and are all wondering what station. We have had letters from all sorts of people congratulating us on our behaviour and wishing us luck.

On Sunday and Monday nights we were of course surrounded by a howling mob who threatened to attack barracks. The threat left us quite unmoved as we knew they daren't attempt it, and even if they did they would suffer considerably. We are all packed up and leading a most uncomfortable life.

Yours,
Tammy

¹ Following the incident at Bachelor's Walk, the Lord Mayor of Dublin recommended that in the interests of law and order the 2nd Battalion KOSB should be withdrawn from the city. When Lindsay wrote, it was preparing to move to the Curragh to await further orders.

11. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
30 July 1914

Dearest Mother,

I cannot write you where we are going as when we go it will be at 5 minutes notice and probably by night. Also the postal people could not be trusted and if possible we want to leave here without shedding more blood. The slum crowd are out for our blood. I wouldn't leave barracks now without a revolver in my pocket. The war cloud is rather dark and we are in what is called the precautionary stage of mobilization i.e. all men away and officers are recalled. Any moment the wire "mobilize" may come. But don't get anxious. I'll let you know if anything crops up.

Yours,
Tammy

I don't think I shall be out of pocket over the shooting as I will get someone to take it off me.^[1]

¹ It would appear as if Lindsay had rented the shooting rights on the Rathdonnell estate.

12. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
1 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

Still no news for you. If there is a pretty general conflagration, we shall naturally be in it and our destination will undoubtedly be Belgium. I wrote to Lady Rathdonnell today.

Should we mobilize and move from here I shall store all my baggage here and send the vouchers to you. We are all getting very tired of sitting about in barracks doing nothing.

As you see by the papers they are trying to make out that Cobden himself shot Mrs Duffy which of course we can absolutely disprove but still it is a rather underhand game to play.^[1]

I am glad you are not in the cottage alone at this time but with friends. Ditto V & P.^[2]

The crowds have ceased to collect round our gates, but they are none the less still rabbid [*sic*] against us.

Best love,
Tammy

Give my love to Aunt Selina and Charlie.^[3]

¹ This relates to the events of 26 July at Bachelor's Walk, for which see the Introduction.

² Probably Lindsay's sisters Violet (referred to elsewhere in the correspondence both by her full name and more often as 'Vi') and Margaret (who while mostly featuring in the letters under her full name, is probably also the person referred to as 'Puddie' or 'P').

³ Selina Williamson, wife of the late David Williamson of Lawers (Perthshire), and their son Charles. Lindsay was related to them through his mother. Charlie features throughout the correspondence.

13. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
3 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

You will see from all the papers that War is inevitable. Our orders for mobilization have not come yet but we expect them at any moment. The war cannot last long as you can see from the immense armies in the field and the amount of food stuffs required let alone cash. Anyway it will be a week before we leave the country even if we mobilize tomorrow.

Germany must be smashed or heaven help Europe. Our one fear is we may be too late to help France where she needs us. If that is the case we are done finished as an empire and men of honour.

It remains to be seen what action these cursed Dublin people take when we start moving about the town on our various jobs.

Everything is very quiet here at present. I will write again soon.

Your Tammy

Haven't heard from Vi or P for ages.

14. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
4 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

I write this in the Orderly Room where I am answering for Dering who is away seeing his fiancée. We are momentarily waiting for the flag to fall but still it doesn't come. If the order does come I shall be pretty busy helping Dering in the hundred and one things that will have to be done.

The reason why I say I will store my things here is, when once the order goes forth to mobilize, Government will at once take over the Railways and I should not get them over. If I store them here and the Expeditionary force^[1] goes abroad when the first hustle is over you could send for them and have them sent on.

I went down town this morning and did some shopping but everything was very quiet. Lots of officers buzzing about getting things. I was short of boots as I have worn Faggs^[2] for nearly 6 years now and they are on their last legs. So I

cut the tops off my long Norwegian boots^[3] and they make delightful marching boots.

The feeling among the people in the town has come round to the side of our men to a remarkable extent. The woman who was shot was a notorious character and known to always lead all stone throwing at police and soldiers.

Tell Vi that the men she saw in Glengarry caps were not ours. All scotch regiments wear the Glengarry^[4] and except for the Argyll and Sutherlands and Gordons, who have a different dice border, and the H.L.I., who have a green cap, the only difference lies in the cap badge.

I am sorry my writing is so bad but the pen is beastly.

Best love to you all,
Your Tammy

¹ The British Expeditionary Force (often known simply as the BEF), for which see the Introduction.

² Fagg Brothers, military and sporting bootmakers, London.

³ The name given to a type of knee-length, laced boot that was popular for its waterproof quality.

⁴ A Glengarry is a traditional Scottish bonnet used extensively in military dress. It is made of a thick milled woollen material and is decorated with a toorie on top, a rosette cockade on the left side and ribbons hanging down behind.

15. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
4 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

Just got the order to mobilize 5 minutes ago so hasten to let you know. We shant be off until the end of the week anyway or if then. We shall have to have a naval battle first.

God bless you,
Tammy

16. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
5 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

Excuse pencil. I enclose my will such as it is. On the outside is the address of the place where I have left my motorcycle. Fearfully busy.

Dering is going to be married on Thursday.^[1] I don't think he is right but still that is his affair.

Your Tammy

I wrote to Evelyn Mason.^[2]

¹ Captain Dering married Helen Fitzgerald on 6 August 1914.

² Lady Evelyn Mason, née Lindsay, was the daughter of the 26th earl of Crawford, and Lindsay's second cousin. See Family Tree.

17. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
5 August 1914

My dearest Mother,

Much love for your letter tonight. I don't think you need worry about my finance as my dividends are paid in July and I don't owe much money. I think £30 covers it. I have run out of cheques and have written for a new book. As soon as it comes I will pay Vi what I owe her. Lots of rumours about Naval engagements but of course one cannot believe $\frac{1}{4}$ of what the papers say.

I am all right for socks. We are only allowed 35 lbs of baggage which means practically nothing. If I want anything if we do go over the water I will write you for it. I don't suppose you will get away from Scotland for a long time to come. Anyway you are to be there for the whole of August.

I have not made any arrangements for selling my motor cycle and sidecar as of course no one knows how long the campaign will last. I have been practically mobilizing the Battalion as Dering is continually away seeing his lady. Tomorrow as he is being married I am running the whole show and have to

sort out all the reservists and get them to companies.^[1] As they mostly roll up drunk it is quite a pretty problem. Now I must away to bed.

Your Tammy

¹ Following the order to mobilise, 700 KOSB reservists were gathered at the regiment's depot in Berwick-on-Tweed and sent to Dublin to join the 2nd Battalion.

18. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
6 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

It would be quite impossible for you to get over here, even officers coming to join have to fight their way practically to get here at all and then arrive hours late. My boots are all right now and I am quite ready to go. We are all fearfully busy.

Love,
Tammy

19. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
7 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

I sent off all my kit consisting of 19 articles to be stored with Millar & Beattie, Warehouseman, 14 Grafton St, Dublin. I told him to send you the receipt for them. Our Naval Victory seems to be generally accepted as true.^[1] It is certainly by the Headquarters here. Everyone's fearfully pleased at K of K^[2] being put in charge. I don't think they will rid of him in a hurry.

I will post my keys to you on Sunday or Monday.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ Rumours of naval engagements between the British and German fleets were rife in Britain during the opening days of the war and often appeared in newspapers as unconfirmed reports. It is not clear to which of these Lindsay was referring.

² Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, who was made Secretary of State for War at the outbreak of World War I.

20. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
8 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

I am forwarding my keys to you tomorrow. I have one package which goes to Pickford tomorrow and cross over when possible. It contains some G.S. Blankets etc. I imagine letters to me should be addressed 2nd K.O.S.B. 13th Brigade V Division Expeditionary Force. But no notice has been given of it. I shall probably be very glad in a fortnight time to get a new set of underwear (only 1) as we travel very light. Not thick at all and some Players Navy cut Tobacco not mixture in a small tin.

I had a very nice letter from Jennie Dove wishing me luck but none of my other friends have written.

Everything is nearly ready and we shall be ready by midnight. Regulations are very strict about whose [*sic*] allowed in the stations and on the docks. In fact no one but the military are allowed near the boats.

I am writing to Drummond^[1] to say that you have power to operate on my account. If money is close and I want anything expensive it will help.

Best love,
Tammy

Rumour has it we may move tomorrow.

Just reopened letter as it is now settled we don't go tomorrow. Don't be worried at silence and don't believe all the papers say.

¹ Drummonds Bank, Charing Cross, London.

21. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
10 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your telegram. I have answered it to Rogerthorpe.^[1] We had a brigade parade this morning for 2½ hours.^[2] We did steady drill just to settle the men down.

I am doing a Captain's work now in my company as we are a Captain short. I am in the 13th Infantry Brigade which is part of the 5th Division. I have just had a newly joined subaltern handed over to me to break in.

No one knows if we are to go yet or not. We are just mobilized so as to be ready. No battle has been fought in North Sea yet. Must be off to see about this subaltern.

Your Tammy

I cannot send any shirts or socks to you as I have 4 pair with me and the rest are stored. I only have 2 khaki shirts and these go with me. I want short length drawers and vest of medium thickness. H

¹ Rogerthorpe Manor, Badsworth, near Pontefract, West Yorkshire, home of Lieutenant-Colonel William F. Ramsden, husband of Mabel Lindsay.

² The parade, at full war strength, was held in Phoenix Park.

22. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
11 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

I am posting my keys to you today and am keeping one belonging to a big sack bag in which I will store my G.S. blankets etc. The morning I leave, this will shove in an envelope the last thing. So that if I have not time to write after hearing when we move, you will know we've started by the arrival of a solitary key.

Rumour is going about that the expeditionary force is collecting at Southampton but of course nothing official will be given out until we are actually on the high seas.

The whole brigade went for a 10 mile route march this a.m. we only had 3 men fall out from bad feet, the other regiments had 20 odd each.

General Paget^[1] came and said good bye today. Poor devil he looked as if the strain was telling on him.

We shall only be able to communicate on Postcards as the censor will erase any names and places we go to if mentioned. If all reports are true Germany seems badly up against it. I hope Millar and Beattie have communicated with you about my baggage.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

¹ General Sir Arthur Paget, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in Ireland.

23. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Royal Barracks, Dublin
12 August 1914

Dearest Mother,

Here is the key of my sack bag which I have left with Pickford to be sent over by them when possible.

I don't think there is the slightest chance of us going direct to Belgium or France, but we shall probably put in at Southampton or Portsmouth and remain there until a battle has been fought in the North Sea.

All sorts of people call into Barracks to say goodbye to the Regiment. I won't close this now as I may hear from you before we go.

Your Tammy

Just heard we sail tomorrow morning no destination given. God bless you.

Extra sheet of paper with questions from Mother and answers from Tammy

Specify if the drawers are to be Merino or Cotton

If the vests are to have long or short sleeves.

Shall I send once a fortnight?

Shall I pack these things in calico or paper?

1 Flannel shirt
2 pairs socks
1 Merino suit (or vest and cotton drawers)
2 Handkerchiefs or how many?
½ lb Navy Cut Tobacco
Vest and drawers Merino
Short legs and sleeves

Canvas packing correct

Don't send too much at a time as I shall be over my 35 lbs^[1]

Am on board. Captain has sealed orders so don't know where we are off to.

Tammy

Coarse plug^[2] for the men. You won't get much in as it weighs heavy.

¹ 35 lbs was the weight limit for an officer's personal luggage in France.

² *i.e.* plug tobacco.

24. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Tréville]
[16 August 1914]^[1]

Sunday. All very fit and well. Weather has not been of the pleasantest.

Humphrey Lindsay

¹ Lindsay did not date this postcard, although '23 1914 Sept' has been written at a later date and in pen (the original note is in pencil) above the message. There are three postmarks on the front of this postcard, none of which correspond with this date: 16 August, 24 August and 25 August. The first of these dates (which was a Sunday) is likely the one on which Lindsay wrote the card.

25. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Landrecies/Maroilles]

18 August 1914

Tuesday. Most awfully hot but really quite delightful and interesting. All the men and ourselves are very fit. Of course I am not allowed to mention anything connected with this show but it is hard to realise it is active service.

Love to all,
Humphrey Lindsay

26. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Silly-le-Long/Cuisy]

2 September 1914

Dearest Mother,

We have been travelling hard with not a moments rest and I write this at 1am. We have fought 4 battles and had very little sleep. I got your letter about my boots and the photo. As a matter of fact the boots have been perfect and are still going strong. In 35 lbs kit one cannot put in another pair of boots.

We have done a lot of billeting and it is really rather amusing when one is not harried by early starts etc.

Since we started on the 20th we have walked 160 miles along hard high roads not counting any actions. I am beginning to get quite used to being shot at but artillery fire is the devil.

I saw Ian for a short time and also Ronald Antrobus.^[1] I wish I could tell you where we have really been and are going to but I expect in a day or two to be able to write pretty freely.

The four days fighting mentioned in the papers was a fearful strain and the papers have mostly got it all wrong. One thing is we have had perfect weather and hope it will last.

If we are allowed to write fully about our actions I will give you a full account. Anyway the Divisional Commander Sir Charles Ferguson has said he is proud to command us and our Brigadier has said the same.

I have taken to eating eggs raw as one has not always got time to cook them and they are really quite nice.

I heard from Mrs Hartmann last night. Will you thank her for me. So far no one else has written. It is impossible to get our clothes washed yet but in a few

days I think we shall be all right. At the present moment all I want is tobacco weekly. I cannot post this so will carry it along open and send it off as soon as I can meanwhile adding as I go along.

Another day's march over done in the wee sma hours as the daytime is so fearfully hot. As far as we can make out we are going into a sort of rest camp to refit and recuperate after the last strenuous days which means marching every day and all day to get away from the guns.

The country we have been passing through lately is perfectly lovely and the villages most picturesque but it is fearfully sad to see the terror stricken country people fleeing hurriedly from the hated Germans with only what they can each carry.

Everyone is fed up with the war. No one has any animus against the German Army and the general feeling is that of pity for the poor Germans who come stolidly on against us in great masses. I'm certain that all those actually taking part in the war would be only too thankful to be able to lay aside their arms and go home. We all have the most profound admiration for the German Army as a whole. Their system of supply both for food and ammunition in the field must be wonderful. Their discipline of course is brutal in the extreme.

Best Love,
Tammy

I don't know of course how fully Smith^[2] writes to his wife but as we are on our honour not to say where or what we are doing one is fearfully tied.

¹ Lieutenant Ronald Antrobus, Royal Field Artillery. He was Lindsay's second cousin. See Family Tree.

² Captain George W. Smith, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

27. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[near Presles]
5 September 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter. Letter follows at first opportunity.

Humphrey Lindsay

28. JIM TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.M.S. Acheron
7 September 1914

Dear Mrs Lindsay,^[1]

Please excuse a very hurried short note. I am very anxious to have news of Humphrey, as I hope you know by now what he is doing, anyway I wish him good luck. I saw in the papers some days ago that some of his regiment were amongst the missing which looks as if they may have had a hot time, however no news of him so I am sure he is safe.

We were in the Heligoland scrap^[2] and came through a very trying day, and all hope for another affair of the same sort, it has improved our spirits tremendously. I have news from Southam^[3] of great doings in the Red [Cross] way and am glad everyone is so well employed.

Yours sincerely,
Jim

¹ *i.e.* Isabel Lindsay, Humphrey's mother.

² The Battle of Heligoland Bight on 28 August 1914 was the first significant naval engagement of World War I.

³ Southam, on the River Stow, Warwickshire. An auxiliary hospital to treat war wounded had been established there by the Red Cross.

29. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Missy-sur-Aisne]
16 September 1914

Socks arrived. Came just when I most needed them. Should like pocket flint and tinder and English matches, also chocolate. Country swept bare by Germans. You never could imagine what an awful mess an army can make of a place when it loots it. Scarcely a moment to ourselves at present as we are in close touch with the foe. Haven't changed my shirt since 25th August and my boots are on their last legs and we have no kit with us. We are all looking forward to a rest and fresh clothes etc. Love to all.

Your loving Humphrey Lindsay

30. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Missy-sur-Aisne]
17 September 1914

Dearest Mother in the World,

Two more parcels rolled in this morning containing socks, tobacco, chocolate etc and shirt. So now I feel a perfect gent. I cleaned my teeth for the first time for 3 weeks this morning so I hardly know my own mouth. I wonder if you would recognise me with my beard which is quite appreciably long now. We have marched steadily for the last ten days and have just stopped for two days.

It is wonderful what the human body can stand in the way of hardship without breaking up. We have lain in the open in pouring rain and sat about in the wet and are none the worse. As I write this a constant stream of shells is passing over the house and we sincerely hope that the Germans won't drop a high explosive on it. The news of Kitchener's move in shipping 200,000 Russians^[1] into Belgium is splendid and I should imagine quite unaccounted for by the German.

It should do more than anything to shorten the war of which we are all mortally sick. I am sorry to hear that T'Annie is so ill. Give her my best love. I saw Claud Lindsay^[2] for a moment 2 days ago. He is Morgan's son.^[3] The socks have been most acceptable to me and brother officers. Don't send any more plaster or ointment as I cannot carry them.

The villages which the Germans have occupied in their retreat have been left in an indescribable state of filth and dirt. Dead horses and sometimes men are left on the streets. Every cupboard and draw[er] is ransacked. Mattresses thrown on the floor to step on and fouled before leaving. They also ransacked every cellar and in one room we found 200 corks.

Until one has seen and experienced it one has no conception of the appalling devastation an army can do in a retreat especially when living in the country.

The shriek and whistle of shells and bullets in a modern battle is colossal. They say in our first fight alone on the 23rd more ammunition was used than during the whole S African War. Having lived on Bully Beef and Biscuit for the last 3 weeks we are heartily sick of it, but as there is plenty fruit we get along. During a battle 3 days ago we had a pause before taking up a position and I ate peaches until I was full. They were good.

Water is a great difficulty and there seem to be no [?hoses] in this country like we have at home. Now I must get some sleep but will leave it open in case anything happens before the mail goes.

Nothing further has occurred except the day has turned most infernally wet. Wherever we halt for the night we billet for the night in barns and houses but of course it depends on the situation. It is rather difficult to write you a connected letter without giving away details.

So far the V division has borne [*i.e.* borne] most of the brunt of the fighting and the 13th Brigade has been in the thick of everything. It is generally believed that the Germans are demoralised and short of food and ammunition. We all hope it's time.

Best Love,
Your Tammy Humphrey Lindsay

¹ There were persistent and widespread rumours in Britain that Russian soldiers had been sent to fight on the Western Front, to the extent that some claimed to have seen trainloads of Cossacks travelling through England. Notices were placed in newspapers by the Press Bureau discrediting the rumour.

² Captain Claud Frederic Thomas Lindsay, Royal Field Artillery. He was killed on 31 March 1918 at the Somme.

³ Henry Edzell Morgan Lindsay.

31. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Missy-sur-Aisne]
20 September 1914

Have received all your parcels and letters for which much love. Don't send any more clothes for another fortnight or so as I am fully stocked now. Chocolate, matches and tobacco always acceptable. Been resting last few days all anxious to see developments. We all want a good night's rest and heaven knows when we shall get it.

Your Humphrey Lindsay

My French quite good, get on famously.

32. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Missy-sur-Aisne]
21 September 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letters, parcels. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

33. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Missy-sur-Aisne]
22 September 1914

Dearest Mother,

The Regiment had the privilege of sending 5 post cards home by the Kings messenger.^[1] It worked out at one from each company. So we sent one to the wife of the Captain and put a note asking her to let the parents of the rest know we are well. I have written you many letters and P.C.'s but I don't know how many are getting home.

Yesterday we had 4 hours of anxiety as the Germans shelled our village from 2.30 to 6.30pm. We all took to cellars but they absolutely wrecked the village and set part of it on fire.

My beard is getting quite fine. It's impossible to shave as my razor is with the second line transport and God knows where that is now. Chocolate in all forms and the black bullets^[2] were most acceptable and we all thoroughly enjoyed them.

When peace is declared I should think such a cheer would go up that it will be heard in England. Both sides are weary of the whole show I think, and the French and Germans have been at it a month longer than we have. What we are all dreading is that it may drag into the cold weather. [*sentence heavily crossed out*]

The weather has been too awful lately and why we haven't all got rheumatism and pneumonia I cannot make out except we are as hard as nails. Do let me know how people think the war is going to end as your letters seem to get through fairly up to time now. Though mine apparently don't get through to you.

We have been stationary here for some time and are all waiting waiting [*sic*] for what we hope is the final round up of these blighters. From diaries on captured officers they have apparently lost fearfully heavily and don't like standing up to us. They say our shell fire and rifle fire is awful and that they never see us. Funnily enough we say the same of them with the exception of

the rifle fire which is not too good. Bless you. We pray for a speedy end to this damnable show.

Your loving Tammy

¹ King's Messengers were salaried, usually ex-military, officers who were responsible for overseas diplomatic service deliveries and also important home deliveries of communications.

² Peppermint-flavoured boiled sweets.

34. MRS HOPKINS TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

Kilcreggan
29 September 1914

Captain Hopkins^[1] K.O.S.B's in a postcard of the 27th asks me to let you know Mr Lindsay is "fit" and you are "not to worry if you don't get letters as there is reason to believe they are not being sent from" Mr Lindsay [*illegible*]. "Don't send any more clothing till I ask for it. Sweets, Tobacco, matches, always acceptable. Saw Jack Ramsden.^[2] Have received all your parcels and books, have written constantly". Capt H's postcard came by Kings Messenger to M Hopkins.

¹ Captain Gerald B. Hopkins, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

² Possibly J. W. A. Ramsden, 7th Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment, which was stationed alongside the KOSB.

35. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Ciry-Salsogne]
30 September 1914

Dearest Mother,

You will probably wonder how you get news of me so quickly at times. Once every so many days we get a postcard home by the Kings Messenger's Bag. The company send it to one address with messages from each officer and the recipient sends them on to our various addresses. I am awfully glad that our

letters are beginning to get through. We are still stationary. I had a feeling Ian was wounded but did not know for certain until I got your letter this morning. I saw Jack Ramsden day before yesterday. There are mushroom caves here so we pick them for breakfast every morning and a very good addition they make too. The nights are getting awfully cold now but so far the health of everyone has been excellent. I cannot help the feeling that peace is not very far off. Pray God it is as the nerves of those of us who have been out the whole time are not of the best.

I shall have heaps to tell you when I come home, which I cannot put into letters. Holme has lost one of his brothers in West Africa.^[1]

Very best love and God's Blessing,
Your Tammy

¹ Lieutenant Alexander Charles Holme, 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment, attached to the 3rd Battalion Nigeria Regiment, West African Frontier Force, was killed in Cameroon on 6 September 1914.

36. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Ciry-Salsogne]
1 October 1914

Dearest Mother,

We none of us can tell for certain what became of Leigh.^[1] As you say my company went to his assistance under my command as my Captain was knocked out in the first 5 minutes and is now enjoying himself in Scotland. When we got into position no one could tell me what direction Leigh had taken as the country was thick scrub. He is known to have been wounded in the hand and to have got back to within 200 yards of my flank with 3 men. He sent the 3 men to double to safety saying he would come on when rested. The enemy got so close I had to get back to the men and handle them and from then on to the time of retirement we had our hands full.

A German prisoner who spoke English said they had a Major of the K.O.S.B. as prisoner who was most popular with the German officers. This we conclude to be Leigh as he is our only Major missing.

I heard from Evelyn Mason this morning. A nice cheery letter. I hope by now you have got my Kings Messenger Postcard. This damned battle has been going on now for about 12 days and seems likely to continue. Pray heaven it is decisive. The weather is still keeping fine which is a blessing as we are still

lying out but the nights are cold and it is no good taking out blankets as you cannot carry them about by day as they make too much weight.

I am sorry Ian is wounded but he will probably have a far more comfortable time than we are having. Rumour has it that cholera has broken out in the German lines but there is no confirmation of it at all. There is rather a gruesome sight on a road just outside a post of ours. A motor car going along a road toward the enemy's lines was fired on and all killed and there it still remains with its occupants neither side can get out to bury the bodies as they would at once be fired on. For the last 10 days we have done very little. I imagine we are waiting for the wings to close in. Anyway the position the Germans hold in front of us is extraordinarily strong, too strong for us to take in front I think.

The last week I have been suffering from an awfully sore mouth but it is much better now.

I don't think peace will arrive from defeat of Germany's field army more likely from internal trouble, Socialism or Bread Riots.

We caught a spy 3 days ago or rather a suspect so we sent him on to Headquarters and I believe they have decided to shoot him.

Yes it was Holme's brother who has been killed in West Africa and Dick Taylor is a prisoner. We had a shot at a German aeroplane this morning but did not bring it down. We are now waiting for his return to have another try. Our Brigadier is going but where to or why we don't know as he has done awfully well up to date. Anyway he wrote us an awfully nice farewell note. No other news.

Very best love,
Tammy

Give my love to all my friends you see, the Hartmanns etc.

¹ Major Chandos Leigh DSO, 2nd Battalion KOSB. He had been killed on 29 August 1914 during the Battle of Mons.

37. TO EVELYN MASON (COPY)

[Ciry-Salsogne]
1 October 1914

Much love for your letter which I received this morning. You have no idea how eagerly we look for letters. This is the first letter I have had so your other one must have gone astray. I am writing on a hillside with shells and whatnots hopping around. The days are lovely and warm but the nights desperately cold.

I walked right out of my boots in the 1st month of the war, but it was not surprising as we did over 300 miles on our flat feet. The South African War was play compared to this by all accounts, and I don't think there is a soul here who does not long to get home on both sides. Martial ardour is fine until you have been in the thick of it for 6 weeks and it leaves one wondering how on earth one ever escapes the hail of lead and shells. We are very cheery on the whole but ones nerves begin to suffer considerably after a time. We spent 4 days in a village within 300 yards of the Germans and they continually shelled us. It becomes rather alarming when you are standing smoking in the street and you can hear the whistle of a shell coming. You can tell from the sound it is coming quite near you and then suddenly you see a house collapse about 100 yards away. The wounded I won't talk of as it is rather gruesome.

It is a bitter blow missing all the shooting at home but we all hope against hope that we shall be back in time to kill off the old cocks.

I sent Jim a postcard about a week ago – I wonder if he got it.

We are all convinced that peace will not come from the defeat of the German Field Army but from some other cause such as an internal revolution caused by lack of food or Socialism.

In our pursuit of the Germans we passed through villages after they had, and the scenes of desolation and pillage are indescribable. Beds upset, wardrobes and chest of drawers turned out. Countless empty bottles of wine and foulness everywhere.

From August 23rd to Sept 6th I never had my clothes off and from then up to now I have not seen my kit. I put on a new pair of boots on Sept 16th and have not had them off my feet since neither have I shaved with the result that I have a fine old beard.

I am afraid my letter is rather disjointed but when artillery is going off all round it becomes difficult to concentrate one's thoughts. In our retreat we saw a pretty but awe inspiring spectacle. A German aeroplane came over us closely pursued by 2 of ours. They circled and dodged just like hawks. Finally ours got above him and circled lower and lower until they got within easy shot and then down came the German like a pheasant. We shot the tail off another here the day before yesterday.

Night work here in modern war is very jumpy work and I am always devoutly thankful to see the light of day and be relieved.

The family is well represented in this infernal campaign. I think we must all meet and celebrate the occasion when we return which pray heaven will be soon.

I look forward to putting on a boiled shirt and evening clothes and sitting down to a table with a clean table cloth on it.

With my best love to you all and may we all meet soon.

Yours very affectionately,
H. L.

38. MRS HOPKINS TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

Kilcreggan
2 October 1914

By Kings Messenger Post Card from Captain Hopkins dated 2nd Oct 1914. All well. "Heard from Evelyn Mason. Don't send cheese. Send matches, chocolate, tobacco and raisins. Let us know any talk of peace, Humphrey". They are only allowed one KMPC per company.

39. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Violaine]
3 October 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letters. Letter follows at first opportunity. I have received no letter from you lately. Humphrey Lindsay.

40. KATHLEEN CUTHBERT TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Brown's Hotel, London
4 October 1914

My dear Cousin Isabel,^[1]

I feel I must write to you at once. Uncle Gerald^[2] came home last night for a rest. Very indignant indeed at being sent home as he says he wanted to be like his men and stay there. Well Uncle G saw Humphrey on Thursday last and he asked him to give me a description of himself and write to you. Uncle G says Humphrey looked very fit and well, had a long fair beard which he thought rather suited him! On Thursday Uncle Gerald had sent ½ of K.O.S.B.'s to the north side of the Aisne for 2 or 3 days rest if possible, just out of the firing line and Humphrey was in this lot. The 13th Infantry Brigade are on the bit of the line under the Fort of Conde^[3] and have trenches both north and south of the Aisne with a pontoon bridge across near a little village Misy-sur-Aisne which is entrenched and loop holed. Uncle G can only go over to the south side of the Aisne to see his men by night. The Duke of Wellington's and the Yorkshire Light Infantry and his headquarters are on the north side. Fort Conde is on a hill with woods beneath it where the Germans are very strongly entrenched and on a hill behind the Fort are the German Howitzers which completely

outrange our guns. The men are in the trenches day and night and during the day simply cannot put their heads up. They are allowed to smoke day and night but may not make a fire or heat food in the trenches so it means they only get food hot in the evening when each platoon sends a man back for food which consists chiefly of their rations. "Bully Beef", cheese and biscuits, tea. Very few of the 13th Brigade have been lucky enough to receive parcels or letters frequently. In the advance most were able to buy chocolate and sugar at usual prices and of course they have their sugar ration twice or three times weekly. The trenches are 4 ft deep and 2 ft wide and are rather like this [*sketch of a trench*] according to Uncle G. I got him to draw one for me. Do let me know if you want to hear anything more.

I am writing this from Browns where I have come for 4 hours to see Ian. He got back on Friday which was the very greatest relief to us all. He has had a marvellous escape I think, so all the surgeons say too. He still drags his right leg badly but the vertebrae of his back has been injured and the surgeons say it will be 2 or 3 months at least before he is right, which he does not like at all as he is longing to go back. Before he left the 9th were taking turns in the trenches with the Infantry. They lost or have wounded 20 officers, including interpreters, out of 23! Mother is taking him home tomorrow. Please excuse this hurried letter but I felt you must hear of Humphrey as soon as possible.

Lord Kerry^[4] has lent us the C.O.'s house at Warley Barracks, Brentwood where Harold^[5] is doing Adjutant. It is so nice being with him as he has orders to be ready to go out any time.

Love to Violet and yourself.

Ever yours Affectionately,
Kathleen A Cuthbert

¹ *i.e.* Isabel Lindsay, Lindsay's mother.

² Brigadier-General Gerald Cuthbert. He commanded the 13th Infantry Brigade before being invalided back to England.

³ The Fort de Condé-sur-Aisne was considered obsolete in 1914 but commanded the high ground along the Chemin des Dames and could bombard the Aisne and Vesle valleys. It was captured from the Germans on 15 September 1914 but lost again until 1917.

⁴ Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, earl of Kerry, of the Irish Guards.

⁵ Kathleen Cuthbert's husband, Captain James H. Cuthbert, 1st Battalion Scots Guards, was acting as adjutant to the reserve battalion. He was killed on 27 September 1915 at the battle of Loos.

41. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Pont-Sainte-Maxence/Abbeville]

6 October 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter Sept 30th. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

42. LEONARD C. LINDSAY TO ISABEL LINDSAY

London

8 October 1914

My dear Isabel,^[1]

I sent off to Humphrey today via Army and Navy Stores

1 lb of Navy Cut in ¼ tins

100 cigarettes

6 Oatmeal Soap books

6 Velma chocolate^[2]

2 tins raisins

2 Bivouac Cocoa^[3]

1 gross matches

I think it will cost about £1 [?including] carriage. I hope he will get it. The little books of soap papers are very neat. F[*illegible*] move today. I enclose a circular in case it may be of use to you.

Your affectionate brother,
Leonard C Lindsay^[4]

¹ *i.e.* Lindsay's mother, Isabel Lindsay.

² Velma chocolate was made by Suchards.

³ Bivouac Cocoa was made by Thew, Hooker & Gilbey, Buckingham, England. It came in a tin complete with powdered milk; it only required hot water to be added.

⁴ Leonard C. Lindsay was Lindsay's uncle. See Family Tree.

43. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Beuvry]
15 October 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letters and parcel. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

44. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Beuvry]
15 October 1914

Dearest Mother,

Still well and fit though with an awful cold from lying out in trenches for 72 hours with rain etc most of the time. Just had my first sleep and proper food for that time.

People are really very kind. I got the lighter yesterday. Evelyn's compressed medicine came today and also a very kind present of 100 cigarettes from Jean Dove with a letter. Cigarettes not much use to me as I smoke my pipe.

Dalrymple^[1] goes home having got a bullet in the leg yesterday. Holme and [blank - ?I] lie and comfort each other when in action and feed together. The regiment had a bad doing the last 3 days but got specially thanked and mentioned by G.O.C.'s^[2] corps and division. You will probably see it in the papers.^[3]

The Germans charged us, so we let them come on to within 50 yards and then gave them hell with rifle fire whereat they turned tail. Still we don't know how this enormous battle is going or what will be the result if we make it decisive.

I got a woolie presumably from C. Willie and a letter from Puddie, please write and thank him. I am sending a postcard. I saw Eustace on the 13th. I have seen Claud Lindsay, Morgan's son, Ronald Antrobus, Jack Ramsden.

About young Teeling^[4] I don't know what happened to him after Le Cateau^[5] as he was missing with half a company. Probably he is a prisoner of war.

Tell any of my friends that letters are a perfect godsend even if I cannot answer them all.

Best Love,
Tammy

I have no idea what 5/- of matches look like but after I get them I will let you know. We get intermittent rations of matches.

¹ 2nd Lieutenant John R. Hamilton-Dalrymple, 2nd Battalion KOSB. He was injured near Bethune in October 1914 and invalided home. He was killed in action near Pilckem on 23 April 1915.

² Sir Charles Fergusson.

³ See Appendix A.

⁴ 2nd Lieutenant T. F. Teeling, special reserve, KOSB.

⁵ Battle of Le Cateau, 26 August 1914. After the fall back from Mons, Corps Commander General Horace Smith-Dorrien ordered II Corps to stand and fight contrary to the plan of General Sir John French. They were west of the small town of Le Cateau on green downs. For more details, see the Introduction.

45. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Beau Puits]
19 October 1914

My dearest Mother,

Much love for your last letter. It is awfully kind of Uncle Leonard to send me the parcel but it is far too big to be of any use. I cannot carry one quarter of it along. It has not come yet and I think it will be rather too bulky to get through quickly. I got your Tabloids^[1] last night. At the present moment I am sitting in a trench waiting for the Brigade on our left to come up into line when we shall all advance to the attack. We have had 2 days of more or less rest after the 3 days show I wrote about.

It is extraordinary how little we all know about what is going on. When we left our last place we were relieved by a French Battalion and I had to go round all our trenches at 2 a.m. and do interpreter.

Oct 19th-20th I had to stop here as I was ordered to the attack. In spite of a report sent in by us that the position was too strong they sent us in. Holme and Hopkins kept with the supports and it was my turn for the firing line. We started off quite gaily and had gone about 50 yards when we came under the cross fire of 3 machine guns in addition to rifle fire. We at once began to lose men.

I could not see the Regiment on my right or the Company on my left and as the attack was being guided by me I felt rather awkward at not being able to get forward, but the fire was too heavy and there was nothing to fire at. There was nothing for it, so I got up and ran down the line to see where the Company on my left was and found I had left them behind. The Regiment on my right had retired, so then I returned to my old position being fired on all the time. I dropped down beside a man who I thought was exposing himself too much, and put my hand on him to press him down. He at once rolled over. Poor devil he was dead. It gives one rather a shock when that sort of thing happens.

Feeling I was in a fix the only thing was to get away back and report. So I got me up and ran like a hare for about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile zigzagging to give myself a better chance. I came to Holme who was digging himself in and lay down to get my breath. I then heard Hopkins who was hit so I got up and ran over to look for him. I found him with a bullet through his knee so I cut the leg of his breeches off and dressed his leg for him. From there I had another 300 yards run to get back to Major Coke^[2] who is commanding us. I told him the exact position of the Germans and the machine guns and asked for orders and was told to return at dusk.

I got back to Holme and he and I lay out in a field which was a root field for another 2 hours. While we were digging – phut – and a bullet slipped between our heads. Just before dark God knows why but a battery of our own artillery opened on us and after what we had gone through all day I am not ashamed to say we turned and bolted back to our trenches. Of course the Germans opened up on us with the 3 machine guns and rifles but did us no damage. We picked up Hopkins as we came. I can't give our losses but the Company was so shaken they had to put us in reserve. So today the 20th we dug ourselves in in [the] rear and Rony Holme, I and Dixon who joined us some time ago have a snug little dug out lined with straw in which we lie and feed and where I am finishing this letter.

I had a letter on the 18th from Violet Mason.^[3] Very nice of her to write. The powers that be now admit that our report on the enemy's position was correct and the attack has been suspended.

There are not many officers left now and the men have surprised me in the interest they take in our welfare. Many of them told me that they watched with the utmost anxiety while I was running about and did not see how it was possible for me not to get hit.

However one has one's duty to do and I feel more and more that as long as one does one's duty no matter how heavy the fire, you won't be hit until your time has come. At the same time I will admit I am in a bit of a funk the whole time and no man with any sensibilities can help feeling so.

Captain Smith has gone home with a bullet wound in his forearm. He has been given some French order,^[4] we cannot make out why as in all our worst fights he has always been in reserve and has not borne the brunt of any fighting.

The only time he came into the firing line no-one could find him until the show was over. His subalterns asked everybody where he was. His hit in the forearm was a stray shot as he was quite $\frac{3}{4}$ of mile behind the trenches when hit.

Now no more we all are anxious for our mail tonight.

With best love,
your loving Tammy

¹ Tabloids was a term invented by Henry Wellcome to describe a new type of medicine where the powder was compressed into a small tablet, making it easier to store and to take.

² Major Edward S. D. Coke, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

³ Probably Violet Mason, daughter of the aforementioned Lady Evelyn Mason.

⁴ Captain Smith was awarded the Légion d'honneur. Lindsay is being rather harsh on Smith, as during the battle he was called up from the reserves to take command.

46. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Richebourg]
23 October 1914

My dearest mother,

A new way of spending my birthday, lying in a ditch watching the German shells bursting and hoping they won't burst too near us. We have been fighting constantly the last 10 days and have so far come through. We are anxiously waiting for news of the German Army that got loose from Antwerp.^[1]

Don't send me bulky parcels as we never see our kit now and have only what we stand up in. Your bottle of lime juice arrived quite safely and was promptly put into my water bottle. It was good.

Evelyn is certainly too kind for words and may she reap a rich reward in heaven for all her kindness to me and us all. I had a long letter from Kathleen Cuthbert and also Susan Lushington.^[2]

Just had 3 shells close over our heads, but being at the bottom of the ditch am all right. Last night we did what I think is one of the most ticklish jobs. The Germans were lying within 100 yards of our trenches and we had to withdraw without them hearing us to take up our positions. By the way don't go on sending me out boots as the pair I have got is quite serviceable and will go on a long time and I have nowhere to keep spare pairs.

Will you ask Hawkes, 1 Saville Row, London^[3] to make me a khaki jacket of medium whipcord with a detachable camel hair lining. It must be made amply by as I am wearing wooleys etc which increase my bulk. The side pockets I want made larger and rather more below the waist line than is normal. Don't forget if you want money that I wrote Drummonds to let you operate on my account.

It is dreadful to see the cattle in the fields being knocked over by the shrapnel and lying there. Day before yesterday a cow was shot by a Maxim just in front of my trench and lay there groaning all day. We could do nothing as the bullets were coming too thick so we had to leave it.

Leonard's parcel came all right, will you let him know and thank him as I don't know his address. He sent so much I could not carry half of it. When you send matches I only want about 9 boxes at a time. Quantity is no good to us.

Holme and I and 3 others are the only fellows left of our original lot who came out, though the others will drift back by degrees. Your parcel of chocolate and handkies came today, also Evelyn's epitome of news. The latter most delightful.

Best Love,
Your Loving Tammy

Holme and I both feel the same that unless we get a rest before long our nerve and health will give as the strain is too much after 2 solid months. Others who have been out the whole time find the same.

Have all my kit sent home. I am afraid there is rather a lot. Keep the receipt and I shall get a refund from Government on my return.

¹ The siege of Antwerp had ended on 10 October, freeing up many German troops.

² Susan Lushington was known, among other things, for the musical entertainments she put on for soldiers at her house in Kingsley (Hampshire).

³ The tailors Thomas Hawkes of Savile Row.

47. TO VIOLET LINDSAY

[Richebourg]
24 October 1914

My dearest Vi,

Very very [*sic*] much love to you all for your birthday presents and wishes. As you will see in Mother's letter of yesterday I spent it being shelled.

Our orderly has just passed and said the Indian Troops^[1] are here. Thank God! I hope we may be relieved for a bit as my men are fearfully done. They have not got over the fearful doing we got on Sunday 18th.

Now about my supplies from home. Everything you have sent has arrived bar your ginger cake. I am most grateful for mitts and scarf. If I am not too late tell Hawke to be sure and give me ample room in the armpits and down the shape of the coat. Utility and not looks is what I want. I have got all the tobacco and chocolate I can do with at present so you can ease that off. I can always get ration tobacco and oddments out of parcels which arrive for officers who have gone home.

The other pair of boots have arrived and I have no where to put them. I will let you know in ample time when to send things of that sort. You must remember that when I write and say I have anything wrong with me it is 10 days before you hear and 10 days before your remedy arrives. By that time I am or shall be either in hospital or cured. Evelyn's pocket medicine thing has all the drugs I want esp. Cascara^[2] etc in addition to Diarrhoea mixture and pain deadener.

We have again come to a sit down battle. Rony Holme and I are off duty and have made ourselves a snug dugout which we shall roof in tomorrow. Evelyn sent me a p.c. saying she had been over and seen you. I got a parcel of goodies from her and some Berwick Cockles^[3] from P. which we fell upon and devoured.

Tremendous Artillery duel been going on all day. Tell the Hartmanns I wish to heaven I was helping them clear their brushwood instead of clearing Germans. We have had no rest now for over 6 days. Lying down with heavy firing going on and alarms that the Germans are creeping up to the trenches may allow bodily rest but the mental strain of keeping your men awake and properly on the alert, combined with the bursting of shells which make holes big enough to bury two horses in, within 200 yards of you, prevents any real rest. Now that the Indian troops have come they may relieve us for a bit.

We had great news of a Russian victory yesterday and that they had routed the Germans over a front of 120 kilometres.^[4] Too dark to go on so good night and God bless you all. Oh for a Bath!!!

Your very loving Tammy

¹ At the start of the war, two cavalry divisions and two infantry divisions from the Indian Army were sent to Europe. Known collectively as the Indian Expeditionary Force A, they were attached to the British Expeditionary Force and first saw action at the Battle of La Bassée in October 1914.

² Cascara Sagrada was traditionally used as a herbal laxative. It was also used to soothe upset stomachs and as a natural antibiotic and anti-parasitic in the bowel.

³ A traditional hard-boiled mint sweet with red stripes, made in Berwick-upon-Tweed.

⁴ Perhaps the Battle of the Vistula River, which saw the Russians defeat a combined German and Austro-Hungarian army.

48. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Richebourg]
25 October 1914

My dearest Mother,

It is A Companies turn for the trenches tonight and we shall be in them 2 days before being relieved by another company so I may not be able to write again before the 26th or 27th. Time is getting on and I could not help noticing how the leaves were beginning to fall. I do love getting all your letters and I had such a nice one from Evelyn last night. She is a dear.

The Indian troops are only a mile behind us and we hear that there is a chance of them relieving the Fifth Division and letting us get a rest. We all hope most sincerely that its time. We have been promised a rest so often and it always means that we dash off and fill up some hole or other. However with the Indian troops up and the Canadians^[1] not far behind I dare say we stand a better chance this time.

We have improved our dugout and got a roof on since I finished Vi's letter last night. Hopkins as you know was wounded so I am again in charge of A Company. For 10 days now we have had no chance of a wash or shave or anything so are all pretty grubby to put it mildly. I don't think any of your parcels have gone astray. We open all parcels that come for officers who have been wounded or killed and share the contents. So we do not lack chocolate or cigarettes, in fact at present we have more than we can do with. Ditto the men's.

I am sending back Faggs boots to you as mine are quite good and no other officer is in need of any and they are much too good to leave behind as I have nowhere to keep them.

If I remember right I had 19 boxes of sorts stored. You need not worry about the big black box as it contains saddler and trouser press and all those sort of articles which won't spoil if you put the box on bags in the outhouse and it is awfully heavy. My clothes are in the black cabin trunks and tin uniform case and green suitcase. My new evening dress suit is in the suit case and might be opened and kept from spoiling. My guns want to go in a dry place.

We seem to be pretty stationary here at present and nothing out of the ordinary going on. A lot of sniping all day and artillery duds. The time when

things do liven up is about 4.30 onwards. It is difficult to tell at night if the Germans are really attacking or if it is only a jumpy sentry.

We had great news last night that the Fleet had shelled the Germans out of Ostend and were busy shelling their army on land.^[2] It pleases us all mightily to think of a few 1200 lbs shells dropping in the middle of them.

My feet are as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. With very best love and dreaming of the day when I can roll into Adlestrop Station^[3] and see you all perched on the platform.

Your devoted Tammy

¹ The first contingent of Canadian troops left Canada in October 1914 and arrived in France in early 1915 after several months training in England. Known collectively as the Canadian Expeditionary Force, they were involved in all the major battles on the Western Front from 2nd Ypres 1915 until the end of the war.

² The British fleet bombarded Ostend on 18 October, the Germans having occupied the town a few days before.

³ Lindsay's mother lived in the nearby village of Oddington (Gloucestershire).

49. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Richebourg]
25 October 1914

Can you send me a pocket electric torch and one refill for it. I omitted it from my letter which is going by the same post.

H Lindsay

50. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Richebourg]
28 October 1914

My dearest Mother,

Instead of being in the trenches for 2 days we got orders to remain 4 days before being relieved much to our disgust as our dugout is nice and comfy and has a

roof, while the trenches are awfully cold at night and we have continued alarms which so far have come to nothing. [*One sentence scored out*]

Vests, cake and mittens and ginger arrived the first morning I spent in the trenches here and were most acceptable. Rony Holme said the cake was damn good and so it was. An old old [*sic*] man named Anderson has taken command of A Coy.^[1] He is a drop out of sorts and I have to hold his hand as he is fearfully jumpy. Of course it is awfully sporting of him to volunteer but he is really very little good in the field.

Don't send me any of my wooley waistcoats as I have 2 Shetlands with me.

The first day we were in the trenches they shelled us for 1½ hours dropping their shells within 100 yards of the trench but luckily no one was hurt although bits of shell and stones and dirt showered upon us.

Another delightful parcel of goodies came from Evelyn which helped to make trench life more bearable. I sent a message on a Kings Messenger Postcard via Mrs Anderson telling you to put 2nd Battalion K.O.S.B. on all your letters etc as soon other Battalions will be out here shortly. Will you let everyone who is likely to write to me know especially Evelyn Mason.

Have you any idea who Ian is supposed to be engaged to. I shall be most interested to hear. What a wonderful battle this is with our right on the West of France and our left the Fleet in the North Sea. Everything seems to be going all right and I suppose it is only a matter of time before one gives out and something decisive happens. We hear that the Stock Exchange is betting 4-1 on the War being over by Xmas. Pray heaven it is! [*Two sentences scored out*]

Your letters are reaching me in a much shorter time now. I got yours of 21st last night. Coz [*i.e.* cousin] Mabel^[2] sent me a box of chocolate biscuits which I got yesterday. Tell PL. Thank her very warmly for me. I will write to her if I get a chance of sitting down when I get out of these trenches. The weather is turning much colder and the sky actually looks like snow. According to reports the new German Army Corps comprised of old men of 40-60 are getting disheartened by their losses and non success and they continue to say they are short of ammunition. To us in the firing line they seem to have quite enough!

Now I must stop. Whatever you do, do not send me any money as I have heaps.

Your very loving Tammy

¹ Captain A. F. Anderson, 3rd Battalion Cameronians. A retired cavalry officer, he had offered his services at the beginning of the war. He was attached to the 2nd Battalion KOSB in October 1914 and killed in action on 23 April 1915 during the battle for Hill 60. Despite being described by Lindsay as 'old, old', he was only in his early forties.

² Mabel Antrobus, Lindsay's second cousin. See Family Tree.

51. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Neuve-Eglise]
2 November 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter. Letter follows at the first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

52. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Neuve-Eglise]
2 November 1914

My dearest mother,

Much has happened since I wrote to you last. After spending 4 days and 5 nights in the trenches we were relieved by a Gurka Regiment^[1] and set out on a promised weeks rest. Needless to say we had only done one march towards our resting place when we were suddenly ordered off to a point near the left of the line which had given way a bit.

We found the line held by a Cavalry Brigade who had suffered pretty heavily by a Sikh regiment giving way rather badly and a village which we held had to be abandoned. We arrived in motor buses, disembarked and marched a matter of a mile and a half. Reported ourselves to the G.O.C. and were told to retake the village. If there is one thing worse than another it is capturing villages as the sniping always causes heavy casualties. However we advanced under heavy shell fire to the crest of the hill across damnable country with thick hedges and barbed wire fences.^[2] At the top we came under fire from the houses and machine guns. We took the village and some trenches which had been evacuated and saved the left flank of the Inniskilling Fusiliers. We held on all day and all night and in the morning an attack on the left by the Germans found a weak spot. The London Scottish ran and we were at once enfiladed out of the village and shelled out of it by our own artillery. Not the first time this has happened. So we had to retire about a mile where we dug in again and held on. We were relieved at midnight by some more cavalry and our remnants are now awaiting orders to go elsewhere.

Poor old 25th^[3] it seems our fate to be pushed into all the weak spots. It cannot go on much longer as there will be no battalion left. Holme went down with a shrapnel wound in the left arm but is not bad so now^[4] I feel rather lonely as he had been through the whole show alongside me. There is only one

other subaltern left who has done the same. All the others have come out at odd times.

We were lucky to get out of the last show with the losses we had. It was a damnable hole and we all thought it was U.P. The weather has turned fine again, but the week in the trenches was awful as they are so cramped and were dug in wet clay. The cold went right through you in addition it rained for 2½ days out of the 4.

Very best love,
Tammy

¹ The Indian Expeditionary Force A contained several Gurkha battalions.

² 'Battle of Messines we think' has been written at the top of the letter in a different hand. The battle took place from 12 October to 2 November.

³ The 25th Regiment was a former name of the KOSB. For further details, see the Introduction.

⁴ 2nd Lieutenant R. H. P. Holme died of his wounds on 9 November.

53. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[no date]

Don't bother about leather waistcoat as I have one sent out to Holme who has now gone home. Received all your parcels. Don't send any wooly waistcoats as I have 2 shetlands and 2 wooly scarves. Have plenty of underclothes and for present, also chocolate so you need not send me so much. Humphrey Lindsay. Send above message to above address.

54. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Neuve-Eglise]
4 November 1914

My dearest mother,

Don't send me any wooley waistcoats etc as I have C Willies present and a leather waistcoat sent to Holme so if in turn you can cancel the order but I am afraid this will reach you too late.

Under things I have plenty of at any rate for a month or more. I will write in plenty of time when I see I shall require them. Yes send Norwegian boots in preference to Faggs. The latter makes them fit too well and if we winter out here they would be unbearably tight.

I don't think any harm can come of my saying that I am with the forces north in Belgium where anything may happen at any minute. We all hope for great things. I had a ripping post last night. I had 2 letters from you, 1 from Vi, Evelyn Mason, Violet Mason, Mokkey Browne,^[1] Jean Dove, Mrs Dove, Captain Watkins and Mrs Watkins, Mrs Holme and Puddie. Also 3 parcels from you, 200 cigarettes (no good to me) from Watkins, Vi's cake etc so I rolled into bed feeling very contented and pulled up the straw tucked myself in and went to sleep.

The Regiment has again been specially complimented on our last bit of work when Rony Holme got hit.

Dearest old lady you can ease up a lot in what you send me as we have heaps and heaps of things and on a sudden move we leave so many good things behind. Don't send any more iodine. I only wanted one bottle in case of being wounded and lying out it is grand stuff to cauterise the place.

I have no other fighting news to give you as we are by way of being Army Reserve *pro tempore*.^[2]

Very best love to all and sundry,
Your Tammy who wants to get a soft job at home for a bit.

¹ Probably Evelyn Montague Browne, daughter of Major-General Andrew Montague Browne. In a later letter, she appears as 'Monkey Browne' perhaps both a play on 'Monty Browne'.

² *pro tempore* – for the time being.

55. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Nonne Boschen]
8 November 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letters and parcels. Letter follows at first opportunity.

Humphrey Lindsay

56. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Nonne Boschen]
9 November 1914

My dearest mother,

Again we moved on north. When I last wrote we were at a place called Messines, or rather that was the name of the village we were told to take and then had to retire from.

Now we are in the trenches again in the middle of a thick wood with Germans opposite us outside. I am writing on some note paper taken off a dead German and very handy it is. We relieved another regiment here and it had evidently been the scene of some sharp fighting judging by the number of dead lying about. A good many of them were Bavarians as their uniforms showed. We have removed and are making use of various parts of their equipment. Their greatcoats we use as bedding, their horseskin knapsacks as pillows and any other rifles in working order as second guns. It is a curious contrast to see rabbits coming out to play in the midst of what has been a bloody battle field. The French are making an attack on our right as I write this and the sound of their guns is continuous. Sir J. French^[1] sent a letter round asking us all to hang on and hang on and await the arrival of supports so we are all hoping against hope that at any moment we shall see the German line being rolled up and a general retreat over the Border begin.

I am glad you sent Evelyn my letter to read as I've not much time in trenches to write and room is distinctly limited. Here is a drawing of what it is like [*sketch of a trench*]. So you see we are pretty cramped. The trench must be kept narrow in case they burst shrapnel over you.

Here also is a drawing of a German bayonet I found on the rifle of a dead German [*sketch of a serrated bayonet*]. I don't know if the teeth are put there to make the wound worse or whether their pioneers carry them for sawing wood primarily. Anyway those that carry them use them. As a rule the sight of a naked blade is quite enough for them and they don't stand long.

I wonder if my Musketry Distinction^[2] would get me a job if I could get home. They must want instructors for Kitchener's army and I think I have quite done my share of this war for a start. If writing to Evelyn will you say I got her, Violet's, letter quite safely this morning. In it she says Paul Kennedy is jealous of my endless battles. I'm quite willing to change places with him as soon as he is fit again.

Our new six inch Howitzers are great. They throw a shell 100 lbs heavier than Black Maria^[3] but I don't know if they have her range. Turnbull^[4] and Burnett^[5] have come out and joined us. They have not quite settled down to it yet and got jumpy the first night in the trenches. T is badly placed as his

second Captain, a dropout from the Cameronians,^[6] is full of nerves and the other night when companies were relieving and the Germans opened fire to let us know they knew what was going on, he was found jumping about blazing off his revolver in all directions:- “there’s a German – bang – I believe I got him – God there’s another – bang – bang – oh heavens we are surrounded!” So of course he is not much help.

Now I must stop as I have to censor the mens letters and it is getting dark. Tell Uncle George I don’t want wire cutters as I have them.

Your very loving Tammy

Heard from you and Vi this morning.

¹ Sir John French was Commander-in-Chief of the BEF for the first year and a half of the war.

² Lindsay had qualified from the School of Musketry, Hythe, with distinction, in February 1913.

³ The name given by British troops to the 8-9 inch German Howitzer shells due to the column of greasy black smoke they sent up on impact.

⁴ Captain Hugh V. C. Turnbull, 2nd Battalion KOSB. He was killed on 13 November 1914.

⁵ Captain Alexander E. Burnett, 6th Battalion KOSB.

⁶ Captain R. W. F. Fullarton, 3rd Battalion Cameronians. He had been attached to the 2nd Battalion KOSB at the same time as Captain A. F. Anderson.

57. TO EVELYN MASON (COPY)

[Nonne Boschen]
10 November 1914

How you would smile if you could see me as I write this. I am in a thick pine wood not 100 miles from Ypres in a hole in the ground 3 foot deep and about 4 foot square roofed over with young pine trees which have been brought down by shells, on top of this are laid great coats belonging to dead Germans and over all 3 inches of sand.

It is a curious position as the Germans are on 3 sides of us so that you are bound to come under fire either in front from the right or from the left. It has been the scene of some hard fighting as we both want the place and may be the scene of more. The number of dead lying about the wood testify to the severity. One thing about being here is that you know how you stand and that

means in the case we fight to the last man, no retirement. To retire means to scupper units on either flank and make a hole in the line and much blood would have to be shed to retake it.

Today they shelled the wood to pieces with their 250 lb shells. They blew my platoon out of their trench and they wandered about half demented. However I have them gathered together again. Sitting in my dugout a shell landed 12 feet behind luckily hitting a root and so lessening the damage. The tree went to glory and the back wall of the dugout gave way covering me with dirt and muck. I left it and went over to see another fellow about 100 yards away and had just got into his cubbyhole when 2 more landed about 15 yards from the entrance. Trees came down on us, luckily young ones and more dirt.

He had a box of Fullers chocolate creams so we fell to and devoured them, as if we were going to be slain, we thought we might as well be slain with a contented feeling inside as not. Two men were buried alive, one we got out with a broken leg and arm but the other poor fellow we did not discover until too late. They shelled us with these infernal things from 11.30am until 3pm.

These heavy shells are too vast and make one actually afraid. The feeling I think is more one of awe that man could have invented such tremendous machines of destructions. We can only sit and wonder where the next one will fall, and if it will get you. You hear them coming about 30 seconds before they explode and you can roughly gauge them to about 50 yards.

Well about 2.30pm I wandered off to the trenches to see how things were there and had not been there more than 10 mins when we saw the enemy approaching, so we had some pot shots at them and were on the *qui vive*^[1] until dark, but they never really came on. Having missed my tea which one of the men invariably makes for me no matter where we are I returned to the thick wood and my dugout where I am writing this letter.

I may mention that I and my platoon were by way of resting in the wood, but if that is rest give me the trenches every time. I return to the trenches at dawn tomorrow and another platoon comes out to be shelled or rest as they call it. So goes a day in what the papers call a stubborn battle. Even now as I write bullets are singing in 3 directions over my head and it is so dark you cannot see 5 yards – and so Paul Kennedy envies me my battle does he?

I got your parcel of goodies this a.m. and mightily pleased I was to tuck in. It is awfully sweet and kind of you to send them. Please thank Violet for her letter and give my love to them all. It is awfully nice of you all to write to me and I enjoy getting your letters thoroughly. I'm glad Walter is a Captain instead of a corporal and I wish I was at home teaching musketry instead of dodging shells. A distinguished at Hythe^[2] is not much good to me if one cannot teach people at home how to use a rifle at a time like this and having been out from the beginning I feel I would like to be in England for a bit and instruct some of these people who have enlisted.

I wonder if you would send this on to mother to see. I wrote to her yesterday but the shells rather upset my writing operations and I felt I must write to you as I have not written for so long. With my very best love

Your very affectionately H. L.

Please excuse the paper but it is the only hard thing I have to write on at present.

¹ *i.e.* on the alert.

² Hythe (Kent) was the home to the Royal School of Musketry and the Hythe Ranges.

58. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Nonne Boschen]
10 November 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter and parcel. Letter follows at first opportunity. Tammy

59. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Nonne Boschen]
13 November 1914

My dearest mother,

Still in the trenches and likely to remain here. We have had 2 horribly wet nights and today is drizzling. It turned to a heavy downpour and the making of an attack.

14th Spent a wretched night as it is awfully cold. The London Scottish were in trenches on our right so I asked if Francis^[1] was out with them and hearing he was I waited to see him. However it was dark by the time he came up so I did not actually see him but his voice was Morris^[2] voice in duplicate. They were relieved last night so I shan't see him again here. It is curious the effect war has on one. I little dreamt that I could ever deliberately shoot a man and yet yesterday morning I shot 4 Germans in succession stone dead, I'm glad to say, much to the delight of the men of my company. The result is that now

whenever a German is seen you hear “Don’t shoot, let Mr Lindsay shoot him, you’ll only miss him”.

I shot another this morning who was carrying something so when all was quiet one of the men slipped [sic] out of the trenches and brought in a box of the best cigars I have ever smoked. The Germans brought up a new gun against us today. You could see the shell all the way. I judged it to be about 200 lbs by its size. It landed without bursting on its tail, then you heard a click and about 30 seconds later it exploded with a fearful noise and brought down about 3 trees. Poor Turnbull was killed yesterday, shot in the temple.

Thank heavens the weather has cleared tonight and it looks like being fine but very cold. Our trenches are in sand soil and mixed with clay so they are very cold. We’ve been in them a week and God knows how much longer we shall remain here.

I had another narrow escape last night; a piece of shell about 4 inches long missed my head by less than an inch and stuck ½ an inch into an ammunition box behind me. I don’t think it would have killed me but given me a nasty scalp wound.

I suppose there are no wires we can pull to get me home on some job especially in the Musketry line. What about Grenfell.

It is too dark to write any more.

Best Love,
Yours Tammy

¹ Perhaps Major Francis Lindsay, London Scottish Regiment. He was killed at the battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916.

² Perhaps Henry Edzell Morgan Lindsay (known as Morgan).

60. TO VIOLET LINDSAY

[Nonne Boschen]
15 November 1914

My dearest Vi,

How time flies. Here we are in the middle of November and this bloody war still goes on. Before I forget I will say that there are no Russians here and not likely to be any.

To add to our miseries today we had snow. At present we have about 3 inches of slush in the bottom of our trenches and the men are going sick fast

from aigue and rheumatism and no wonder. Poor devils they are worked hard enough. The Germans must feel it just as badly. We brought in one man yesterday who had been lying out in the open for 3 days wounded. He tried to kiss everyone he met. Today I am by way of being in support and resting again but the dugout is leaking horribly so I cannot lie down and sleep.

I am awfully sorry to hear of young Railston and Nobby [?Reyge]. Bailie^[1] who went home from us quite early on in the War after Le Cateau came out again and was sent to the Scots Fusiliers and now I hear he has been killed. He was such a nice fellow and had only just joined us. I put him through his musketry course in the early summer.

I wonder how long France and Germany will continue to suffer these enormous losses. Surely flesh and blood must have a limit.

I don't think any of us will stand very much more of this trench work without going sick. I know I feel very near the end of my tether. We can none of us keep warm and we cannot sleep as our feet are like blocks of ice. Even if we get relieved here we only we only get pushed off somewhere else and man some other trenches. Failing that we should remain in what they are pleased to call reserve and get shelled as badly as we do here.

The last thing that could happen to us would be to be put on the lines of communication. They are shelling the wood again now as I write. They have shelled it daily for the last week till I wonder they aren't tired of it. Our present doctor is a rotten little man, he ought to have been up today to see our sick but he never came. I wanted to see him myself as I have a most irritating rash all over me and a sore throat and am hoping it is measles or something that will enable me to go sick for some time. To go sick seems to me to be the only way of getting any rest or of getting home.

When one comes to think of it I suppose nearly 90 per cent of those who first came out here have gone home wounded, so it seems a bit hard that the other 10 per cent should not be allowed a trip home. At the present moment my battalion has more officers in proportion to men now than it had when at fighting strength as they have sent us reserve officers of all sorts of Regiments so that I could quite well be spared. We are having lots of cases of men injuring themselves to get out of it – a very serious offence of course and liable to court martial if evidence can be produced. But of course no man gives away his pal and I don't blame them a bit.

I am afraid this is quite a doleful letter but the combination of circumstances, weather and not feeling well does not help one to be cheerful. One bright spot on the horizon is the arrival of your cake which I am looking forward too.

The Black Watch are not very far away from us so I may see Geof Bowes Lyon.^[2] If I get the chance I will, but it's pure accident knocking up against people.

Tell Puddie that her wooley scarf converted into a cap comforter is my absolute delight. I put on your Iceland wool scarf the day it came and have never had it off since.

Three days ago I was bending down when a shell burst behind me. The force of the explosion was too much for my braces and they burst.

It is curious that Bagshaw should go into hospital at Southam Race Course. I know him well. He was an awful trouble to get to shoot, but I taught him in the end. When we get out of these trenches I will send you the pages of my diary. They may not convey very much to you as I could not put in stuffing in case I was killed or captured, but if you have a good enough map you will see how much ground I have covered in France. Now I must end as the candle is giving out and we want the end to cook over.

Your very loving Tammy

p.s. I enclose my pages of diary now before I forget.

¹ 2nd Lieutenant George B. Bayley, 2nd Battalion KOSB. He was attached to the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers on his return to the front and killed at Ypres on 26 October 1914.

² Captain Geoffrey Bowes-Lyon. He was Humphrey's second cousin, and the first cousin to the future Queen Elizabeth, wife of George VI. See Family Tree.

61. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Nonne Boschen]
18 November 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter and parcels. I have received no letter from you. Humphrey Lindsay

62. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Hooge]
20 November 1914

I am quite well. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

63. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Locre]

21 November 1914

My dearest mother,

Heaps of love for your letters. You have no idea how I feel Rony's death. When I saw it in the paper I simply sat down and howled and now even when I think of it I weep silently to myself. We have just come out of the trenches at Ypres in which we sat for 14 consecutive days during which we had some awful wet days and ended up with two days snow and now it is freezing hard. ~~So please send on my new coat.~~

It is rather amusing to read in your letters about my being in a rest camp because although often promised we have not yet rested once. Today for the first time I had a bath in a basin and a good hunt for animiles.^[1] I never knew I could get so dirty.

We are now again promised a rest in fact we are by way of going into winter quarters and have a rest of sorts. There are all sorts of rumours flying around. One is that when we get into winter quarters batches of officers will be allowed home on 96 hours leave. But I don't want to raise either your or my hopes too high. The other is that when Kitchener's first army comes out, we go home, refit and then sail for India or Egypt to relieve the territorials. I wish to god it would be true.

My friend Jean Dove has written to me and told me she is engaged to be married to a fellow in the 14 Hussars whom she has known from childhood. I'm awfully pleased as it is the best thing that could happen for her and me. However I'm not hit at all.

You will see all about the shells in my letter to Evelyn.

I'm glad to hear about the London Scottish having done so well. Of course we did not know of their charge as they were not next door to us but know of their retirement as it caused our part of the line to become untenable.

I have absolutely nothing else to tell you except we had a long and awfully trying night march to here (Loos?). We left Ypres at 9pm and got here at 4.30am. Freezing hard.

Very best love,
Tammy

A Divisional order has just come round saying that a certain number of officers from each Regiment shall be allowed to go home on a week's leave when not in the firing line. Preference to be given to those who have been out longest

and need a rest. So of course my name goes in but when we shall get it I don't know.

If I get it, I should go to London and see Hawkes. Do you think Evelyn would lend you a car to come up and meet me there and come back home together in it. This letter should get home early as a dispatch rider who is going on 48hrs leave is taking it.

I don't want you to send me my jacket now until I know when or if I am coming on leave. If there is any chance of anyone being able to get me a job at home, now would be the time to get going then I could settle it when I got home.

¹ Lindsay is perhaps referring here to lice.

64. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (TELEGRAM)

Folkestone
24 November 1914

Coming home tonight 7-5 on thirty six hours leave will wire from London if miss 4-55 train Humphrey

65. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Aboard train, south-east England
27 November 1914

Dearest Old Lady in the World,

Rather a rocky scrawl in the train I'm afraid. That I've really been home already seems like a dream, but a very enjoyable one. Sitting here writing it seems almost incredible that there is a war going on anywhere. The news in the paper this morning seems excellent and if Russia has really done all the papers say it will hasten matters tremendously. Don't forget to ask the Bryants to find out from Beauvoir de Lisle^[1] if there is a chance or any truth in the rumour of V division going to Egypt.

I was so awfully glad Uncle Leonard got you through the barrier this morning and it was nice of him to come down. I know you felt my going back again but in your heart of hearts I also know you would not have it otherwise.

It is better to be there knowing your job, than to go out with a new lot with everything to learn.

I can't tell you how I loved getting back to the wee cottage again and hope the situation will let us get over again for a longer time somewhere over Xmas. If you write to Evelyn please thank her again for me and say how I loved seeing them all again. I will write when I get over but letters will take such a long time to get over. It is such a glorious day I wish I were standing outside a covert shooting pheasants with you all beside me.

Very fondest love,
Tammy

¹ Major-General Beauvoir de Lisle, 1st Cavalry Division.

66. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Neuve-Eglise]
28 November 1914

My dearest old lady,

Here I am back again in the old haunts in billets moderately comfortable. When I got in slept on a brick floor and regretted my nice comfortable bed at home. We had a most trying journey back as the driver of the motor bus kept losing his way. Arrived at our destination. I met General Sandbach,^[1] who kindly gave us dinner. I started asking him about getting a job at home but had to stop as others came in. When I got back I found many of your letters and Vi's which I read this morning and although old in news I loved reading them.

I have got Puddies scarf and bullets and Vi's stockings etc so I have lost nothing. We had a note this morning to say that the French Ambassador had wired to say that the Russian victory had far more far reaching results than we imagined. So that is good. I believe roughly 100,000 Germans were taken so that with their killed and wounded makes a tidy bag.

Everything here is very quiet and has been for the last 10 days so it remains to be seen where the Germans are going to break through again. I think you may safely say not here.

I found a letter from Mr Holmes waiting for me and one from Cousin Mabel but no others besides yours.

I gave your shirts away this morning. They certainly are beautiful ones. With fondest love and an early end to this war.

Your very loving Tammy

I shall read all your letters over again with my tea tonight.

¹ Arthur Edmund Sandbach, commander, Royal Engineers, II Corps.

67. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Neuve-Eglise]
29 November 1914

My dearest old lady,

We are off to the trenches tonight where we shall remain for 2 days then come out and be in support for three days and then withdraw for a week's rest again. I went to a Celebration this morning at 8am feeling rather depressed but am feeling much better now.

It was an awful wrench coming away again, but the chance of more and a longer spell of leave later is a bright spot on the horizon. The subaltern Rutherford who suffers in his feet like me saw a doctor in London and he said that he could do nothing for him there but he thought it was paralysis of the nerves due to long standing in cold and wet trenches. The doctors here cannot understand it at all and are treating it with Iodine. I am waiting to see how the treatment works before I attempt it.

Will you coat my revolver in oil all over inside and out but don't use Vaseline.

Vi's stockings are splendid things and I wear them every night. The snow and frost have all gone but the wind is cold. Will you ask P to thank C.M.^[1] for her muffler and letter and I will try and write soon. Hopkins and his wife sent me 2 plum puddings so we are eating one today.

You can tell old Hoddy that his cigars are very good and that I am enjoying them with other people. I got my last letter over by the mess sergeant who has gone on a week's leave. Old Anderson is just as trying but it did him a lot of good by being away for 2 days as he had to do the whole thing himself.

If you dive for my Horoscope the big box is secured down as well as locked.

With very fondest love Mother darling,
Your Tammy

¹ *i.e.* Cousin Mabel.

68. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Neuve-Eglise]
2 December 1914

My dearest old lady,

Since I last wrote we have been in and out of the trenches here and go into reserve for 2 days then back to the trenches again coming out on the 4th for a week. The result of this method is that no unit has more than 48 hours consecutive trench work. How long this will go on for no one knows. The next party of officers for leave goes on the 4th. Roughly the third party will get away on the 18th and if all goes well and we don't move forward I shall get away again somewhere about the New Year.

The authorities are doing the men awfully well. Each man has been issued with a fur coat waist length to keep him warm in the trenches.^[1] I think they are goat skin and anyway they come from China. The smell is awful and you can tell a company is coming down or has passed by the smell alone. What they will be like after they have been worn a bit I don't know because the man smells enough as it is. There will be plenty of scratching to be done!

I had a nice long letter from Mrs Holme this am. She says all the village people enquire after me and still remember me singing in the village concert. Very nice of her and them.

The good lady who runs our billet has been badly attacked by pains in the stomach. I think it is appendicitis but as Evelyn's pocket medicine chest does not contain a cure for that, I tried her with ginger instead. We are all now sitting and watching to see the effect.

On the (her pain has gone, so now I am certain it is appendicitis) 1st I ran a tin opener into my thumb under the nail and made it bleed like blazes. I put on Iodine and bound it up and it has healed like a bird. I had fleeting visions of blood poisoning, a swelled arm with a recommendation of 2 months sick leave.

We have one suspected case of Enteric and another under observation. I am rather afraid if they turn out to be the real thing that we may be in for an outbreak. We have been so absolutely free from anything so far that it cannot go on forever.

Post just off.

Your Tammy

¹ Additional outer clothing made of animal hides was issued to soldiers on the Western Front during the winter of 1914-15. Some were made of sheepskin, some of goatskin. Soldiers often referred to them as 'Bunnies', 'Wooly Bears' or 'Stinkies'.

69. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Neuve-Eglise]
3 December 1914

Coat great success, ditto Evelyn's waistcoat. No improvement in feet otherwise well. Weather beastly. Anti tetanus powder and Vi's cake came yesterday.

Humphrey Lindsay

70. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Neuve-Eglise]
4 December 1914

I am quite well. I have received your parcel and letter. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

71. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Neuve-Eglise]
5 December 1914

Yes, hood sounds a good substitute and will do well. Just got your letter dated 29th. All my Irish bills were settled before I left the Country.

H Lindsay

72. TO ISABEL AND VIOLET LINDSAY

[Lindenhoek]
8 December 1914

My dearest old lady and Vi,

Very very much love for all your letters which I have received. As I said in my last letter we had been sent to the 15th Brigade. Never have I been in such awful trenches. The left of my company is within 100 yards of the Germans and the right where I am is within 25 yards. Except that it's your Tammy writing I would not expect anyone to believe it. In front of our right is a ruined

hut. We dug a trench up to it and the Germans did the same. And now we have met. So that if we or they wish to talk we can.

Our trench is knee deep in water and mud and in places up to the waist. Why we don't all get Rheumatic fever I don't know. We are here for 4 days. It is so wet and cold you cannot sleep. Your letters are most cheering and I will hang on until something crops up. No more at present as my hands and all of me too cold to write.

Your Tammy

73. TO VIOLET LINDSAY

[Dranoutre]
9 December 1914

My dearest Vi,

Much much love for your letters and Mothers. Before I forget it the braces I got at Hawkes are just on the small size so if you get another pair get them 2 inches longer. We have just come out of the trenches where we have had the most awful time. The left of our line was 100x from the Germans and the right about 15 yards. We had pouring wet weather and being in clay they simply filled with water. For 3 days and nights we remained with the wet slush up to our knees. My legs were absolutely dead from the knees downwards. I worked for 3 hours on my trousers this morning trying to get the clay off them and even then you would notice no difference. To add to our miseries the parapet kept falling in so you had to keep crouched down or get shot.

When we left the trenches the men were so crippled we could not go faster than about 2 miles an hour and even then about 20 fell out.

They talk of an advance about the 12th but how the men are going to do it I don't know. I can scarcely walk myself and have had my feet painted with iodine. I have no other news of any sort and I wish, heavens how we all wish, we could get home.

Yours very affectionate,
Tammy

I shall be ready for another suit of under wear. Socks and shirts have come. The condensed milk I called Perfects is really called Ideal.^[1] Why I thought it was perfects I don't know.

¹ Ideal Condensed Milk (made by the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co) had been used on Antarctic expeditions and was widely consumed by British troops during World War I.

74. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Dranoutre]
10 December 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter. Letter follows at first opportunity.

Tammy

75. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Dranoutre]
11 December 1914

I am quite well. I have received your letter, parcel. Letter follows at first opportunity. Humphrey Lindsay

76. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (POSTCARD)

[Dranoutre]
12 December 1914

I meant to have written you a long letter today but am under orders to go out with a working party now so I cannot. Don't send sausages. Ideal milk instead of powder as we cannot get the hot water to make it in the trenches.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

77. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Dranoutre]
13 December 1914

My dearest Old Lady,

I am thwarted again. We go into the trenches again tonight for 3 nights so I have been awfully busy getting things done. Now I have no time except to scrawl a short line to you.

Vi's cake has just come. Old Anderson has been in England on a spot of leave. That batch had more than we did lucky devils. I am trying to get a signalling job but don't know if I shall succeed. There is some rumour of my being promoted but I have not heard yet. I nearly went and asked to be taken on as an aeroplane observer,^[1] but as the Colonel was away from the flying headquarters I failed.

I am writing to a Major of ours at the War Office to see if he can help me to a job in this country on the lines of communication. Now no time for more dearest.

Very best love,
Tammy

¹ In the early days of the war, the main duties of the Royal Flying Corps were artillery spotting and photographic reconnaissance. The crew member who undertook this task was called an 'observer'.

78. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (FIELD SERVICE POSTCARD)

[Lindenhoeek]
15 December 1914

I am quite well. Letter follows at first opportunity. Tammy

79. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[Dranoutre]
17 December 1914

My dearest old Lady,

I am on my last legs. The last tour of duty in the mud and the slush has finished me for a time. My ankles have swollen a lot and all my legs are fearfully painful. I have just sent along a note to the doctor asking him what he means to do to me – Keep me here or send me down. I may get home but I will add a P.S. when I get an answer. I feel pretty rotten but as he has not taken my temperature I don't know if I have not got a touch of Rheumatic Fever. I feel as if I might have as my various joints ache especially my neck and I cannot keep warm even over a fire. The trenches are in a damnable condition. Being

in the slope of a hill all the moisture drains into them and they are knee deep in wet clay which is of course the coldest of cold. I sat in them wet up to my middle for 36 hours on end. When at last I did get out I could not stand without support and literally fell down and picked myself up all the way along the communication trench. As I am writing now I can scarcely sit still for aches, but the damned doctor will haver.^[1] He said last night I must go and then he produced some salicylic tablets and said they would put me right but I swallowed them all and am no better. If I have the fever I don't think they will send me out again.

The last time we suffered heavily from the German snipers. Our total losses being 70 killed and wounded of all ranks. We cannot locate them and you never know from one minute to the next if you'll be shot or not as you walk about. The men of course are equally dicky on their pins or nearly so. I will leave this open till the last minute in case I get an answer from the Doc before the mail goes out.

Best Love,
Tammy

P.S. (1) If I am sent down I may only get as far as the base.

P.S. (2) Two of my old friends who used to bring me tea were both shot this last tour in the trenches.

P.S. (3) No answer from Doc so don't know my fate.

¹ In Scots, haver means to talk foolishly or babble, although its English meaning is probably intended here, *i.e.* to act in a vacillatory or indecisive manner.

80. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

No 4 General Hospital, Versailles
20 December 1914

My dearest old Lady,

I have come to anchor at No 4 General Hospital, Hotel Trianon,^[1] Versailles, Paris and am reposing in a luxurious apartment in what is called the millionaires corridor. My feet have finally been labelled frostbite and are looking absurdly silly wrapped up in cotton wool. At present they only ache but I expect they will hurt a good deal before I get the feeling back into them. They cannot tell

me how long it will take but it seems almost certain I shall be here for Xmas. I am writing to Dering asking that all letters for me that go to the Regiment shall be sent back home. It seems to me the quickest way as I don't know how long I shall be here or where I shall be shunted to when I leave. Do you know if the Embassy is still here and if so if ~~Robin~~ Ronald is still on the Staff.

It would be a chance to see him if he is. It is a comfort to get into a bed again but I still find myself expecting to see star shell go up in the night and I find myself listening and listening in the darkness until I suddenly realise where I am.

My letters are bound to be dull now that I am side tracked into absolute quiet. It is curious that while at the front I could write your letters and censor them myself being trusted not to give away anything, and now when I can do no possible harm and have nothing to tell you my letters are censored by someone else.

It will be an experience spending Xmas in a hospital.

Best love and wishes for Xmas,
Your Tammy

Don't send on any of my letters until I know what will become of me.

¹ The hotel had been converted to a base hospital in August 1914.

81. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

No 4 General Hospital, Versailles
23 December 1914

My dearest old Lady,

I am wondering how long it will take for my postal arrangements to right themselves. I hope with luck to hear from you tomorrow or certainly on Xmas day. I had no idea frost bite could be so painful. My feet are still incubating in cotton wool and over my legs I have a high cradle to keep the clothes from pressing on them.

It is awfully quiet here, quite near the Palace and in the Spring and Summer I should think lovely. I hope if I am kept here hobbling about, to go and see the various places. I cannot even hobble yet.

For Xmas day I believe I am to be rolled into Balfours Room (He is a young fellow of 20 who got a piece of shell in his back and has been here close on 3 months) so we can make merry together. There is also a Special Reserve Officer

called French who is wandering about having come about 3 weeks ago with a poisoned interior. So there will be 3 of us. Ff and I have taken to playing chess in the evenings. We are both damn bad so we have quite amusing games with immense slaughter.

It was rather curious getting your letter asking about my feet the same day as I had gone sick. They were so bad in the trenches that unless I held on to one of the men I fell over. All the Sisters here are most cheery and tell me that I'm in for a jolly time when the blood starts circulating. At present I cannot feel the massage and when the surgeon examined my feet he stuck a needle in to find out where I could feel and where I couldn't.

No more to say.

Very best love for Xmas,
Tammy

82. WAR OFFICE LONDON TO ISABEL LINDSAY (TELEGRAM)

War Office, London
24 December 1914

Beg to inform you that Lieut. H Lindsay, K O S B is reported in No 4 General Hospital Versailles suffering from frostbite in feet. Decr 19th Secretary War Office.

83. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (TELEGRAM)

Lady Evelyn Mason's Hospital for Officers
16 Bruton Street, London
31 December 1914

Am in Evelyn's Hospital^[1] frost bitten feet Humphrey

¹ Lady Evelyn Mason's Hospital for Officers, 16 Bruton Street, London, was one of 170 such hospitals in London Command District alone. Lady Evelyn Mason was the daughter of James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th earl of Crawford.

84. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lady Evelyn Mason's Hospital for Officers
16 Bruton Street, London
[no date]

Dearest Old Lady,

Here I am in bed in Evelyn's Hospital, as comfortable as I can be under the circumstances. When we arrived at Waterloo the Officer in charge of arrangements came along and was going to send me off somewhere, so I asked him if I could choose. Said he "where do you want to go to?". "To 16 Bruton St, Lady E Mason". "I'm sorry I haven't a ticket left, I have just sent 4 officers there". Says I "Damn it she's my cousin, but if she's full send me to 10 Charles St". However in the end he found me a ticket for here and I believe the place is full.

The doctor saw me this morning and says he can do nothing and that time alone will put it right. At its best it is a long job and he says it may take me a fortnight or it may take a month to get it right. It is curious how short a time it takes to do the damage and how long it takes to recover.

Send me up my pyjamas, a pair and some hankies will you dearest. At present I am in a night shirt and find it very draughty, as when I slide down in bed – it slides up.

Best love,
Tammy

85. TO ISABEL LINDSAY (TELEGRAM)

Lady Evelyn Mason's Hospital for Officers
16 Bruton Street, London
1 January 1915

Come Saturday three to five bring War diary and small book of song words.

Humphrey

86. WAR OFFICE LONDON TO ISABEL LINDSAY (TELEGRAM)

War Office, London
2 January 1915

Beg to inform you that Lieut. H G M Lindsay Kings Own Scottish Borderers in Hospital 16 Bruton St London with frostbitten feet Secretary War Office.

87. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Comrie
20 March 1915

My dearest Mother,

Got here yesterday 7.10pm having missed my connection at Edinburgh by 2 hours. The snow had cleared wonderfully but all the wires and poles were down. C and Aunt S both seem pretty well and send their love etc. Am going over Lawsons this pm. Went and saw the Robertsons this morning who asked after you. Thawing today and looks like rain. This is just a scribble to catch the post. I like the house awfully.

Your Tammy

I posted your letter

PART TWO
1916-1918

1. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

York^[1]
5 October 1916

Dearest Mother,

The recognition due according to the horoscope came in this morning in a report from the Inspector General and was as follows. "Captain G.H.M. Lindsay is recommended for advancement. His work has been very good, especially organisation".^[2] The last word amuses me as I have not consciously sat down and organised anything. It remains to be seen if the promotion will come along. I don't know how much good the report will do me or who it will go forward to. We were only sent a copy for our information. No time for more at present as my class is on the Range and I must go after them. I had Leather to dinner last night and on Sat night and we may go and see *Romance*.^[3]

Your Tammy

I forget if you have stayed with Kathleen before or not. I am still proceeding with the case.

¹ Lindsay was an assistant instructor in the Machine Gun Corps, and was based at Strensall Camp, near York.

² Lindsay had been promoted from lieutenant to captain in June 1915.

³ *Romance*, a play by Edward Sheldon about a relationship between an opera singer and a young clergyman, opened at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, on 6 October 1916.

2. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Hotel Metropole, Folkestone
11 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

A hurried scrawl before I am off. The boat is due to go at 11.15am today – the weather is foggy but I don't think that will stop us. I thoroughly enjoyed our meeting in town and I know you did. The Samuelson's^[1] met me and we dined here and talked over old times and people.

I shall go to one of 2 places either St Omer^[2] – or near Le Touquet.^[3] If I put a ring round the date i.e. 14.11.16 it will mean I'm near St O. If I write

the date 14/11/16 it means I'm near the other place. Of course they may not mind me saying where I am.

Best Love and God bless you,
Your Tammy

¹ Probably Captain G. W. Samuelson, 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, and his wife. He had been attached to the School of Musketry, Hythe, as a machine gun instructor.

² St Omer was a commune in north-west France. The General Headquarters of the BEF was based there during World War I.

³ Le Touquet (full name Le Touquet-Paris-Plage) was a commune near Étaples on the north-west coast of France. It was home to a Lewis Gun School.

3. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. ^[1] [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
15 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

I am afraid you are anxious for a time but so much has happened since my arrival that I haven't had a moment to sit down and write. I hope you got my wire alright. I'm not at the place I expected but I am only 8 miles north from it and I shall probably go there next week.

When I got over and reported I was told they had no orders concerning me so I had better put up at a hotel for the night which I did. I reported next morning and was sent off to report myself to the Commandant at a place about 12 miles distant where F Mason is a camp commandant. When I reported the Staff Officer said 'there must be some mistake as there is already a Commandant, you had better put up in a hotel while I wire about you'. So off I went, luckily I went back in the pm and found it was alright. I went out to the school and had a look at it and then came over here to see the Commandant of the whole show who wants me to remain here a bit. My school is really a detachment from here so my promotion won't be above a Major. You might cut out the Gazette^[2] when you see it and send it out to me. That brings me up to Sunday night.

Monday the Commandant walked in and said I've got to go up to the line on business would you like to come along Lindsay, so of course I said yes. We went up to where the push is going on and most interesting it all was and very

different from my day. I went over a tank and saw a German aeroplane brought down in flames – a wonderful and fearsome sight. A certain number of shells came over but not unduly near.

It's impossible to give a connected account without giving the names of places, but I saw and went through most of the places now well known in the push.^[3]

I shall go and look up the Stoneham's^[4] as soon as I move over there, also Forte. Let various people know my address as I haven't time to write more at present.

Jackson^[5] is the name of the Commandant and the others are all right as far as I can see. When I move over I shall be under canvas, but the surroundings are very nice. Ask Webb to send me out 1lb of Players Navy Cut Tobacco Blue Label every month.

I think I shall find the work here most interesting and great fun.

Your Tammy

Only got back late tonight from the trip.

¹ Lindsay included the Army Post Office code for the school: APO S18.

² The *London Gazette*. One of the official journals of record of the British Government, it published among other things a list of members of the armed forces who had been promoted. They were said to have been 'gazetted'.

³ The Somme offensive, 1 July to 18 November.

⁴ Allen Stoneham was an English businessman who, as part of the Le Touquet Syndicate, developed the town into a gambling and golfing resort. On the outbreak of the war, he offered the use of his land and property to the British Army.

⁵ Major C. H. I. Jackson, Royal Scots Fusiliers. A veteran of the Boer War, he had been an instructor at the School of Musketry, Hythe, at the start of the war.

4. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
18 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

Still here and managing to survive somehow. It's bitterly cold with a cutting wind. At present I am making myself acquainted with machine gun work and

find it very interesting. I wonder if among my things you can find a field service note book. Its oblong brown imitation leather filled with white paper divided into blue squares. I only want the cover. Also the Dunhills waistcoat Evelyn gave me would keep out the wind. I am sorry I did not think of them before I sailed as I didn't want to have to write home for anything.

I hope my kit has arrived from York. There ought to be golf clubs, fishing rods in brown paper, green suit case, brown box marked with Turnbills name, black portmanteau and bicycle. It looks an awful lot and I'm afraid it is.

Now I must away to bed and try and get warm. One thing I find is the intense cold here is distinctly trying to my feet and I miss my hot bath daily and the English W.C. However things will be better once we can get through the winter.

Best love,
Your Tammy

5. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
[no date]

Dearest Mother,

No letters yet so if you have written I am afraid they have gone up the line. In future don't put K.O.S.B. on my letters and then they may arrive here all right. Heaven knows when any will arrive – tell Webb the same if he is sending the Tobacco or the Stores if they are doing it.

At present I am indulging in a furious cold caught from sleeping on a damp mattress, but I am gradually getting the better of it. The weather has turned foul and raining torrents. When it rains it lays the sand and when it's fine and a wind the sand is impossible.

I wish I could tell you all that goes on here but of course I can't and it makes my letters so dull. I've not seen Forte yet as I was feeling too rotten on Sunday.

Don't forget about not putting my regiment in the address. When I am gazetted I shall probably appear as Machine Gun Corps and shall have to put off my badges and bonnet temporarily.

Best Love,
Tammy

6. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
26 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

Just time for a line. Can you get the stores to send me a kit bag like that brown canvas one in my room only half the size. If I am going into a tent I want something waterproof to put my clothes in. Get them to print H. Lindsay only on it. No rank or Regiment. Weather is clearing up and my cold is much better. No other letters from you since the budget. I heard from Mrs Doig and Mrs Leigh.^[1] No time for more.

Your Tammy

4 of us went to a near town and had a damn good dinner last night and all feel better.

¹ Probably the respective widows of Captain John Doig and Major Chandos Leigh, both 2nd Battalion KOSB.

7. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
[no date]

Dearest Mother,

At last my letters have got through. I had 5 from you last night including those you forwarded. The mess here is really remarkably good and the meat is nearly always pink with lots of vegetables.

I am not moving from here yet – in fact not for another three weeks for certain as I am going to do a course in M.G. then I am equipped and prepared to take on any of the work here. The M.G. work is much more interesting and has greater prospects than the other – also it will enable me to go up the line lecturing.

My cold is heaps better but still hanging about. I'm glad my luggage has rolled up all right. I don't mind who sends the baccy as long as someone does.

What a good thing for P to go moving round seeing people – it will do her a world of good.

Just at present the adjutant here is ill so I am doing his work for him while he is up and takes a rest so I am pretty busy in consequence.

Weather is still foul and likely to continue so. Don't worry about blankets. I never move without my flea bag^[1] – Shetland blanket and plaid. So far the parcel has not arrived but will in due course. It is nice of people to enquire after me. No more news for the present as I am off to a neighbouring town to shop and have a good dinner.

Your Tammy

¹ Army slang for sleeping bag.

8. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
29 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

My gazette is out and I am temporarily Major so my pay etc is all right.^[1] Thank heavens I have at last recovered from my cold so I can take more interest in my surroundings. I am giving my first lecture since coming over, tomorrow. It is nothing here as the class consists of only 40 officers quite small compared with my audience at home.

Last night I went and dined with a Hospital near here. Funnily enough it was the one I was in at Versailles but no one I knew was still with them. It was a nice change but an awful bore walking back here afterwards.

On Sunday I went and saw Forte. He seemed very well and pleased to see me. He sent you his love and told me to tell you that if you wanted him to look after me in any way, to write to him.

A French airman had an accident here yesterday – turning upside down and falling. His machine caught fire and he had a damned narrow escape from being burnt to death. Luckily we were on the spot. He broke his leg and burnt his face a bit. Tomorrow night we are going to try and celebrate St Andrews night.

Will you write to the Junior A. & N.^[2] I think they are in Lower Regent Street aren't they and ask if my watch is ready. Let me know what I owe you for various things and I will send you along a cheque.

Your Tammy

¹ Lindsay was appointed instructor in the Machine Gun Corps on 24 November 1916. He was also made a temporary major for as long as he was in command of a training school.

² The Junior Army and Navy Stores. It was founded in 1879 by former members of the Army and Navy Co-operative Society (established 1871).

9. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
30 November 1916

Dearest Mother,

Apparently my letters are taking a long time to reach you. At the present moment I am going through M.G. work but when the course is over, i.e. just about 10 days before Xmas, I shall go over and take charge of the Lewis Gun School. I will try and let you know my change of address in good time.

My waistcoat and the book which was quite correct have just arrived. I am trying to get into the town to get a few things to make me comfy in camp such as an eiderdown, a bed, a lamp and a stove. It will be cheaper and quicker for me to get them out here than to have them sent. If they had only told me what I was coming to it would have been so much simpler as I should have known what I wanted to bring with me. I have a thick waterproof sheet with me and my cork mattress so don't worry about them.

From what I can gather from the C.O. here the L.G. School wants a lot of pulling together – why it has run down so much I cannot yet find out but I shall by the time I take it in hand. As soon as I find my feet there I shall see if I cannot split it off from this place, as it is futile to try and control 2 schools eight miles apart and the other is as big if not bigger than this one. I think one of the faults is the instructors are too young.

Best love,
Tammy

I am very snug at present as I have borrowed a stove from a man on leave. Tobacco not come yet.

10. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
1 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

Yes you may address me as Major and I return the cutting. This is just a scrawl for you to receive as I'm short of time.

There are no French people of the right sort round here as it is purely a summer resort and I put in the sand to let you know that I am on the sea. Both places are on the sea.

I heard from Vi and P yesterday – both wrote quite cheerily. I can't make out which letters of mine have reached you. You ought to have had quite a number. One of yours was labelled insufficiently addressed as 318 covers a district. So don't leave out Machine Gun School. Perhaps that is why my baccy has failed to come. I only found yesterday that 318 is an area.

Don't worry about anything for me for Xmas. I don't want anything except a pair of warm gloves – not woollen. If possible I should like a pair with hard wearing palms and soft chamois leather backs sort of things and not less than 8½ that's the smallest I can wear and a size larger would not be amiss. A cake now and again would be most acceptable to the mess.

No time for more.

Your Tammy

11. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
4 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

Got your other letters alright. The Teddy Bear sleeping suit sounds topping. Mrs Beatty wrote to me a very nice letter and asked me if there was anything I wanted at all. I know if I said I had all I wanted she would think I was proud so I asked her for a teddy bear sleeping suit. I am going in to buy a stove and a lamp today and to meet some fellows who are coming over for a conference.

You asked if my Cheltenham work is any use to me. Of course all training in mathematics^[1] comes in useful in dealing with figures. I went up to tea at another hospital yesterday to try and see the sister who nursed me at Versailles

in 1914. Things don't seem too bright in the papers at present, but perhaps it's the effect of cold weather on their livers.

Thank you for ordering the kit bag. I heard of Chris Holme who tells me he has broken off his engagement with Miss Gough. Her mother said it was fair [*i.e.* unfair] to the girl to keep her tied up as C has no prospects but C added a line to say that really he was rather relieved to be out of it for various reasons.

Yesterday I lunched with Forte and have a standing invite to go there for any meal at any time. Very kind of him.

Perfectly glorious day today.

Your Tammy

¹ As the war in the trenches progressed, machine guns were increasingly used as a form of short-range artillery, providing an indirect barrage on enemy positions. To do this accurately, the relative position of the machine gun to the target had to be worked out mathematically.

12. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
6 December 1916

I have had so much to do the last day or two that I have had no time for writing. Did I tell you my Baccy had arrived all right. On Monday I went to the town and got myself a Primus stove and an eiderdown ready for going with a tent. The weather is again glorious but windy.

I will try and find out where the 11th Hussars are, but a regiment might be within 5 miles and I might not know it.

The last letter you enclosed was from Monkey Brown that was. Vi told me that Evelyn had written but so far I have had no letter from her. Some letters seem to get hung up for ages.

I have been bothered the last day or two by my old abscess. The doctor found some old pus in it which made a new small boil. However he sorted it so I hope it will be alright now. My cold has completely gone.

I think when I go over to the Lewis Gun School for good I must get my Songs out as I think they might be useful. No other news.

Your Tammy

I am sorry to hear of Cousin Maud's death in a way, but it's a good thing for her.

13. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
8 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

I am getting this posted in England. I am actually at a place called St Cecile Plage 6 miles north of Etaples where Forte is. The Lewis Gun School is at Le Touquet, 2½ miles west of Etaples. Both schools are on the sea. Here we live in a house but at Le Touquet only tents are provided. I will let you know when I actually go over. At present the Commandant of this place wants me here but as soon as I can I am going to my own show. I don't feel competent to lecture on Machine Guns especially as I have never fought them.

We all keep indulging in colds and passing them on to one another. My old abscess is getting all right. There is also here a school of gunnery for aeroplanes so we see some magnificent flying every day. Boulogne is only 35 minutes motor run from here, but we usually jump on a slow goods train and get off before reaching the station.

Now I think you know all there is to know about where I am. The instruction at work is very similar to what we did in England only the Commandant is a gentleman. My hands are too cold to write comfortably.

Best Love,
Tammy

Heard from Mrs Baird^[1] last night – nice letter. I hear there is a great peace party in England, have you heard of it.

¹ Most likely Susan Baird the mother of Lindsay's future wife Edith.

14. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
10 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

You should have heard by now that I got the baccy all right. I asked a fellow to post a letter to you in England letting you know where I am. I am going over to see Forte this afternoon as I want his advice. When you send a cake

next time don't put in jam sandwiches unless you mean sponge cake ones. It's just flashed across my brain that that is what you refer to perhaps. When I read it of course the first thing I thought of was bread. I know the cake will be greatly appreciated by all here. I am so glad M.^[1] is returning to you and not being recalled to Rogerthorpe. Ask her to let me know as soon as she gets back if my wee car reached Rogerthorpe all right.

I spent a busy day yesterday working out some fine problems mathematically and graphically. I have not seen either Olive Chetwyn or Violet H.P. as their hospitals I believe are over by the other school. If you can find out what their hospitals are it would interest me. I might or might not go and visit them. No more news.

Your Tammy

¹ Probably Margaret Lindsay, the older of Lindsay's two sisters.

15. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
12 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

I forgot to say in my last letter that there is no need for you to send me butter as we get the most perfect butter locally. It was sweet of you to think of it but parcels are apt to take ages in coming and I don't think the butter will travel.

The doctor and I walk over to Forte's camp on a Sunday. Unfortunately it turned most damnably wet before we got halfway there so we got absolutely soaked. This M.G. course ends on Thursday so I expect I should be off to the Lewis Gun School about Saturday, but I don't know for certain.

The sooner I get there the better as the present fellow running it is playing 'merry hell' and puts everyone's back up. At the same time no-one here is anxious for his return so things are generally in rather a mess. There's no sign of my kit bag yet but no doubt it is on its way.

It's a sad trait in the family that they always seek gain without doing any work for it. It always comes back on them in the end. Most exceptional Uncle Leonard giving M £5. Still I'm glad he did. It's a pity she has to return to Rogerthorpe as I hoped you would have her for Xmas.

There is a concert here tonight for the Class which I expect will turn out rather an orgy. They usually do with fellows down from the line. Poor devils

knowing what they come from and what they are going back to one can't help passing [*illegible*] in discipline over unless they go too far.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

16. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
15 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

Your cake arrived safely yesterday and was very much appreciated by everybody. My second lot of tobacco also came. I am very glad to hear that my car is at Rogerthorpe – at least I imagine so as you talk of a bill from Wales. I am sorry Margaret has had to go back, both for you and her. Anyway she has moved about pretty considerably since she left R.

The trouble about my abscess was that it healed up too quickly and the poison left in it has been working to the top, but I think it is alright now.

So far no letter has come to me from Evelyn or any of them. I wrote to her at the beginning of this week. Johnny's job at Belfast sounds all right. I wonder what it is he is doing.

George Lindsay^[1] Rifle Brigade was here for the night on his way back from leave. He is getting very stout and extraordinarily like Coz Henry.

Yes you made quite a correct guess about the shopping centre.

No other news.

Your Tammy

P.S. Those gloves mentioned by the Stores sound quite all right. Size G and ask if my kit bag has been dispatched.

¹ George Lindsay was brigade major of the 99th Brigade. He was a machine-gun specialist and had served as an instructor both at the School of Musketry at Hythe and at the Machine Gun Corps training centre at Grantham.

17. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Machine Gun School, B.E.F. [Sainte-Cécile Plage]
21 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

Can you send me some more socks. All those I bought have been so shrunk at Strensall I am walking out of them. I think you want to knit me longer and wider feet as they so soon seem to get too tight. I heard from Madge, Mrs Leigh and Mrs Beatty last night. In fact all my friends are splendid in the way that they write. I am so glad you are going to Southam for Xmas. Give them my love. I am sending this there in the hope that it will catch you on Xmas day.

I went away north 2 days ago lecturing and I go again to another place tomorrow. It's rather fun and is a break in the ordinary routine. I shall have my hands full at the other school as things appear to be in a bad way there. It will make it more interesting straightening them out. I am writing on my knee over the fire – hence this scrawl. The weather is damnable after a few glorious days. I walked 8 miles north yesterday for lunch in an inn in a forest. There was a powdering of snow and a sharp frost and the country lovely so we made a beeline over the hills.

I've not seen Forte again but shall go and look him up on Sunday probably.

Best love,
Your Tammy

18. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. ^[1] [Le Touquet]
28 December 1916

Dearest Mother,

So Arnold^[2] is really off shortly. I am sorry for Vi. I'm so glad you enjoyed your visit to the R's, it's not good for you being by yourself too much. I came here yesterday and am occupying what is called an Armstrong hut. It has a floor, side walls and roof of canvas and 4 talque windows. The only advantage is you can stand upright. My teddy bear is on its way but has not yet come. Your 2

cakes arrived safely but I don't think the plain one is a success, it gets so hard the moment it is cut.

I mixed wine and whiskey last night so am feeling anything but well or cheerful today.

Your Tammy

¹ Most of Lindsay's letters from the Lewis Gun School were written on its own headed note paper. He added the Army Post Office code for the school: APO S11.

² Arnold Churchill had married Lindsay's sister Violet on 12 August 1915. He was the son of the Reverend William Churchill, headmaster of Stone House school, Broadstairs.

19. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
3 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

Fraid I've not written for a long time. My bag from the Stores and the gloves have come, also my Teddy Bear Suit came yesterday. Mrs Beatty has sent me a delightful Xmas present of a leather kit bag which holds quite a lot and folds quite flat when empty. Most awfully kind of her isn't it.

New Years Eve I dined with some people called Chapman^[1] who run a Y.M.C.A. hut^[2] here and are friends of Forte. Enormous party of 36 of which he was one. I saw the New Year in and on my way home looked in on some Claims Commission fellows one of whom was in the VIth with me at college – drank their health and ate pate foie gras sandwiches and rolled into bed at 4 am.

Monday night I danced at the Hotel Anglais, being taken there by Mrs Strachan and had a great time. It's occupied by the Westminster Hospital VAD's.^[3]

Last night I dined and played bridge with the Claims Commissioner. Now I am here of course I want more things sent out. (1) My songs (2) My brown brogue shoes (3) a pair of shoes to dance in (4) a bottle of fountain pen ink. This pm I am going to an At Home! Tonight the Y.M.C.A. have a concert.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

Will write you a fuller account later.

¹ The Chapmans ran a YMCA hostel at Le Touquet. Known as Les Iris, it offered free accommodation for people visiting seriously ill relatives in nearby hospitals.

² There were over 300 YMCA huts along the Western Front. Large, solid-built structures, they were manned by volunteers, many of whom were women, who provided soldiers with drinks, sweets, writing materials, books and newspapers.

³ The Duchess of Westminster (No. 1 British Red Cross) Hospital had been established at Le Touquet in October 1914 to treat British casualties. It was staffed partly by nurses of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, Order of St John (VAD).

20. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
8 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

We are kept at it pretty continuously here so that I have less time for writing than at the other place. I will write to Charlie as soon as I have finished this. The Stonehams gave a small dance on Saturday night which was really great fun. All the girls wore fancy dress which had its advantages as I can always plead that I don't recognise them in uniform. The good looking ones are fearfully spoilt and I couldn't be bothered to take a dance which was "the sixth after this one", still I had quite as much amusement as I wanted.

Apparently I am very much missed at the other school which amuses me as I was only there about 5 weeks, and there is some talk of getting me back there – but I don't want to go as I like this place and the work very much more.

I have had scarcely any letters of late and some have taken ages on the way. I heard from Mrs Baird but she hadn't a great deal to say for herself. Poor P, she does seem to be having a rotten time at Rogerthorpe. The only bright spot that I can see is that it won't go on for ever. Vi sent me a box of Carlsbad plums which vanished in no time.

We have absolutely no coal here and do all our cooking and heating on fir cones! Very good heat but they burn very quickly.

I am lying very low at present and gradually collecting all the strings. So far I have gained the confidence and liking of the rest of the staff which is a step forward. The next is to introduce my reforms which will be easier in consequence.

Your Tammy

21. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
9 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

We are indulging in perfectly appalling weather. Rain, snow and howling gales all at the same time. The result is we are flooded. Luckily for me I am in a canvas hut which does not leak.

I went to a dance at the Stonehams on Saturday and quite enjoyed it. The Duchess was there and I am told I am to be bidden to dinner. I have not gone out of my way to be introduced to her and have no intention of doing so. Some people called Lindsay Fitzpatrick live near here and claim relationship. They say they want to meet me. I can't help thinking that Claud Lindsay (Morgan's son) married their daughter, or niece, as they are Irish.

Posts are most irregular now. Sometimes we get two in a day and sometimes none. Mrs Stoneham causes me immense amusement as she is such a snob in quite a nice way. The sort of person who keeps two visitors books, one for titles and generals and the other for ordinary people. She only deals with the heads of various shows round here.

I'm sorry to hear Arnold is down with flue [*sic*], its bad luck on Vi. My teddy bear is the greatest comfort to me at nights. I sometimes wear the jacket by day when I want to be comfortable and easy after work.

Very fondest love,
Your Tammy

I hope Alice is not very ill.

22. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
17 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

All your parcels arrived today and are most welcome. I am sorry my letters have dropped off but I am far more busy here than I was at the other place and the weather has been so awfully cold that I have hesitated to go to my hut to write.

I will enclose a cheque for what I owe you when I have finished. I had a letter from Mrs Wilson Wood and Madge^[1] two days ago. They are going up to town having taken a house in Belgrave Square. Evelyn asked Madge to go to her but she refused as there were no orderlies. I also had an awfully nice letter from Mrs Leigh.

Last Saturday the Duchess had a small dance as a farewell party for one of her doctors who is going home to be married. It was great fun. As I said before the undercurrents here are most amusing when you understand what you are looking at. I will tell you all about that side when I come home on leave.

I got a message from Mrs Chapman yesterday asking me to go down and try a horse her daughters wanted to ride. They wanted to know first what it was like before they attempted it. It amused me to think that I should be the means of finding out.

I am applying for a horse for my use here. It will be most useful and there are lovely rides in the woods. Today I lunched with Forte – we get on capitally together. The Stonehams I think have quite taken to me as they have invited me to go and have a bath whenever I like. What one really wants here is a bicycle but they are forbidden. I don't think it will be very long before I am left in sole charge here and then I have some plans of my own I hope to bring off.

Olive Chetwynd [*sic*] was at the Duchess's so I've met her and now I shall have to go down and see her. George R. was here and I couldn't find out what happened to him as I wanted to take him to dinner. No 24^[2] is a long way from here and it's difficult to get to see him. [*The surviving letter ends here*]

¹ Madeline Wilson Wood and her daughter, also called Madeline.

² No. 24 General Hospital, Étaples.

23. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
20 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

Those socks you sent me are perfectly splendid and so comfortable.

I was dancing last night at the Canadian Hospital^[1] near here and enjoyed it thoroughly. A fellow who was with me pointed out a girl as being a good

dancer. She seemed familiar to me so I did a bit of thinking as I walked towards her. By the time I got to her I made up my mind I knew her. She was a Miss Wilson of Dublin whom the Regiment knew. She is quite a nice girl and a good dancer but it was rather funny running into her out here.

The Duchess is not particularly fascinating. Of course she dresses well and has a good figure and has undoubtedly got a brain. Candidly I cannot see why anyone should rave about her. I can so well picture you and Violet strolling around Oxford together. I am afraid she will never fine down but I imagine that as dull as she is someone will be quite ready to marry her without violent affection.

I shall be amused to hear the result of Captain North's visit as I think you said you thought Jim was bored by him. Having had two glorious days the weather has gone back to its old beastliness. The other Major here, Fitzwilliam^[2] by name, is really impossible and rubs everybody up the wrong way most thoroughly.

I forgot the cheque in my last letter so am putting it in this. I am making it out for round figures, the extra will help to go to defray the expenses of my various parcels. I had one of the best baths since I came out at the Stonehams the other day and am so glad they have made me an honorary member of their bath.

Your Tammy

¹ No. 7 Canadian General Hospital, Étaples.

² Captain Cuthbert C. L. Fitzwilliams of the Welsh Guards had been seconded to the Machine Gun Corps, where he held the temporary rank of major.

24. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
27 January 1917

Dearest Mother,

My cheque should have reached you by now as I posted it the day after I forgot to enclose it. There are two other things I want which might come out of £5. 2 tins of shaving soap with lanolin; and rather a big size badger shaving brush.

I can't get them round here but the stores might have them. Anyway Burgin – Chemist – York will have them.

We are having terrific frosts here – 20° every night which makes getting up and going to bed damned unpleasant. Tomorrow I am off for a few days trip to see some French Schools – a thing I have been most anxious to do for a long time.

By the way the next time you write to Vi you might just mention that I am a Major now.

I can't tell you what I think of the D[uchess] as I really don't know her well enough but as soon as I make up my mind I will let you know.

My infernal abscess has cropped up again so on my return I shall get a good surgeon and get him to investigate and if necessary get the whole thing laid open and cleaned out. My servant has successfully burned my big pair of boots which is a damned nuisance. I have sent home the feet to see if they can be relegated.

I shall get back here on the 2nd. No other news except Violet tells me Jim is over here with some M.P.'s. It's just a chance that he may roll in here on a visit as they do sometimes.

Your Tammy

25. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
8 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

Got back yesterday from my trip to the French schools – at 1am in the morning and then had to walk out 4 miles with my bag on my back. I had a most awfully interesting time over the work about which of course I can write nothing and even if I did it would probably be only so much Greek to you. Apart from the work it was an entirely new experience living in a mess of French Officers. They were perfectly delightful and as kind as possible to us. I find I can understand French perfectly but as I can't think in French I am not quick at talking. The Artillery General asked me out to dinner. He was a dear old man and a perfect courtier. I apologised for my French and he said if he could talk English half as well as I talked French he would be quite content. Coming

home we stayed two nights in town and went to a theatre which was another experience. We were fearfully extravagant. Taking rooms with a bathroom attached but we fed out at all sorts of weird places and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Last evening I went down to the Chapmans – whom I have told you of – to tea. They asked me to stay on to dinner and as it's as cold as charity in camp and I like them I accepted. The night I came back it snowed like blazes and in the morning I found 4 inches of snow on the ground. Of course it thaws in the sun by day and freezes like hell at night. At present we are having the most glorious skies at night – a perfect moon and a deep azure sky.

In a short space I shall be in sole charge here! A little patience and quiet pushing has done it!

Early next week I am off again up country this time lecturing at an Army school. Everyone round here is frozen out of their homes – no water and no coal. I am finding out about Bobby Hartmann and will let you know as soon as I hear. No other news except Jim came here while I was away! Bad luck.

Bestest love,
Tammy

26. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
13 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

I am so awfully sorry you have been looking in vain for letters from me, but you see I couldn't write while I was with the French Army as I could not get my letters censored and then when I came back I naturally had an accumulation of work to get rid of. On top of that I have been away lecturing and only came in just now.

I am so sorry to hear about Mrs Hartmann. Give her my love and say I hope all will be well.

Isn't it a bore that the first winter I am out of the country you have real good frost and skating. Of course there has been skating here but in a very patchy fashion. Tomorrow morning I am seeing the doctor about my abscess

and see if I can get it cleaned out in hospital once and for all. If I do go to hospital I will send off a p.c.

I had a nice letter from Madge. They have moved up to London and her doctor says she must not do any work until the end of March.

When I have got my ailment sorted I shall be left in sole charge here. It has taken some time for it to come about but patience is a virtue I learnt early in the war.

I'm so sorry I never acknowledged the cakes. I thought I had. Anyway they arrived all right and were devoured.

One of the instructional staff here asked me to go out with him to the wife of a painter here. I don't like not to go, but I'm certain I shan't like it as she goes in for being what she calls Bohemianism – but it seems to me to be mere vulgarity.

Mr Stoneham has been frozen out and has gone to England so there is no hot bath there for me for some time to come. The frost is breaking fast here but thank goodness it is a gradual thaw and not so fearfully wet in consequence.

[The surviving letter ends here]

27. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
14 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

I go into hospital tomorrow to get sorted. I don't know how long I shall be there until they operate. No letters last night and I have no other news since writing. In addition to my other ailment I have fearful rheumatism in my right shoulder blade today. A fellow from the MG School has been promoted so we are having a dinner together tonight. I will write from hospital and let you know the result.

Yours Tammy

28. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Liverpool Merchants Mobile Hospital, Étaples
24 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

Just a line to say my operation is over – a much longer one than last time and rather more painful. But as long as it is a success that doesn't matter much.

I expect to be here 5 or 6 days and then take it easy at the camp while it finishes healing. I am in the Liverpool Merchants^[1] but continue to write to the L.G.S. as I have made arrangements to have my letters sent in.

As you can imagine I'm not too comfy in myself at present and lying on my back is not an easy position for writing. I would have sent off a p.c. yesterday only they had to keep me under morphine part of the time.

Your Tammy

¹ No. 6 British Red Cross Hospital, at Étaples, also known as the Liverpool Merchants Mobile Hospital.

29. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Liverpool Merchants Mobile Hospital, Étaples
25 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

I was out for the first time yesterday and tried to send you a wire but couldn't. Anyway my letters must surely have reached you by now. I go back to Camp this afternoon. In addition to my other trouble, the Surgeon removed a pile or two and sees no reason why I should be troubled that way again. He can't guarantee it of course.

Yes I hear from Jeannie Dove pretty often. Her man was in hospital again with fever. I had two letters from the Samuelsons yesterday. They have had a household of illness. Guy with Flu and Bronchitis and they nearly lost their small boy Ollie. However all is well again and Guy tells me they expect another addition in September. Rather early to tell me don't you think!?

I shall remain with my Claims Commission friends for a week going up to camp every morning. As I was allowed out yesterday I went and lunched with Forte who had just come back from leave. He was very cheerful and as kind as usual. When I leave here I am taking a tonic with me.

Leave seems very uncertain and is likely to be stopped anytime now, so I don't know when I shall get over.

No other news.

Your Tammy

I am sorry to hear of Mrs Hartmann.

30. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
29 February 1917

Dearest Mother,

I am back again at work and nearly completely recovered. They had to cut me open for about 3 inches behind and remove the seat of the trouble so no wonder I wasn't very comfy after the operation. I get it dressed every morning and the doctor thinks it will probably be unnecessary after tomorrow as it has healed so well.

I shall be left on my own at the end of this week and the other Major goes to the other school. I have written to Fagg about my boots asking him to send them on to me.

Jones was at the Liverpool Hospital but has gone home. The man who did me is considered very clever and I certainly think he has made a first class job of me. I had a certain amount of choice as to where I should go. One place I decided I would not go to was the Westminster. I heard from Vi in hospital – no news.

I find I can get my buying price for my small car so I think I shall sell her. In the mornings I am at present amusing myself by scrubbing and beeswaxing a floor for the Chapmans. It fills in time nicely and wants doing. No sign of your cake yet but no doubt it will turn up.

It's no catch to be convalescent at home now as you are rounded up into centres and only allowed out from 2-6pm daily. Under no circumstances are you allowed to go home.

I want to get leave in the Spring as I shall want some new uniform etc.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

31. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
3 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

The shirts and polish arrived yesterday and your cake has just this moment walked in. I am nibbling the ginger as I write.

I am to all intents and purposes all right again and shall discard the dressing tomorrow I expect. At the same time I am fighting an attack of Flu which makes me feel rather wretched, but I feel I have got it under.

We are having an attempt at Spring but the wind is still very chilly.

I am so awfully sorry that Mrs Hartmann is so weak. I should almost doubt if she has enough strength to pull round again. What regiment was Jimmy in.

I think I told you I am running this show on my own now. So far all goes well and everybody seems to be breathing more freely now the other man has gone. He did nothing but make trouble from the day he arrived.

No other news.

Your Tammy

32. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
7 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

My tail is to all intents and purposes recovered so I shall return to my tent in a day or two. To add to my joys I have now completely lost my voice, at least I had for the last 36 hours but tonight it shows signs of returning. It was very

curious that having written to Madge from hospital saying I was laid up – as I owed her a letter, I should get what I call a frantic letter in which she starts off by saying “I was so thankful to hear from you as we all had been so anxious about you the last few days” – I can’t grapple with the female element at all and I’m not going to be misled by letters. She concluded by begging me to try and go home on leave and not knock myself up.

It’s a great game having this place to myself and I find I can quite comfortably tackle both the organisational and the instructional sides. The atmosphere has completely changed since Fitz went away and everyone is very cheerful indeed. The result is that work is going on very much more smoothly. Yesterday I had some Colonels down and among them an old KOSB friend whom I had not seen since a year before the War. Naturally we fell upon each other and talked like a couple of schoolgirls.

I am beginning to feel most enormously better both in body and in spirits.

Of course having everything on my hands now makes me increasingly busy, but it’s worth it. I hope soon to be able to ride again.

I told you in one of my letters that I had written to Fagg to send me on the repaired boots but it looks to me as if it had failed to reach you. Perhaps it failed to reach him too.

So Arnold is off at last. He will just arrive in time for the warm weather starting I should think. Of course it will be ages before poor Vi hears from him. Dinner just coming along so must stop.

Best love,
Tammy

33. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
8 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letter. I am glad you are going up to London to see Vi and Arnold. I hope you will have a nice time. We are indulging in another snap of winter having intermittent powderings of snow and high winds.

I think I shall probably move back into my tent this week. I can't go on indefinitely staying with these friends of mine, and I am really to all intents and purposes cured now.

I am going to try and get a young magpie as a pet this Spring. He might be rather amusing to have if I can make him fond enough of me. I don't think it would convey anything to you if I told you what alterations I have made. They are nothing very startling – merely to make less friction in the running of everything generally. You see everyone here felt he was distrusted and being reported on by the other man, so that my first efforts are to bind the whole together. I think I am doing this. Having come here first merely in charge of the instructional side I got to know them and gained their goodwill and confidence.

I will write to Aunt Chattie and Alice.

Best love,
Tammy

34. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
11 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

Our second winter has departed and we are having another attempt at Spring. If the weather does really settle down it's going to be glorious as the sun is already quite hot.

I am glad you got up to London and saw Vi and Arnold. It's far better for him to go than hang about London, and I'm so glad he was more human before he left.

One of Mrs Henderson's brothers is on a class here now. He seems nice. Now that I am on my own here I've gone back to my bonnet. I hate the other head-dress.

Do you think this last operation on Mrs H is really going to do her any good. From what you say it sounds as if they had cut her open and sewn her up again without finding anything radically wrong. I haven't heard from Margaret for ages so I have just written to liven her up.

There's no news of any sort. How beastly the Mason menage sounds. Nothing would induce me to eat roly poly with carrots inside. It is so unnecessary.

Best love,
Tammy

35. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
12 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letter. I am returning to my tent today as I am practically alright again. They sewed me up with catgut which should dissolve, but there is one stitch which refuses to do so yet. I am giving it another two days and then if it won't go the doctor here is going to cut it out for me. They all seem very pleased with the result of their clearing operations.

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs Baird. It's a sad letter and I am awfully sorry for them all. He is such a nice man and so awfully kind.

We had a thunderstorm last night after an extraordinarily hot and clammy day. You talk of the Germans ruining everything as they go back, but the number and size of the mines can be nothing in proportion to bullets and shells fired so it's nothing to worry about.

The Dardanelles Commission^[1] was pretty outspoken and I hope retribution will follow. Any General or Admiral – in fact any officer – who fails always pays the penalty so why shouldn't the cursed politician who sacrificed our lives.

Everything here is going very smoothly. I hope to get in and see Forte again before long.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ The commission was established by the British Government in the wake of the failed Dardanelles and Gallipoli expeditions of 1915.

36. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
16 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

I have just had a belated letter from Margaret. Just an ordinary letter with no great amount of news.

I am riding daily now and feel a hundred times better for it. Forte has been in hospital with a bad liver, so I rode in to see him. He is ever so much better and gets back to work tomorrow. It really is extraordinary how different this place is and the classes are on the whole a good natured cheery crowd. When they grasp that we are willing to give them as good a time as possible during their stay here, provided they play the game, they usually play up.

You remarked the other day how I was haunted by the name Wilson. Well another curious thing is that I have another friend in Edinburgh called Miss Wood.

My hut is ever so much more comfortable now. I have brought myself a cupboard and shelves to keep my clothes in instead of upended biscuit boxes.

The mess on the whole continues to be good. Now that I am on my own here I have returned to my bonnet. I have the other handy so that if anyone comes I wear a head dress according to circumstances.

Got some difficulties to deal with so must slip.

Your Tammy

37. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
20 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

I received 3 letters in a bunch from you last night dated 14th, 15th, 16th. I cannot tell you anything about numbers or courses here. I shall be in England for 3 days at the end of April as I am coming over to lecture the Cambridge Staff College. I may try to combine it with leave.

You ask if the other school is happy to have my predecessor. The answer is in the negative. I am most extraordinarily better in myself since the operation. No time for more.

Your Tammy

38. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
22 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

Before I forget again old Webb still sends my tobacco to the M G School instead of here. Can you put him right. Something seems to have gone wrong with the posts here. No letters for over 3 days for any of us.

We had a touch of winter again today and last night but the snow is melting fast. We resent it as it had begun to be nice and warm here.

I hear London is divided into numbered areas to facilitate distribution of letters so I am rather waiting to know various peoples addresses. No news.

Your Tammy

39. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
28 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

Since I last wrote we have had a Y.M.C.A. Officers hut opened here. A great boon as it contains 6 long baths and two billiard tables. Fellows coming down here from the line can now get a really hot bath any time and amusement in the evenings.

I have also been bidden to a reception given by cardinal Bourne^[1] near here. I think I shall probably go as one never knows when one would meet somebody useful.

The weather has again cleared up and is making valiant efforts to be spring like. Tonight we have a concert party from England. They are sometimes rather fine and they usually dine in our mess.

Part of the work here entails testing various inventions connected with the gun which all adds to the interest.

No other news.

Your Tammy

¹ Cardinal Frances Bourne, archbishop of Westminster.

40. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
29 March 1917

Dearest Mother,

I got Nash's Magazine^[1] all right – many thanks. The other papers you sent me never reached. Don't trouble to send them out to me as we can get all the monthly magazines in the neighbouring town. A travelling concert party came round last night and gave us an awfully good show. We gave them dinner which was a great success. On Friday we are giving a feed and a concert to surrounding bigwigs as a return for hospitality shown us by them. The dinner will be quite a success but I don't know about the concert. Forte is coming.

I am wrestling with another furious cold. I have them so seldom that it annoys me getting them one after another out here. It's partly due to living under canvas with such sudden changes of weather I think.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine* contained a mixture of stories, poems, reviews and other material.

41. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
8 April 1917

Dearest Mother,

Easter Sunday and a glorious day here. I have cut out an hours work to have a parade service.

I am so glad Vi is with you again. It's nice for you both. Tell her the plums reached me all right and much love for them. Yes I take Stout^[1] regularly now and I hope with this topping Spring weather we shall throw off our colds for good.

This place is closing for a week while the Instructors are instructed and brought up to date by a Staff Officer from the line. It's a very sound scheme if it's done properly.

Our show we gave at the Scottish Churches Hut^[2] has made our name and everyone still talks of it. The V.A.D.'s all say that they have not been to such an enjoyable show since they came out, which is nice as we did it to try and give them a good time.

I have had a clean sweep of my administrative N.C.O.'s and went out personally to find good ones. I think I have been successful. If I have it won't be long before I get this camp running itself.

Two delightful ladies have come out to work in the mess hut here. Miss Bibby's by name.

No time for more as I must away to kirk.

Your Tammy

¹ Stout, a dark beer, was considered to be a wholesome drink with a number of health benefits.

² Scottish Churches Huts provided soldiers with church services on a Sunday as well as bibles, games, magazines and Scottish newspapers. The first huts opened in August 1916, and eventually numbered twenty-five. They were supported by donations from Scotland and staffed by around 350 volunteers.

42. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
18 April 1917

Dearest Mother,

This is the first chance I've had of writing since the 12th. We have all been over at the other school doing tactical work. Most amusing as my instructors are streets ahead of theirs and came off with flying colours. They all come over here tomorrow for a week and then on the 29th I sail for England to lecture on the 30th and return on the 1st unless I get leave which I have applied for. If you come up to town to meet me I can't tell what time the boat goes but send a note to the Caledonian Club and bring with you my summer undies etc. as follows. 3 vests, 3 short drawers, 3 of those thin khaki shirts, my thin riding breeches/ sort of pale crushed strawberry, my thin khaki tunic with my patent collar, my khaki shorts, and my khaki knickers with strap and buckle at the knee, my Norwegian marching boots.

They all ought to get into my green suitcase. I can then leave my winter skin in England and return in summer kit. If I get my leave I will try and wire but wires are almost as slow as letters.

I gave a lecture last week and was congratulated on it.

We are all delighted to get back to our camp and feel like returning from a very disagreeable visit. The other fellows are a mouldy lot. No time for more as I am behind hand in my work with being away for a week and I have to make arrangements for this next week.

Your Tammy

43. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

London
9 May 1917

Dearest Mother,

Excuse pencil but I am seizing a moment to scribble you a line while Madge is getting off two letters.

I have had a perfect time up here and all the family are more than kind and nice. I go down to Hythe tomorrow to the Samuelsons and off Friday morning I expect.

Yesterday I had a most interesting lunch with Robinson the Editor of the Times and this morning another useful and interesting time at the Ministry of Munitions.

We've been out practically every night to Something. Last night we went to Cavaleria Rusticana and Pagliacci. Tonight we are going to see General Post^[1] – awfully amusing I'm told.

Yesterday pm I took Madge to Albert Hall to the big Bazaar^[2] – had my fortune told. The lady who was quite good and never mentioned love affairs of any sort told me I could not help being a success as I had personality and determination – that I had developed self confidence in a most extraordinary manner and that I was on the verge of a change of position. She was going to say something and then said she couldn't. What she was going to say originally I don't know but I got out of her that I had an exceptional power of making people like me in spite of themselves. I asked her if that was her original thought and she admitted it wasn't but she really couldn't say what occurred to her. Rotten of her wasn't it.

Madge was asked if I was her brother as we are so alike and so good looking!! Hmm. I am going over armed with a dozen lobster for the mess. Excuse pencil but there's no place to write in this room and M is scribbling behind me.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ *General Post* was a comedy by Harold Terry about the effect of the war on class structures.

² A 'Great Bazaar' was held at the Albert Hall 7-10 May 1917 to raise funds for the war blinded.

44. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Hythe
11 May 1917

Dearest Mother,

I am off in an hour or two by the Staff Boat which sails at 6.30pm. I had a most awfully happy time in London with the W.W.^[1] I think the old people are

really very fond of me. He took my hand and arm and walked up and down saying how glad they were to have me and I was never to come home without coming to see them and begged me to take care of myself etc. – altogether a most touching farewell. I think my declaring myself last year has cleared the air tremendously between Madge and myself. We get on first rate. I gave a lecture here which was greatly appreciated. In fact I think I was more than right coming from the work point of view, and I am going back to my work feeling that my time over here has not been wasted.

I said goodbye to Evelyn who was most affectionate.

Very bestest love,
Your Tammy

If you come down to Vi remember Mrs S here
Clyne House
North Road
Hythe Kent

¹ The Wilson Woods.

45. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
16 May 1917

Dearest Mother,

I'm sorry not to have written sooner but I have been fearfully busy. I don't want those Machine Gun Lectures, I left them on purpose. I wonder if you can lay hands on my stocking tops – khaki stockings without feet. I thought I had packed them but I can't find them anywhere.

I saw Forte 2 days ago looking much better. I've had no lectures since I returned but then I've had no time for writing any. We have been having glorious weather until today which is cloudy with a cold wind.

I am joining the tennis club near here so as to get more exercise. No other news at all.

Your Tammy

46. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
22 May 1917

Dearest Mother,

I've been a beast in not writing before. I thought I had acknowledged your awfully generous present of £10. You know you needn't give me cash dearest as I am really quite all right and I am not spending it so if you get in a tight corner will you let me know.

I am going to bother you again for my pair of white flannel tennis trousers. I hadn't room to pack them coming over and my grey ones must be washed sometimes. I don't want any more socks at present.

It is gloriously hot here now but very thundery and I find playing tennis most evenings keeps me splendidly fit. I am sending a bill for you to pay for me out of what you have left of my £5 as I don't want to write a cheque for 7/6 also a 10/- P.O. which is no good to me here.

Everyone was apparently very glad to see me back again and we had any amount of work on hand. Lecturing this weather is most exhausting. No other news.

Your Tammy

I am so glad to hear you have met May Kemble again.

47. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
30 May 1917

Dearest Mother,

I had a most successful lecture up country and really enjoyed myself. I had lunch in a town on my way up and had just finished when who should walk in but Mrs Leigh. I stayed as long as I could and talked to her and asked her to lunch with me the next day on my return journey. Naturally we talked mostly regimental news.

I think a letter of mine must have gone astray as I know I wrote and told you about my teeth. I had a long letter from Jean Dove two days ago. Her man was given a month's leave to India.

We have been having glorious weather here and I play lots of tennis. The chief drawback is getting down and back. However it is all exercise but it rather takes it out of one as it is a bit of a rush to get back in time for mess.

Just off on a tactical scheme for the whole morning. We had a good concert last night at which I was compelled to sing.

Your Tammy

48. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
11 June 1917

Dearest Mother,

Ages since I wrote to you. I quite like the pattern of the pyjamas. May I have one more pair sent out (flannel) as the pair I originally bought last November is already skin tight and I can scarcely get into it.

I forgot to tell you that Mr Baird^[1] is dead. Mrs and two daughters are still staying at Colstoun. He died of a tumour on the brain. I have a letter from Nesta who had no news at all.

Three nights ago we had a most glorious display of lightening [*sic*]. The best I have ever seen. Last night we had a tremendous thunderstorm from 11pm to 3am and again at 6am this morning.

I am now the possessor of a puppy. A delightful little person who wanted comforting during the storm. She followed me without a lead within 24 hours of my taking her. Having got her Miss Chapman now thinks I have got hold of the best of the lot, but I told her that if I found I could not keep her she should have it back again.

I've been playing tennis hard and am improving. Pennyman^[2] of the 1st Battalion has come down here on approval as an instructor. Must dash off to work.

Your Tammy

¹ John Baird, the father of Lindsay's future wife Edith. He had died on 6 April 1917.

² J. B. W. Pennyman had been one of Lindsay's fellow lieutenants in the 2nd Battalion KOSB during its initial campaign in Belgium and northern France. He had been seriously wounded at the battle of the Aisne but returned to active duty and by September 1916 was a major in the 2nd Battalion KOSB. He was attached to the Machine Gun Corps the following May.

49. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
20 June 1917

Dearest Mother,

Many more happy returns of your birthday.

I am not at my best tonight as I have at last been inoculated. I am not too bad with it merely rather tired and slack.

Three of us have taken a bathing box on the beach and go down and bathe nearly every evening. Then lie about in the sun to dry. Unfortunately we had a bathing accident on Sunday and one officer was drowned.

I do hope your venture up north will be a success and that you won't overwork yourself.

We are by way of having a 4 day break so it's rather rotten being inoculated and losing the free days. Mount lives with the General here in a very nice house – by no means camping out.

I can't possibly foretell in the least when I shall be home again. When it does come all the warning I shall get is about 11pm one night a warrant will arrive saying I may go at 3am next morning. At the moment all you can hope for is a wire from me when I step off the other side.

I am sorry to say the Colonel who took over from me is going to be swept away again and we are all devoutly hoping someone who is nice and a sportsman will succeed him. No, Pennyman and I are not fast friends. We get on but he's no use either as a soldier and still less as an instructor.

We have had most appalling hot weather here lately, 108 in the sun at 10am. Heaven knows what it was in the shade.

You don't say anything about Vi and Hothfield^[1] so imagine you didn't find much of special note. I had a delightful supper by the side of the sea with a

V.A.D. friend. A perfect night and a very good light supper and hock. We both wondered what our respective parents would have said had they known. I must off to bed now but sometime I will let you know what my reputation here is if I think it fit.

Tammy

¹ Hothfield is a village in Kent, although Lindsay is perhaps referring to the nearby manor of the same name, the home of Sir Henry Tufton.

50. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
29 June 1917

Dearest Mother,

For goodness sake don't go and overstrain yourself at this hospital, and if you find it getting too much do stop in time.

At the earliest I should get home in August but I think it extremely doubtful. I shouldn't go to the W. W.'s I think but I really don't know. The pup is delicious and most devoted. She doesn't care a damn for anyone else. I have taken her down twice to see Mrs Chapman who gave her to me and although she still remembers her and is delighted to see her she always comes to me when I call or whistle. Not bad after only 10 days or so possession.

It will be interesting to see if I do have a long journey next month, and if so where to. We've been suffering from a series of thunderstorms of late. I'm not surprised at Carol getting married and expect they are all very pleased about it. Poor Mrs Neilson I feel sorry for her. She has certainly had her share of misfortune on this earth. Your letter which reached me last night ended off so suddenly with no signature that I think you must have left a piece out when you licked it up.

Our bathing cabin is most smart now it is furnished. Do you know a man called Evitt. They come from Woodstock. He is down here on a bit of leave. Now I must stop.

Your Tammy

51. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
5 July 1917

Dearest Mother,

I'm off again to lecture next week up country. The pity is that it comes in a break. My puppy has got me into trouble. I took her to her home and she absented herself for a short time. In that period she devoured a ladies petticoat so now I shall have to replace it. I can't very well ask her what kind it was so it looks as if I shall have to give her a silk one.

Our bathing box is looking topping. We are now having our own sign board up. In the centre a blue shield with a St Andrews cross for me, a white rose for Robinson, a Yorkshire man, and a maple leaf for the Canadian. The name is to be Croisement Dangereux.^[1] Round the edge dice in various combinations [*sketch of three dice*]. It might make people start guessing.

If I find myself in B I will go and see Lorna but it's a long way from here.

We have just got a gramophone with lots of foxtrot tunes so I am learning many new steps.

No other excitements have happened.

Your Tammy

¹ *Croisement Dangereux* – dangerous crossing.

52. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
10 July 1917

Dearest Mother,

We have just finished our four days break and are at work again. Unfortunately the weather was unkind on our off days but looks like being really hot again now.

The last few days I have got to know several French ladies who play tennis and my conversational powers are increasing.

Will you send me a pair of sock suspenders and also a tube of Euthymol toothpaste. Our bathing hut on the beach is now the centre of quite a gathering every night. The three of us have been adopted by numerous children and we play all sorts of weird games. Last night there were 3 field officers and two captains all playing hide and seek like two year olds with various children and their mothers and aunts.

My pyjamas arrived quite safely and the new ones are perfect. I am now complete in that respect. No other news except that George Lindsay,^[1] one of Morgan's sons, was killed flying in England.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ Captain George Lindsay of the Royal Flying Corps was killed in a flying accident near Bristol on 26 June 1917.

53. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
14 July 1917

Dearest Mother,

Samuelson has come over here for a week to see what we can do in the way of L G work. I think the life here even for such a short time will probably do him a world of good.

I am now having a most amusing time with my French friends. Yesterday a young fellow called Duncan and I tead with them. We were going to play tennis afterwards but the court was too wet. He danced and I played bridge.

Today we are all going bathing and are going to try and get a photo of the hut done which I will send you. Altogether life is very pleasant at present.

Had a long letter from Madge. Her picture is apparently going to be a great success as Lazlo^[1] says he wants it to be his masterpiece and is greatly excited over it.

I am glad you are going to give yourself a holiday in August. By the way will you send me a petticoat to replace the one the puppy devoured. I should think a black silk one is most useful. Miss Bibby is normal size I should say, but

I want a nice one and if you let me know the damage I will send you a cheque.
No time for more.

Your Tammy

¹ Perhaps Philip Lázlo, an Anglo-Hungarian painter who was known for his society portraits.

54. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
29 July 1917

Dearest Mother,

Apparently the garment Mrs Cox sent is perfect. Very many thanks for sending it. We are in the middle of a very heavy thunderstorm – quite the heaviest we have had.

Yesterday I played in an American tennis tournament with a French girl. We played 63 games and felt rather beat at the end of it. I am glad you are going to have a rest. I'm sure you need it badly. I saw Mrs Stoneham yesterday who was very friendly.

I had a letter from Charlie last week containing no news but hoping that you and Vi will go up there for a week.

Best love,
Your Tammy

55. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
17 August 1917

Dearest Mother,

I am so glad that you are remaining at Rogerthorpe and that Vi is with you there. All my friends are very well only their name is Bibby not Binny.

It is perfectly dreadful the way I have slipped into the habit of going down to the Chapmans. I have dinner with them nearly every evening and work

either in the garden or on motors or painting fences etc. In fact so regular am I that I feed and shut up the chickens now.

On Tuesday I went off in an empty cart with the youngest daughter to a farm about 5 miles away to get hay. We loaded up – climbed on top and came back in great style. Needless to say everyone we met, English and French, grinned delightedly at us. One old French lady chuckled loudly, waved to us and said ‘tres bien’. The girl, Auriel by name, has quite the prettiest eyes of anyone I have ever met but don’t be alarmed, I am not a victim but we are the best of pals, as I am with them all.

I must be looking very old as my class think I am 40! I found one grey hair a week ago. A cousin of the Chapmans, same name, told me that since I had been removed from Command here, I had changed. She didn’t think the change had agreed with me and I had taken some time to get over it. However I am apparently better now. No sign of leave yet. Best love to you all and I will do as you suggest re Dent.

Your Tammy

56. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
4 September 1917

Dearest Mother,

We are again indulging in perfectly glorious weather after the storm so bathing and tennis are in full swing again.

I have spent much of my spare time of late with the Chapmans. They had so many trees down in the wind and no labour so I went down and hung by my tail from a high branch and cleared them up. Very good exercise.

No sign of any leave yet but if all goes well I might get some in October. It’s curious what you mention about letter writing because we have all noticed it over here.

Mr Samuelson is daily expecting the arrival. I hope all will go well. He is so careful that I don’t think there is likely to be any danger beyond the ordinary.

Made two new parisienne friends this week. They are a most interesting study – quite unlike anything I’ve met before. Taken as a whole they are quite attractive but when examined closely not at all so.

I wonder if the horoscope is going to work out correct. There is a chance of promotion but you can never really foresee it for a certainty. What part of Ireland do the Plunketts come from because I know some in Co Down.

Best Love,
Tammy

57. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
16 September 1917

Dearest Mother,

When is it you return to the hospital because as things are going now I ought to get home on leave in October. Two nights ago I went to the Duchess after dinner for some music. Two French girls played on the violin and the other the cello. They played really well and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Then the Duchess spoilt everything by saying now we will dance. Personally I hadn't the least desire to dance but I daresay the numerous V.A.D.'s there enjoyed it.

The Chapmans have had trouble with the Y.M.C.A., who have treated them abominably after they have been here nearly two years. Things have more or less reached a head now and it means that either the Y.M.C.A. climb down or the Chapmans go. It's an even chance.

I still go down there almost daily and do odd jobs. I am so glad young Rice is all right and they have him safe back again. No news.

Your Tammy

58. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
19 September 1917

Dearest Mother,

The trouble between the Y.M.C.A. and the Chapmans is at an end and they have sent in their resignation. So their stay here is now probably only a matter

of weeks until someone else takes over the work. There was no other course open to them.

Today I am going to lunch with Lady Angela Forbes^[1] having been asked to by a Major Prescott-Westcar.^[2] He is an instructor here and in the Rifle Brigade.

On Friday I am going to hear the Westminster Pierrot troop perform at the Hospital. A Miss Peak daughter of the Colonel who is in charge.^[3] She is a very nice girl and perfectly natural which is such a change from the majority of the V.A.D.'s round about.

A horrible rumour has just come in that in a short time all leave for officers will be stopped as so many men are long overdue for leave, so my chances of getting over are slim if it's true.

Mrs Samuelson has had another son and all is going well. If you want to write – c/o Captain G. W. Samuelson, Yorkshire Regiment, School of Musketry, Hythe, Kent.

I have been doing a lot of work for the Chapman's lately transferring poulets from various pens – clearing up paths – tinkering with cars etc.

No-one here bothers when the war will come to an end. When it does it does as far as we are concerned.

Best Love,
Tammy

P.S. can you send me any receipt [*i.e.* recipe] for Potato flour and cakes. Vi might be able to get them from Lady G Booth.

¹ Lady Angela Forbes was a socialite and novelist who had established several canteens and recreational huts for British soldiers at Étaples.

² Major W. V. L. Prescott-Westcar DSO, of the Rifle Brigade, had been attached to the Machine Gun Corps as an instructor.

³ Colonel William Pemberton Peake, Royal Army Medical Corps.

59. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
2 October 1917

Dearest Mother,

I haven't written to you for some time but we have been inundated with distinguished visitors which has meant a lot of work. Everything has gone off very well and everyone has apparently been very pleased with the results.

My leave seems to be coming up over the horizon and with luck is almost within calculating distance. Lady Angela is a curious specimen and unlike anyone I have ever met before. One hears many things about her which may or may not be true but anyway she is very good company.

I have found my dog at last and she was perfectly delighted to see me again. So Arnold is home again. I may see him as I shall probably go and stay one or two nights with Vi on my way back.

I had a long letter from Jean Dove who says she constantly expects to hear that I am engaged even temporarily but she wishes I would consider some of her friends as they are so nice. A joke of course but with an element of truth in it I think.

I may dash off and see the city again next week if I can get the leave. Everyone who came here for the season is leaving and a great many have already gone. The Chapmans by the way have no father. He died I think in '14. They go the 25th of this month.

This is being written while my class are pulling the guns to pieces. I wonder how true the horoscope is going to prove and if I shall go on a long journey.

Best Love,
Tammy

60. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
4 October 1917

Dearest Mother,

I am waiting for two officers to return off leave and then my name goes in. I should think that will happen roughly in ten days, so I may find myself starting about the 14th. I propose to stay one day anyway in London first to order a few things and then I shall come on home for my winter things. The last two days I may spend with Vi but I am not very certain. Scotland I shall not visit. It's too far and wastes too much time.

I am hoping to go away on Monday for three days and renew my acquaintance with the great city. I really don't know what to advise about the Whitacres house at Kingham.^[1] It sounds much nicer than the cottage but will outside repairs fall to you or on the landlord?

Yes I am due to go in November and I have been more or less promised a Brigade Major's job. I think it is one of the best in the field and will certainly pay me far better than commanding a battalion, as it will give me a (q) for staff after the War – whereas if I command a battalion it will mean nothing as so many men far junior to me have commanded, and when all is over I just revert to Company Commander with nothing to my credit. How enjoyable this job will be will depend on the Brigadier.

I shall revert to Captain anyway when I leave here, but that's a small matter if I rise in another line. Anyway I shall have broken free from schoolmaster's work.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Kingham is a village and parish in west Oxfordshire, around four miles from where Lindsay's mother lived in Oddington.

61. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Caledonian Club, London
25 October 1917

Dearest Mother,

I had quite a surprise when I found Vi on the platform at Paddington waiting for me. We drove off and had tea here. Then we went and saw Arnold. I was only there a short time so I can't really say if he has altered much. Vi says he has improved and she ought to know if anyone does.

I had a quiet dinner and had a long talk to one old regular in the Camerons and went to bed at 12.

This morning I went shopping, took Vi with me, dropped her and went and saw Jim. Then I went on and picked up Madge for lunch and took her to the Barclay, then on to the Carlton for tea.

I am taking her out to lunch tomorrow and dinner and a theatre on Saturday as Vi is remaining up with Arnold who is all right after his operation this morning. Madge told me that her mother quite looks upon me as replacing the son who was killed^[1] in the Dardanelles! We get on splendidly and no awkwardness at all.

I shall spend Sunday night at the Grosvenor Hotel as I leave Victoria Monday morning 7.30. I shall try and do Isa Saturday pm. I've seen no-one I know besides in town so far and you now know all my doings.

Your Tammy

¹ Lieutenant-Commander James Boothby, Royal Naval Armoured Car Division, was killed in Gallipoli on 1 May 1915.

62. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Caledonian Club, London
26 October 1917

Dearest Mother,

I shall not be able to write again before I sail so am seizing this opportunity. I saw Vi and Evelyn this morning and said goodbye. I told the latter about your moving and she also thinks it a good thing.

Last night as I told you Madge and I dined at the Carlton and went on afterwards to see Cheap.^[1] Curiously enough who should be dining at the next table but George Lindsay. How he has got leave again so soon I don't know. However we passed the time of day and parted. Cheap was most amusing and I should love to see it again.

Tonight I am dining with Madge at her club so that I have really seen an awful lot of her in my short time up here. I had Nesta and a cousin to lunch yesterday and made Vi come as well as she was doing nothing. It was really rather amusing to see the two together. She once despised and rejected Vi, now a safely married woman and the smart Nesta still single. I don't think it was brutal but really rather funny when looked at in that light.

We went and saw Isa in the pm. She seemed very pleased that we had called and gave us tea. I think Vi is coming back to her natural self again by degrees.

I have fixed up for a car to meet me at Boulogne so I shall get back to the school in comfort.

Best love to you both,
Your Tammy

¹ Perhaps *Cheap at Half the Price*, a one-act play by Robert Leonard.

63. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Caledonian Club, London
27 October 1917

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letter this morning. I shall move down to the Grosvenor Hotel Sunday so as not to be obliged to get up earlier than is necessary.

Yesterday Vi came and lunched with me and met Madge. We lunched at Claridges and after Vi had gone went and looked at some water colour sketches at Agnews.^[1] Then we strolled around until it was time for her to go back to work. As she does not get off work until 1.45 lunch and tea run very near to one another.

I have finished all my shopping and am killing time until lunch. I missed seeing Kathleen yesterday but hope to see Isa this afternoon. It's no good going to see Arnold again as he is naturally not very comfortable. Will you send Madge one of those picture postcards of my bathing hut. I enclose an envelope ready addressed.

Best love to you both,
Your Tammy

Of course I will help too when you move.

¹ Thomas Agnew & Sons was a fine art dealer located in Bond Street, London.

64. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
2 November 1917

Dearest Mother,

You notice my postal number is 79 instead of 11.^[1] I got back quite safely and have been busy ever since. I found the Chapmans had not yet departed but they go today.

Did I tell you in my last letter from London I was unable to make an appointment with the dentist. If Charlie answers my letter I will send you his answer.

Yes my time in London was quite enjoyable. It was a great piece of luck that Madge had two clear days at the end. We dined together on Sunday night and racked our brains for something amusing to do and finally determined we would try and get into Murrays Club^[2] – neither of us being members. We went and we got in. So we danced from 9.30 to midnight and great fun it was. It did her a lot of good I think and she thoroughly enjoyed it.

I came over on the boat with Bosh and had a long talk. I also met Mrs Isacks who let me live in her house at Strensall. There were more men on the train that I knew than I have met before which was nice.

Will you write to Burgin in York as before and get ½ dozen tins of that ‘shaving soap with lanoline’. Keep 5 and send me one some time. I’m not in a hurry for it. Also I shall want some more of the toothpaste.

Very best love,
Tammy

I’m sorry you are losing P.

¹ In this and subsequent letters from the Lewis Gun School, Lindsay added the new Army Post Office code for the school: APO S79.

² Murray’s was a members-only cabaret club in Soho, London.

65. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
6 November 1917

Dearest Mother,

The Chapmans have at last gone I am sorry to say. So now I've got nowhere to drop in of an evening. I have taken to golf again as an exercise and I think we shall probably get up a paper chase or two. We may even progress as far as mixed hockey with V.A.D.'s.

The pup is in great form and comes round with me playing golf. So far I have not had any letters of interest since my return so I must send forth a budget and see what comes in.

Work remains the same here but tactical schemes are a difficulty when the weather turns bad. Especially as the course has to be fitted in like a Chinese puzzle.

I am now going to indulge in the luxury of a bath so no more for the present.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

66. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
26 December 1917

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letter and congratulations. The mention surprised me, but if I am to get anything at the New Year it was bound to be, BUT because I have got it, it does not necessarily mean anything else will follow.

We are alternating between hard frost and snow storms so that golf is at an end pro tem.

My fate is sealed and I leave here somewhere between 14 + 20 Jan. I go to the 24 Division^[1] to learn staff work in all its branches and may come home for the next staff course as all the vacancies were filled for this one.

My two dances were the greatest fun and all my friends are good dancers. My special friend is Miss Peake, daughter of the Colonel, who runs the Duchess

Hospital. One of those few girls who meet you half way and are perfectly natural.

I am going to see if I can send the pup home to you if it's not too expensive. She is such a dear I should like to keep her. Perfectly clean and housebroken. I am scribbling this in a hurry as I ought to have written earlier this week but we have been busy entertaining the men.

Very best love for the New Year and don't get scared because I go up to the 24th Division.

Tammy

¹ The 24th Division was an infantry division raised in September 1914 from men volunteering in Lord Kitchener's New Armies. It served in France and Belgium for the duration of the war.

67. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[partial letter, no date]

... have to go into quarantine for 3-4 months so it won't be until the spring that she will get home. The tobacco from Stow is quite all right and I wonder if he can increase the amount; or send the same amount fortnightly instead of monthly as I can't get it out here. What would be better would be for the A & N stores to send it as I can get it out of bond at about half the price. Will you write and ask them Players Navy Cut (Not mixture) either Blue or Red label. If supply fails to send me something about the same.

I am writing to wish the Williamsons a happy new year.

Your Tammy

68. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
8 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

We are fairly revelling (!) in winter here. A thaw set in and we all hoped for golf again but that hope has been busted by another blizzard.

This recognition that has come to me is really very overwhelming as I find that I am to go to the 24 Division to be trained as a G.S.O.2,^[1] which is senior to a Brigade Major. Naturally I want to get away and get reported on as soon as possible.

On Sunday three of us went to a french [*sic*] tea party to celebrate La Fête des Rois^[2] and played fool games afterwards. Not very amusing.

I don't think you will have any trouble with the pup as she is very intelligent and very obedient and broken to the House. Don't pamper her and let her start begging at meals and if you find she is too much I know the Chapmans would take her back again, in fact they have asked for her if I find I cannot keep her.

I can quite imagine C. W. kicking at being rationed^[3] and taking it almost as a personal insult. My successor has not arrived yet but I expect him daily.

Best Love,
Your Tammy

¹ General Staff Officer Grade 2. Lindsay was brevetted major on 28 January 1918.

² 'The Festival of the Kings', held on 6 January to celebrate the epiphany.

³ Compulsory rationing was introduced in stages between December 1917 and February 1918 as wheat supplies diminished. Other foodstuffs, including butter, meat and sugar, were rationed in July 1918.

69. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
9 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am glad you are pleased at getting letters of congratulation. I enclose a letter from Mrs Swailes, her son took a fancy to me at Portland and was killed soon after.^[1] She wants my photo and is sending me his. I told her to send it to you.

Will you send me another pair of my Norwegian Boots please. I am through the sewing of these. My pay will remain approx: the same – rather less. Am just going out to buy a dog for another man.

I see Shewen and Bell are home from Germany.^[2] If you hear what sort of state they are in do let me know.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ Probably Lance Corporal James Swailes, 1st Battalion KOSB. He had died at Gallipoli on 6 June 1915.

² 2nd Lieutenants William Shewen and Ronald Bell of the 2nd Battalion KOSB, who had been captured in September 1914 and just newly released from an internment camp in the Netherlands.

70. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
14 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

I shall not get away from here before the end of the month as my successor does not come until the 23rd.

Many thanks for knitting the socks but don't send them until I ask for them as I have heaps. The frost broke so I was able to play golf yesterday, but it snowed again last night. I find Quarantine so expensive I can't afford to send her home so I must find someone who would like her out here.

I had a nice letter from Mrs Baird – very friendly. I am glad L.R.^[1] has got an O.B.E. She certainly has worked very hard. Vi sounds more cheerful about her flat. Will you send me her address.

Enclosed you will find a bill which I am sure I paid and the receipt is in my despatch case. Will you look and see. I paid it last leave. If it is there will you write to Harman and tell him. If not let me know and I will hunt up Drummond.

The cold out here is also bitter and all our water freezes in our huts at night.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ Probably Constance Lilian Ratcliffe, the commandant of the Race Course Hospital at Cheltenham, who was awarded an OBE in January 1918.

71. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
15 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

I hope by now you have sent off the boots to this address and not to any other as I can't tell you what my other address will be. It is practically definitely settled that I leave at the end of this month.

I have a rotten attack of muscular rheumatism today all across the small of my back and shoulders. I can scarcely move. The cause of it is the thaw I think as we have been having an infernally damp sort of cold. The unfortunate part is that it is our half day and I cannot play golf.

I dined with Forte last night and thought him looking very old and tired, but he is always awfully nice to me and we get on very well together. Work has commenced again and it seems curious to know that it will be my last course after having taken so many. Even if I did leave sooner, which is unlikely, things would always be forwarded to me from here.

Your Tammy

72. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Lewis Gun School, B.E.F. [Le Touquet]
23 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your last letter. The tobacco came quite all right two days ago and I wish you had sent the boots off at the same time. I hope my other letter saying I did not expect to leave before the end of the month will have persuaded you to post them. The actual date I leave is February 4.

I am most certainly not going to Italy as at first I am only attached for instruction with a view to qualifying for the job.

There is a man called Speke on the course here who comes from Newcastle and knows all the Strakers and Allgoods. Did you ever come across them, because I don't remember ever having heard the name before. He tells me that if Kathleen marries again she loses her money but no doubt you knew that.

It is kind of Uncle Leonard to ask us down Devon way,^[1] but I can't see myself going all that way during my leave. As for the Pup I am again hivering so you may yet find her coming home.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Leonard Lindsay lived at Broomhills, Honiton, Devon.

PART THREE
1918-1919

1. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeelee]
26 January 1918

Dearest Mother,

I was moved on the end of a wire to the above address yesterday, so had no possible chance of warning you. I have been pitched into a G.S.O. (2) job here while the real man is going through the Senior Staff course at home. This means I shall probably be here until the end of March but what is to follow I don't know. It's rather difficult to pick up the threads so high up the ladder and with no former experience of this work but I must make the best of it. It's exceedingly interesting but naturally my surroundings and mess can't compare to the Lewis Gun School.

Funnily enough I expect to meet the course from England where Johnson has gone before long. There is a possibility that at the end of March I shall find myself going home to do the same thing. No more for the present.

I am not going to the 24th Division at all now but I can't tell you all the ramifications yet.

Yours,
Tammy

2. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeelee]
6 February 1918

Dearest Mother,

You must have got my letters answering most of your enquiries by now. I am going to bother you to send me my pair of black brogue walking shoes as I have nothing to wear here of an evening when I have time to change.

I am settling down here fast and am quite finding my feet. This morning I have to go and make the acquaintance of the Corps Commander so I am filling in my time by writing to you.

Apart from office work here I get out pretty often as I am in charge of Training and so have to go round and everything that is going on.

I heard from Vi and Margaret yesterday. Not much news from either – in fact I very rarely hear from either. The diary Vi sent is quite what I wanted and does excellently.

I find that I can write more letters here than I could at the other place. There you see I had definite working hours and when these were over I always went off and played some game. Here I have more work but even when it is finished temporarily I can't go away and there is nothing to do so I write to my various friends.

I have got my 1914 ribbon^[1] up at last. It has taken ages for it to come out here and I think this is the last corps to receive its share as everyone else round about has had it up some time.

It's nice being back in the centre of things again and hearing and seeing all that goes on. I must be off now.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ The 1914 Star and Ribbon was awarded to all who served in France or Belgium between 5th August 1914 and midnight 22nd/23rd November 1914.

3. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeele]
9 February 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am returning my worn out pair of Norwegian boots as I cannot get them repaired out here. The letter you asked me to note the day of arrival of took 5 days so one cannot tell what time mails take. Anyway you should know more or less now where I am.

I'm so glad you are going to have a few days in town with Vi – don't tread on her toes if you can avoid it as I think she is rather touchy with you. You don't mind me saying so I know.

I have just scored a most beautiful pair of boots – a present to another man here but which don't fit him.

I went off with another fellow for a long motor run on duty yesterday. Had it been fine it would have been glorious, as it was we both enjoyed it and saw a part of Belgium I had not seen before. We really get wonderful views across miles and miles of lovely? flat country with scores of windmills working in all directions. I should get awfully bored if I had to live in such low country.

A Colonel in the N.Z. Force seems to have taken a fancy to me as he produced photos of his home and family to show me and started off to tell me all about them. Poor man he was very homesick and longing to get back.

I think Eddie Lindsay^[1] is not far from one so I am going to try and get at him. Evelyn wrote me a delightful letter in answer to one of mine – far the nicest I have had from her.

In this letter is enclosed a letter from Reid the Colonel at my old school who is most flattering.

I told you I think they gave me a dinner before I left – very nice of them but to my mind very unnecessary. The tobacco from Webb has come today just as I finished my last tin.

I think it would be a good thing to get another couple of pair of Norwegian ankle boots if the pair you last sent me is my last new lot. There is no doubt they are THE boots for this work.

My primus stove will be no good to me as I cannot get oil but you will be relieved to hear I have had a bath. I also saw that another KOSB has got married. They're all doing it.

Very best love,
Tammy

¹ This was probably Edward Lindsay, the brother of the earl of Crawford and Lindsay's second cousin. See Family Tree.

4. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[undated]

Dearest Mother,

I am stranded for the night luckily in a place where there is an officer's club. I had been away over a hundred miles lecturing and was on my way home when we had a motor smash and my car has gone to glory. By some great stroke of luck no-one was hurt but as we charged a motor lorry at 30 mph we might well have been.

I like my new work enormously and shall more and more as I feel my feet. It all has to do with training and when you realise how high up on the ladder I have been thrown you will see how essential it is that I make good. If you get thrown high up and don't stick no-one is likely to throw you again.

I should be getting a bunch of letters forwarded to me any time now but so far I have received none. I was awfully sorry to hear of Sandy Neville's death – such a rotten way of leaving the world during war time. News which I can give you is now less than ever so you must be prepared for short scribbles. I want, as soon as I have settled down, to go back and visit my old haunts.

The 1st Battalion is coming into rest quite near me so I shall have a chance of riding over to see them. I see in the Sunday Times that Haig and Cobden are coming out of Germany but it does not say that they are coming home.^[1] However do write and let me know if Haig does come and do write yourself as you suggested.

I discovered lately that I am apparently quite well known practically everywhere but then think of the hundreds I have had through my hands.

I hope to get back to my H.Q. tomorrow but it is damned hard to get a car going my way.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

¹ Major Alfred Haig and Captain Hugh Cobden, Lindsay's former fellow officers in the 2nd Battalion KOSB, had been taken prisoner by the Germans in September 1914.

5. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeele]
13 February 1918

Dearest Mother,

I return the letter sent by the A & N Stores duly filled in. I have absolutely no news for you from here.

The only excitement I've had has been a presentation of Belgian honours this afternoon. The parade took an hour and a half and went off without incident. Next time you write will you give me Miss Vickers address as I ought to write to her. I should awfully like to know what she thinks of Arnold.

Every day I am here I meet more and more friends of my pre-war days. Men whom I have never spoken to you of simply because we have met for a short time and passed on so my mentioning them would convey nothing to you.

The man in question this time is a Brigadier General Duncan^[1] who I believe has or had an Austrian wife and I met him on the M.C. years ago.

I find there is plenty of work to do in the 24 hours so I don't miss my friends so much as I might. The 1st Battalion are out now quite near me so I shall go off and see them tomorrow. No time for more as I am off to bed.

Best Love,
Your Tammy

Heard from Mrs Baird tonight. Very interested in my move and wanting me to let her know what happens to me.

¹ Brevet Colonel and temporary Brigadier-General F. J. Duncan DSO, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots.

6. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeelee]
19 February 1918

Dearest Mother,

I wonder if you are home again and whether you enjoyed your trip to London.

I have just come back from visiting the 1st Battalion. The fellow commanding them and the Quartermaster are the only ones I know there now. Today has been a hectic day for me. Nothing but queries and conundrums. However I laugh at all the people who get anxious over the phone and try to point out to them that it is not a bit of good getting worried over anything. If I had got worried when I took on this job I should be in a lunatic asylum now but it is extraordinary how all obstacles vanish if you wade slowly in among them and sort each one in time.

I had a long letter from Evi Browne that was. She expected I was back in the active zone and thought a letter would be welcome. Very nice of her wasn't it. Her brother funnily enough is in a Division quite close here on the staff, but as our work is of a different type I don't come in contact with him.

No mail at all last night – most dull. Sunday and Monday I spent away from here seeing some musketry – quite like old times. Old Bosch is over most nights laying eggs round about, but so far he has not visited us thank heavens. It's curious now that I am over a hundred miles nearer the front than I was I don't notice gunfire as much as I did down at the School. One slight drawback to this job is that I have missed my leave, but at the end of March when people return here I shall try and get south for a few days.

My brown shoes have come but I am returning them as I can't wear these with tartans also my bacco [*sic*] has arrived from the A&N Stores. Let me know if the difference in price amounts to anything appreciable.

I like this sort of work more and more but being here only temporarily is a bore as there are many things the man I am answering for does which I don't agree with but it is no good turning things topsy-turvy for a month or so and have him alter everything again when he comes back. The various branches of

the Staff here are awfully nice and we get on well as I rag them consistently in my dealings with them.

My various lady friends both married and unmarried seem very insistent on the necessity of me getting married. Their anxiety for my future welfare causes me many chuckles. However I tell them there is lots of time. I wonder if Madge came to lunch and if you have seen her what you think of her. Don't be afraid of hurting my feelings! No time for more.

Your Tammy

7. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Abeele]
2 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have sent back my brown brogue shoes to you today and hope they will turn up all right. The weather here has become perfectly vile with a bitter N.E. wind so everyone is feeling rather captive with everybody else.

In spite of spreading my bread upon the waters my mails have not been as good as I hoped for.

Last Monday I had to make out a programme for the Corps Commander to go round and see various camps etc. on Friday. I made one out and submitted for approval and heard no more. Wednesday night feeling rotten with my cold I went to bed early. At 11.30 I was woken up and told I was wanted so I had to scamper over to the office in pyjamas and a raincoat where I was told that my programme was not what the C.C. wanted and that I must make out another there and then and take it to him at 9am next morning. Which I did and I am glad to say the whole thing went off all right.

I find that the more I have to do with office work the larger the number of illiterate people who can't write. What I mean is that quite 50% of letters coming from the top to me do not express what the writers have in their minds, so that every letter has to be studied and also all that has gone before in order to solve the riddle. In spite of this national failing I believe the organisation and staff work of the B. A. is head and shoulders above any other army.

I'm sorry I omitted Forte's letter. I will put it in this time. There is nothing to hurt in those bags of mine but as soon as I can get a strong envelope I will send the keys.

Will you send along another pair of pyjamas as I had an accident last night with the first pair you made me. It was my turn on duty sleeping in the office

and I hung my pyjamas over the stove to get nice and warm. The draught disturbed them and they fell on the stove so that the seat was scorched out of them. Most tragic. Another cake of soap at the same time would be acceptable if you have any by you – but no more socks old lady at present.

My black brogue shoes are in town with my evening clothes. No other news.

Your Tammy

P.S. I find I have destroyed Forte's letter – so sorry.

8. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
7 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have been away to my old school for a night to see some new demonstrations and returned this evening just after tea. I found a letter from you and Miss Vickers waiting for me – the letter is enclosed. It was nice seeing all my old friends again and the woods and everything made me feel quite homesick. I never really realised what a good spot I was at until I revisited it. It was a glorious spring day and everything was looking its best. All the inhabitants were delighted to see me and I just had time to go and see them all. I went round after dinner to Les Anglais^[1] and saw my friend there (Miss Peake) and we sat and gossiped for an hour in the hall. No doubt there will be much gossip in consequence.

In spite of feeling homesick for the place I wouldn't go back to my old footing again although I should enjoy going back to command for the summer.

I saw the big bug^[2] from G.H.Q. while I was there and asked him what was to become of me on the 28th. I am particularly anxious to know, the vacancies for the next Staff Course at Cambridge are being filled now and I want to know (1) if I am going there (2) if I am going to get an appointment direct (3) if I am going to be flung back on the rubbish heap. On the whole it was just as well I went down.

I didn't blacken my brown shoes as they are never successful and if I go on the Staff it means I shall [wear] khaki trousers with which I must wear brown shoes. I wonder which brown boot you sent, if it was the exceptionally neat Russian leather one I fear it may be rather on the small side.

I am glad Vi sounded more chirpy in her letter and I hope it will last. Yes go ahead with the pyjamas but don't make my legs so long – shorten them by 6 inches.

I thought you knew that Colonel Stephenson has been in Switzerland^[3] for well over a year now. Major Haig I think remained in Holland^[4] with the rest of that batch, but I have had no news.

Madge hasn't been good at writing just lately but I expect she has been pretty busy packing up for home. She hasn't said a word about what she proposes to do after her rest. No other news.

Your Tammy

¹ L'Hôtel des Anglais in Le Touquet.

² Army slang for someone in charge, or otherwise powerful person.

³ During the last two years of the war, around 68,000 prisoners of war who were sick or injured (but might otherwise recover sufficiently to perform military tasks) were sent to internment camps in Switzerland under the auspices of the International Red Cross in order to aid their recuperation without giving advantage to the enemy.

⁴ Some long-term prisoners of war were transferred from Germany to the Netherlands, where they were detained in internment camps usually until the end of the war.

9. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
10 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

The pyjamas rolled in this morning safe and sound. I'm not at all sure you're an economical housekeeper. I ask you for one cake of soap and you send me two. You must remember I only ask for what I can carry and that there are times when even one cake of soap extra is difficult to stow away.

I have been instituting enquiries as to what my fate is likely to be when the man I am answering for returns on the 28th. From what I can gather I shall become a Brigade Major which will suit me admirably. How long I shall hold it for before I move up the ladder will depend largely on myself and circumstances. I never wanted to get confirmed as a Staff Officer as high up as I am now as I would rather work my way up and learn each step thoroughly

as I go. If you start too high you can't realise the difficulties of the man below you. From this you may be satisfied that I am in no way disappointed.

All the trees and bushes are bursting into bud here and odd birds are beginning to find their voices. If they give me this B.M. job it may be in any of the various theatres of war. Personally I shouldn't at all mind going to Italy. Also I get the pay of this job for the time I have been doing it. It comes to roughly £66 I think. Post just going.

Your Tammy

10. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
13 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am going to send home my jaeger pyjamas and a leather waistcoat. In the pocket of the latter I shall put the keys of these two bags. The long one belonging to the nice leather bag given me by Mrs Beatty.

There is an old Colonel Kettlewell doing an easy job out here under me. He lives in a small village about 3 miles from Kingham – between Kingham and Burford. Have [you] ever come across them at any time? He's really too old to be of much active use still he is a gentleman and as such easy to get on with. I have only another fortnight here now and then I don't know where I go. I shall put in for leave from the 30th unless I am pushed off immediately to another job.

Tonight I am going down to lecture at the Corps school. It's part of my job to find them lecturers and as I couldn't get anyone for them tonight I am going myself. In many ways I shall be glad to get out of this job as it isn't soldiering and not really so interesting in many ways as my old one. There is too much dabbling in non-essentials. Of course I control more but going round doing that is not quite the same as having a definite job of one's own to make. Don't run away with the idea that I am dissatisfied because I am not by any means, but I do hate hanging about. If I am not working I like to be able to get away and be free.

I will leave this open until this evening on the chance of anything interesting happening.

Nothing of interest has happened so I am shutting this up. Three golf clubs ought to roll home any time.

Your Tammy

11. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
15 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am having quite a hectic time at the present moment. I got strapped yesterday and I am expecting another one now. Yesterday thinking I could help the Bgg^[1] and having been given a more or less definite order by the Corps Commander I sent off a wire without showing it to the Bgg as I do daily in fact hourly. It was quite an ordinary affair but as luck would have it, it happened to cross something else he was doing. Result I got a dressing down for sending it off without showing it to him.

Luckily I only saw the humorous side of the thing and so did not take it very much to heart, but if I were to show him everything I sign there would be no need for an officer to do the job. Anyway I resent being called down for something I do with the best intentions.

This afternoon a lecture took place and only 18 officers turned up. I made the arrangements but short of issuing an order to someone to attend I can't force people to go and I can't order them to go; so I [am] awaiting a few caustic comments.

No about Dudley. I don't know what his regiment is so I can't turn him up. What has obviously happened is that his real rank is Major – that the C.O. of the battalion went to hospital and he being next senior was made acting Lt. Colonel or temporary Lt. Colonel. When the other man came back he naturally automatically returned to his real rank.

A Lieut. Colonel wears a crown and one star and commands a battalion. He may or may not go right into action with it. It depends on orders. If he does the 2nd in command doesn't and vice versa. It's done to save useless waste of senior officers. A full Colonel wears a crown and two stars and is what a Lieut. Colonel becomes after completing his period of command of a battalion (3 years) in peacetime. You practically never see one now in command of a Battalion in the fighting line unless he is in a dugout.

A Brigadier General is really only a full colonel but he has that title while he commands 3 battalions forming a Brigade. In peacetime if he returned after his period of Brigade command he dropped the title of Brigadier General and became Colonel. A Brigadier General in [the] Territorials or Kitchener's Army can now retire and retain the honorary rank. Does this clear things up for you.

My pyjamas and waistcoat are on their way but my man sewed them up before I enclosed the keys so I still have them.

Don't be upset because of these strappings. They are all in the days work and I put them by in the back of my mind for future reference.

Your Tammy

¹ Perhaps an abbreviation for brigadier-general.

12. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
19 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

No news at all and I am feeling very flat as all my mails until this morning have been very blank. I heard from Madge, Mrs Baird and my VAD friend down below this morning so that was a distinct improvement. Mrs B wants me to go and see them if I am on leave long enough – when I get it. I see everything in London is going to shut up at 9.30 in the evening so that except for shopping London won't be worth staying in.

About my pyjamas. In my new suits don't give me too many buttons on the jacket, four are quite enough.

Funny the Kettelwells living near you. I only discovered it when he went on leave last time and saw his warrant made out to Kingham.

My VAD friend whom I told you about by name of Peake has caused me quite an amount of amusement. When I went down there the other day she told me that a certain number of people were saying that she was rather taken with me. After I left apparently she rather regretted having said it and was uncertain what way I had taken it so she wrote and said that it was only fair to tell me that there wasn't the slightest truth in the story etc. Of course one might read that in two ways. Anyway I wrote back and straightened things out and am now wondering what the answer will be.

Pouring rain today and very little to do in the office which is dull. I think my parcel will reach you all right. They all have so far.

Nothing of interest has occurred.

Best Love,
Your Tammy

13. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XXII Corps [Mont Noir]
23 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have no news yet of my next job, but one thing quite certain is that I am not going to the Staff College Cambridge. The names are out and I am not among them.

As you will see from the papers there seems to be a big battle raging or on the point of doing so, further south. I shall not be a bit surprised to find myself drifting down that way before long. I know one Brigadier, as I told you, who is anxious to get me, but I don't know what Brigade he has got.

I should not be sorry to get to a more active sphere as there is too much hanging about here for my liking.

I have written an account of what being attached to the Staff in my capacity means but I will wait till I come home to show it to you.

No mail tonight which is boring as I do like getting letters. In fact the day is awfully blank if I don't. Nothing else I can tell you so good night.

Your Tammy

14. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[*undated*]

Lost somewhere in France. Wrote today to say I was going to 11th Brigade as Brigade Major. Cancel this I don't know where the hell I am going.

Your Tammy

15. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[*undated*]

Dearest Mother,

I have at last got myself sorted. They made an error in the telegram that ordered me off and I am now going as Brigade Major 111 Brigade and not 11 as I told

you. I am told my general is an awfully nice man so everything seems very nice. Of course a B.M. is not as high as a G (2) but everyone who has passed through the job always looks back and says it the nicest job in the service.

I may not write again for a day or two as it will take some time to find them and settle down.

When you write to A & Navy order 1 pair of boots and 2 pair of shoes. I don't want to have too many pairs of boots as I rarely wear them in ordinary times except on parade. Much love for sending me Haig's address. I am writing to him this morning.

The car may be round any moment now so I will close.

Fondest love,
Your Tammy

16. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XI Division
30 March 1918

Dearest Mother,

Your letters are being forwarded to me all right so I have not lost touch with you altogether. The work here is more interesting than at the Corps as I am more intrinsically in touch with the line. I have been going round the trenches lately to get the hang of them and their defence. I think I hate it and then wonder why. Sometimes I breathe a sigh of relief and sometimes I don't. It must depend on the state of my liver.

I can't see why you think that Miss P[eake] proposed to me because honestly I can't see it in that light. You must know the workings of the female mind far better than I do, so I will accept your idea with reserve. I must be considered peculiarly dense by these good people because I always take them absolutely literally and answer exactly what I think or feel.

I am by way of remaining here a month as I think I told you, but then again things are moving so quickly now one can never be certain how long one will remain in any given spot.

No other news and I have had no letters from anyone.

Your Tammy

17. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XI Division
5 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I see I must teach you some more about the Army. A Corps is made up of a number of Divisions varying with circumstances. Each division is composed of 3 Brigades and each Brigade of 3 Regiments. Now that I am with this Division I am no longer in the 22 Corps but with another. David is Intelligence officer of the Corps to which this Division belongs.^[1]

About the Diary. It is a square dark green book with a dull red hinge and was in the leather box which belonged to Turnbull once. Vi has not got it.

From the work I am doing here I am mainly wasting time in one way but learning quite a lot from the people I mix with and meet. George Lindsay blew in yesterday. He is Machine Gun Officer (Staff) of the Army to which this Corps belongs. Why do you connect Maitland with the Wilson Woods? Wasn't Mrs W.W. a Campbell or am I mistaken.^[2]

The General who wanted me to go to him as Brigade Major was hit in the face two days after taking command which was real bad luck. Why is it Arnold keeps catching all these illnesses. It looks as if he was rather a weakling and such a bore for Vi. Excuse the scrawl but I have no ink.

I don't want my Jaeger pyjamas thanks. I can keep quite warm enough.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Lindsay's cousin Lieutenant David Lindsay of the Royal Garrison Artillery was attached to the Intelligence Corps. See Family Tree.

² Lindsay's mother was correct. Mrs Madeline Wilson Wood was the daughter of Frederick Maitland-Heriot.

18. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XI Division
8 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am so bored with myself and having nothing to do today that I am writing this although I have no news. I never told you of a delightful old Irishman who

is my servant here. He has quite adopted me – talks of us and our things etc. In fact he quite nurses me. Won't let me go out without being brushed down and my coat straightened. When I go up the line he hangs about my hut at the time I am due back to see that I get back safely.

The new GSO (2) who has come is a nice fellow called Pickering. We get on very well together which seems to annoy the GSO (1). It is a bore him being new as the GSO (1) has to break him in to his work which means that I must keep clear and so cannot pick up as much as I should if I were understudying an old hand. Before he came I was naturally far busier as I was doing all the work. How they can report me at the end of my month I fail to see. The only report they can send in is that I am clean about the house but have been given no opportunity of performing the duties of GSO (2). However sufficient unto the day is the toil thereof.

I am going for a long walk after tea to try and feel less discontented. The GSO (1) is a funny man. Been hit through the head and had five operations which I think accounts for a good deal of his queerness and bad temper. Altogether it is rather a difficult situation and I think he imagines I take work too lightly.

The new stuff for the pyjamas looks topping and they should make up very well and look very smart. The food here is quite all right.

Your Tammy

19. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. XI Division
8 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am off again and have at last got a definite appointment. I shall go to the 11th Brigade as Brigade Major.^[1] So in future address me as Brigade Major 11th Brigade. It's in a different army and a different corps and a different division, but that won't matter, in fact I am very glad. I can't think why they didn't send me there months ago instead of moving me around acting for people. Of course it's all very good experience and should help me. I quite see that in these other appointments I have officiated in that it all depends on the type of man you have as boss. I couldn't have faced a G2 job in this division as it's full of disappointed soldiers who are the devil to deal with. I think now that I shall have only one to deal with things will be easier and I shall feel a great deal more confident of myself.

One curse is that my mail has not caught me up here yet so when it will catch me up down below I don't know.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Lindsay's appointment as a brigade major took effect on 10 April 1918.

20. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
11 April 1918

My dearest Mother,

I have taken over my new job and am installed. I can't tell you where I am except that I have moved a good deal further south.^[1] I think I shall like the job once I have picked up all the loose ends and so far I like my general. His name is General Francis.^[2] I am living in a deep dugout and artificial light (candles) are the only light we have. It's a curious existence and one I am not yet accustomed to.

The man who I have succeeded was also a K.O.S.B. but one I never met as he came in later. He was apparently very generally liked by nearly everyone – judging by enquiries. He was hit about five days ago.

I wonder if you found my diary because I should not like to lose it.

One thing rather nice is that I know all the Divisional Staff as they were in the Corps I first went to. Also Evie Montague Browne's (that was) brother is on the staff of the Division.^[3]

Coming south I stopped the night en route and ran into three old friends who were on the staff at Le Touquet with me – and are still there. I also passed quite near my 2nd Battalion but hadn't time to stop and see them. I wrote to Haig. No other news.

Best love,
Your Tammy

¹ The 111th Infantry Brigade, part of IV Corps, Third Army, was deployed south of Arras. It had recently faced a major German offensive (Operation Michael).

² Brigadier-General Sidney G. Francis DSO, West Yorkshire Regiment.

³ Andrew Duncan Montague Browne DSO, brevet lieutenant-colonel, 1st King's Own (Royal Lancaster) Regiment.

21. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
13 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

A quick scrawl as the post is going. I enclose a letter from Mr Wilson Wood to me which you may like to read (if you can). My mail caught me up last night so I had a budget of 12 or so – most refreshing. Violet wrote me a long letter and tells me Madge lunched with her and that she had also seen Mrs Doig.

Great things are happening by all accounts but greater things are yet to happen I hope. We can't let Bosche go on having everything his own way.

I don't think you need worry any more about my V.A.D. friend. I have sorted her all right I think. Your last letter just came but can't read it before post goes.

Your Tammy

So awfully sorry about Rice.

22. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
15 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am sending you Mrs Baird's last letter to you. You need not return these letters but I have no news of interest and it may amuse you trying to picture what these good friends of mine are like from their letters.

Let me know if Violet made any remarks to you about Madge. In her letter to me she says she liked her enormously but then knowing what she does she might not say all she would to you.

I find this job far more to my liking than any of my temporary ones I have done lately as I have active work and office work to do. You see a Brigade is run entirely by the General and his Brigade Major and there's a full day's work for the two of us. Where we are in the line we never go out together. One always remains in to be on the spot and make decisions should occasion arise.

I can't vouch for your story about Winston Churchill as I have not heard it out here.^[1] Also I can quite believe anything about Ruby's Society – few of

them are perfectly straight and if they are they are probably voted dull by the remainder and dropped.

Post is going so no more.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ Winston Churchill was currently Minister of Munitions.

23. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
17 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

You were more or less right in your assumption as to where I was when I told you to refer to my diary. Now I am a good 80 odd miles further south. Everybody 'has his turn' in these shows.

I am now living above ground again for a short period but while I was working under it everything got so clammy and damp that I am suffering rather from a cold in the head. However I am hoping it will now quickly depart. I wrote to congratulate Nesta on her new engagement but I hear from her that it is not true!

With regard to rumours about the war and various generals – we really hear very little indeed though I did hear yesterday that Gough is supposed to have committed suicide.^[1] One does not believe all these stories though sometimes they turn out to be true.

I am going with the General to a conference this afternoon so have not much time. Last night I was glad to discover that when shells begin to fall he is not above running to get out of their visible area. They didn't really come very near us but they might have – especially as gunners always pay attention to roads at night. He's a great walker and walks most people to standstill but I think I can beat him.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ General Sir Hubert Gough had been dismissed from his command of the British Fifth Army following its failure to repulse the Germans during the early stages of Operation Michael. Rumours that he had committed suicide were unfounded.

24. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
19 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

You will now have got a rough idea of where I am. You ask what my work consists of. Well nearly all day I am out and about seeing to things generally. When we are out of the line I go with the General. When in the line either he or I stay at home – we never go out at the same time. Most of my work comes at night and I rarely get to bed before 12 midnight at the earliest – more often at 2 am. I sleep with my head to all intents and purposes on a telephone and in the line invariably get rung up at least three times during my so called night. So on the whole I do a full day's work for 7 days a week.

As a matter of fact we are expecting a battle daily. It may catch the Brigade in the line or it may come when we are out in reserve but anyway when it comes we shall be in it – of that I have no shadow of a doubt.

My nerves so far are better than I expected and I see no reason at present why I should fail on account of them. We all hate shells but then that is natural. In fact I would rather it is a show and have lots of noise and work as it gives you less time to think. Ordinary days you hear a shell coming and wonder where the devil it is going to fall. The other day I was taking the air with another man outside a dugout and we heard one coming over. He thought it was falling short – I thought it was going over us. As a matter of fact it fell about 100 yards away from us but failed to explode. Anyway by the time it landed we were well home in the dugout – taking no risks.

I think I made my General sit up a bit today, he had to stop and admire the view several times^[1] – reminded me of going up Cleeve Hill.^[2] I think he is taking a liking to me by degrees but we are both silent men.

Your Tammy

¹ *i.e.* he had to stop and catch his breath.

² Cleeve Hill (330 m) is on the north-east edge of Cheltenham.

25. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
21 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

You are not addressing your envelopes correctly – not think it matters a great deal. Brigade Major is not a rank but a grade so you should put Major Lindsay, KOSB, Bde Maj, 111 Inf. Bde. B.E.F.

The weather is much finer again and everything more pleasant in consequence. The idea of an attack on this sector is not so great now as it was and every day the Hun puts it off provided weather conditions allow us to watch him the worse it is for him.

I am delighted to hear that Rice is alive although a prisoner of war and also that Bobby Hartman got through all right. Some units had fearful experiences and were very roughly handled but by all accounts the Hun got badly savaged as well. It will be very interesting to see the outcome of all this and a lot will depend on the weight of our counter attack and if we can drive it far enough home. I cannot see it going on for another year.

Opinion out here fluctuates backwards and forwards but in the end it all seems to depend on America and how many trained divisions she can fling in at the decisive moment.

Our going back the distance we have doesn't matter in the least always provided that we can keep an unbroken line. Country means nothing as long as armies are intact and well supplied and there are sufficient reinforcements.

I am sending home a sandbag with some papers I no longer require. No other news.

Your Tammy

26. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
23 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letters. We get a post every evening when rations come up and at the same time they take away letters to be posted. What you say about me and my various jobs may be true and certainly in this job I have a far freer hand than in any of the others and that is probably why I enjoy it.

I thought I told you I had seen David Lindsay^[1] – I don't think we what you might call jumped at each other. I am not surprised to hear W. Willie has become an R.C.^[2] He has always been more or less on the edge don't you think.

Yesterday I went down to my old school on my way back from another job. They were all most awfully nice and seem genuinely glad to see me. What do you feel about the Horoscope yourself? He has certainly been extraordinarily good so far. Do whatever you like about it only if you have it done send it out for me to see.

I've lost today's post as I have been out this morning with the General looking round Battalions. No other news so with best love.

Your Tammy

I did not see the article on Horace Walpole.

¹ See Letter III.17, note 1.

² *i.e.* a Roman Catholic. The 'W' before 'Willie' might have been written in error for 'C', *i.e.* 'cousin'. See Letter I.44.

27. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
24 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am enclosing a bill which I would like paid. I can't get at my cheque book and I know I shall lose it. I always forget to tell you that my servant is an old 2nd Battalion man. I cannot say he is good but I am keeping [him] because he is a remnant of those days.

Everybody is now mad about the Lewis Gun and I find I am looked upon as a distinct asset to the Division and the Brigade. They little know what a frail reed they are trusting to.

As a Brigade Major with the rank of major I am rather a *rara avis*^[1] as you will find certainly 90 per cent are either temporary Captains or even Lieutenants. You see I have been left out in the race for high places and all or nearly all of my contemporaries are either commanding battalions or are by now G.S.O.(2)'s. I don't mind in the least because with my experiences and

service I can do far better work for the Brigade than I could ever as a G.S.O.
(2). No more now as I am busy.

Your Tammy

¹ a rare bird, *i.e.* a unique individual.

28. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

37 Division B.E.F.
26 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I think I asked you to keep one of my letters to refer to again. I cannot remember if it was on the 1st or 2nd page in line 5 I put some inverted commas. That is as near as I can get to it phonetically and even then it is not very near. It was the scene of fighting when we made our first big push and it is almost certain to be marked on any war map.

I heard from Vi last night. She is writing longer letters than she has for ages. This is the second I have had in about six weeks. It was a wonderful sight walking up here the other night – the whole horizon lit up by gun flashes. We kept falling into ditches – trenches and wire. We had one lucky fall when we fell into a gunners dugout and found hot tea brewing. This was about 12 midnight. Then we came on our slippery way again.

Will you send me my other pair of riding breeches which I left at home in October – rather a light fawn colour. I had an accident with mine the other night. I put a lighted pipe in my pocket and caught fire. No other news.

Best Love,
Tammy

29. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
28 April 1918

Dearest Mother,

I heard from Madge yesterday evening so I am not entirely forgotten.

Not a word about any other work yet awhile as she says they are going to Harrogate for June.

My washing which I left at the XXII Corps when I left has been all over the country and managed to catch me up last night. You should know now what division I am in.

It is becoming most fearfully hot work walking about with all ones paraphernalia and one returns to ones dugout quite exhausted. We are still very quiet here and less chance of scrapping than ever pro tem.

I am glad you are going to have a day in London. The Mrs Doig^[1] whom you missed in London had a break down and had to retire to the country to rest but she expects to get back to her work soon. She also got the O.B.E.

Best Love,
Your Tammy

¹ Probably Mrs Annie Doig, Lady Superintendent of the 'All Welcome' YMCA Hut, Victoria Station, London. She had been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List of 1918.

30. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
2 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

No news at all and everything very quiet. I have managed to get a stout envelope so am sending the keys of those two bags home.^[1] I had a blank mail last night but hope to hear from someone tonight.

We have at last got a real sunny day which is pleasant but makes walking rather hot and tiring. Anyway it will enable our aeroplanes to get busy and collect information.

I am just scribbling this to try and catch the express mail at Division.

Best Love,
Tammy

¹ See Letter III.7.

31. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
4 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

It was my fault no doubt that you didn't tumble to my mode of address. You see I can't put both Division and Brigade as my address in case of the millionth chance of it falling into enemy hands so when I put the Division only I thought you would spot that. However in future only put the 111 Bde on my letters or there may be trouble.

Miles came in here this pm from G.H.Q. I don't think he expected to see me. Anyway we had a long chat and he tells me A. C. Campbell^[1] has been killed. He married the sister of Maxwell's wife after a fortnight's acquaintance.

I have had a nice letter from Evelyn which I enclose – more affectionate than usual. I am sorry Pat^[2] is missing – I can't believe he was fit enough to come out again but that can't be helped.

By all accounts the Hun has had some pretty sanguinary losses up north and has come to a halt pro tem. He may try south again now for a change. His shelling the last two days has increased somewhat.

No other news.

Your Tammy

Two shells have just burst in the roof of my dugout and put all the lights out and now my roof keeps cracking. Whether it intends to fall in on my head tonight remains to be seen.

¹ Probably Major Aubone C. Campbell DSO, 2nd Battalion KOSB, who died on 3 April 1918.

² Probably Captain John Patrick Kennedy, 5th Battalion Rifle Brigade, who died on 24 April 1918.

32. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
6 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letters. Of course I shall not repeat what Vi has told you, but I cannot understand why she should be secretive about Arnold getting

exempted because people are bound to find out sooner or later. It's a great pity that he has been allowed to slide out in a great many ways but from the money earning point of view I suppose it is all right.

I am sorry Pat Kennedy is missing. One of the Battalion commanders in this Brigade had Pat under him at one time when he was commanding another Rifle Brigade battalion and said he was a first rate Company Commander.

Things here are just the same as when I last wrote except that I am rather grubbier than I was, and shall be grubbier still before our time in the line ends.

I wrote to Mrs Hartman the other day to congratulate her on Bobby being safe. Harry Parker with a son ought to be very amusing – I should think it would be one ugly little beast to start with because neither of them are good looking.

I don't understand David being missing. He is a Corps Intelligence Officer and as such should not be in any danger except from bombs. Surely it only means that he has not written for some time.

Best love,
Your Tammy

Yes I wear red tabs but still keep my bonnet.

33. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
10 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

You will probably see in the Times of either today or tomorrow that there has been a show of sorts at Bucquoy.^[1] You may be interested to know that it was my Brigade which was concerned. That is why I am not putting its number as usual. It started off a splendid success but things developed in a way which the General and I had forecasted and we came back again in the evening. I can't tell you more than that at present as I am busy writing up an account of the show. In spite of coming back the Divisional and Corps Commander express themselves pleased with the result. We killed a lot of Huns but took on more than we could conveniently handle.

I am looking forward to a bath and complete change after tea, my first for fifteen days!

I have just heard that the Stoneham's house has been completely burnt to the ground. I am sorry in a way that Smith has given up doing horoscopes. I think he was good.

At present we are just behind the line and it is a great relief to live above ground like a human being again. We are still within easy reach of the guns and they shell this place periodically through the day. However to have a bed to sleep on is worth risking a few shells for. Eight days hence we expect to go further back if the Hun doesn't develop any nasty tricks.

I had the longest letter I have ever had from Madge a few days ago. Her father has a clot on the brain and only just missed a stroke so they are naturally very anxious.

Very best love,
Tammy

Can you get some of that lined foreign paper and decent envelopes? It is almost impossible to get anything except this beastly stuff here. NOT a great quantity but enough to carry about.

¹ On 8 May, the 13th Battalion Rifle Brigade attacked German positions at Bucquoy, a village in the Pas-de-Calais about 19 km south of Arras. A very brief mention of the action appeared in *The Times* of 10 May.

34. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
14 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your two letters today. I am most awfully sorry to hear that Rice has died while a prisoner of war. Madge sent me some Patience cards, carbolic soap, erasenic soap and some foot powder two days ago and with them came a pair of socks knitted for me by her maid – rather touching.

Today I heard from Jean Dove. They have given up their country place in Meath and fear results if conscription is forced on Ireland.^[1]

No, leave is out of the question. I daresay in the past year staff did get leave every three months. I was supposed to when at Le Touquet but it is very seldom that it ever works out so regularly. I don't see any chance until about September as I think we are both going to fight a l'outrance^[2] this year and get the damned war finished.

I saw in the Times a Rose Aylmer was getting married. I think she must be the girl you knew at Cheltenham. Perfectly beastly weather today been continuous rain.

Tomorrow I go back about 10 miles to lecture on the Lewis Gun.

Your Tammy

¹ In response to a manpower crisis in the British Army, a proposal was put forward in April 1918 by the British Government to impose conscription on Ireland. Although the subsequent law was never enforced, what came to be known as the Conscription Crisis prompted strikes, rallies and other protests.

² *i.e.* fight to the death.

35. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
18 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

I haven't got your last letter by me as I write and as I read it at 4am this morning when I got back I can't remember if there was anything to answer specially.

If all goes well we shall be back where we are for some time so you needn't worry. Of course it all depends on what the Hun does here and elsewhere.

You mustn't be alarmed because I tell you that shells land on the dugout. As a rule they are about 30 foot below ground and perfectly safe from most calibres. It is sheer bad luck if two of the biggest land and blow you in.

The heat the last three days has been quite tropical but as I write we are indulging in a good downpour and a thunderstorm. Now that our little show is well over and I can look back it seems so senseless to be alarmed because after all the Hun can't cover every inch of ground with shells at the same moment.

You may be right about Madge – I wondered the same thing myself. I have also wondered whether when the father realises what a close shave he has had and that he is still by no means out of danger will say anything. Only time can show in either case.

I must write to Margaret as I have my Chapman friends at the Majestic Hotel. At least two of the girls are. I have at last got a decent horse to ride and I am on the track of a second. You see I am entitled to two.

The Hun nearly got our abode last night with a couple of eggs. We heard them falling and I looked at the General and he looked at me. Then there were

two thuds and we waited for the explosion but it did not come. He [*i.e.* the Hun] was very active for two or three hours but none came any nearer.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

36. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
20 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

I don't think you will find Bucquoy on any of my maps as I was not in the district in those days, but any map in the newspapers will have it. It is between Arras and Albert.

I have not had another letter from Madge since she told me her father was ill.

My finances are improving greatly. I have about £420 at Drummond and £155 at Holt.^[1] The weather here is baking but very delightful and I am having a bivouac put up in an orchard as I don't like my billet.

I had a letter from Mrs Hartman. Thank her for writing. No time for more. Your paper has not rolled up yet.

Your Tammy

¹ Holt & Co. provided banking services to army personnel. During World War I, it dealt with the pay of over 65,000 officers.

37. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
23 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

Just got back from a very hot and tiring morning having started forth on an empty stomach. My General let me down badly as he knew the move was coming off and arranged for his own breakfast at an early hour. Living the life

we are just at present; it is hard to believe we are at war and not merely doing ordinary peace time manoeuvres on a large scale.

Yesterday I had a letter from the Samuelsons and they tell me that the Beattys have bought a large place near Ashford. I wrote to Mrs B some time ago and am hoping to hear from her soon.

I don't know why May should be such a grilling month over here but we have [*illegible*] mid-summer which tries everybody's temper especially when breakfast is missed.

I am being fearfully rushed at present with all sorts and conditions of work and only 24 hours to do it in. The people above me are not always very considerate in the amount of work they pass on to lower formations.

No time for more.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

38. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
25 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am sending home a pair of long boots. They are so water tight that I sweat inside them and get just as wet and now summer is coming in they are too hot. Will you post off the Norwegian boots the stores repaired – to me?

I had a letter from Charlie W today; it contained no news but in a way was more affectionate than usual. The Beattys can only have just bought that place and I don't think they are in England again or I should have heard.

My appointment was in the Times of the 21st or 20th, I can't remember which for the moment.

My writing tonight is awful but I am really dead beat and want to get to bed. I am up at 5am every morning and rarely get to bed before midnight. There is always something to come into the office which I have to sit up for or else I have something to concoct and get out before morning.

Best love,
Your Tammy

39. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
29 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

Still no news, and yesterday I had a blank mail day.

The Hun seems to be pushing a bit down south again but so far does not seem to have done any great damage. No one thinks that is his main effort and we are quite prepared for a very big attack on another part of the front.

How many vacancies per month to each formation is not known yet. As this has happened it is conceivable that I may get home about July instead of September. I am glad to hear that David got a French decoration.^[1]

No more now.

Your Tammy

¹ David Lindsay, Lindsay's cousin, had received the Croix de Guerre.

40. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
31 May 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am very glad to hear that the steel hat got home all right. It was so obvious to anyone who knew what it was that I was rather afraid it might be stolen. I did not kill the man who wore it. He was a prisoner and discarded it as soon as he got back a bit.

If I suddenly take to sending you field postcards you will know I am on the move. I only tell you this now as you might worry if letters ceased to arrive suddenly and it is better to be prepared for all eventualities.

I have had very dull mails the last day or two. The Bosche seems to have made a bit of a push in the Aisne direction but seems to be slowing up somewhat now.

The weather still keeps gloriously fine and hot. Post going.

Your Tammy

41. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
9 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am so sorry I have not written for a day or two but I have been extra busy. I have sent home my flea bag to lighten my kit. My boots have arrived safely many thanks.

I am in new quarters – a most delightful chateau with stone tiled floors upstairs as well as down and most glorious grounds which have rather gone to seed naturally. I can't tell you in any way where I am but we are all more comfortable than we have ever been before. Leave of course is closed again indefinitely.^[1] The country round here is magnificent – you can see endless fields of corn for miles and miles and when the corn is ripe it must be heavenly.

I have heard again from Madge and Mrs Baird. I will write and thank Charlie for his card. I hadn't realised that he was really as fond of me as this seems to indicate.

I find with my job that it does not matter whether I am in or out of the line there is always something to be done. The General on the other hand only gets what I consider he should get. It's a curious trait in men I find that as they climb they get a habit studying themselves more and their subordinates less.

All sorts of things the General ought to tell me he doesn't unless I ask him and in a way that gives one the feeling that he is bored at being asked. It doesn't matter a great deal but it means added labour. Then at meals he sits perfectly silent as though the rest of us were beneath him. Some of the fellows aren't gentlemen but you can't help that nowadays. He always has a liver in the morning and has to be approached warily. On the whole he is a good man but with a little trouble he could improve himself and be extraordinarily pleasant.

No other news.

Your Tammy

Can you send me along more envelopes and paper.

¹ The continued German offensive had led to leave being cancelled.

42. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
9 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

Of course I will go shares in a present for Jim and naturally get anything you like. Letters are coming in curious ways. I had three from you last mail. It is quite extraordinary how fine it is keeping. Tomorrow our kind French hostess proposes to invite some French girls to come over and play tennis. One feels the want of feminine society after a time out here.

I am wondering if Mrs Hartmann's friends from Roye are anywhere around. I never knew their name so I can't make enquiries of various people I meet.

With the Bosche advance people from the newly invaded districts spread so that it is quite possible I may come across them.

Returning to the subject of this chateau – parts of the walls have been cut down and long avenues planted so that looking out of the windows one looks down a long vista into woods. The rides round are splendid and I go bang across country and through enormous woods. If I have enough money and a car I should like to bring you to this part of the world after the war. May is certainly THE month over here. One would not want to stop long as there is nothing to do in the way of golf or fishing but just to tour through would be delightful.

We had a false alarm last night. I was annoyed at being woken up at 3am as I was looking forward to a long sleep it being Sunday.

Very best love,
your Tammy

Re the Johnstones – it shows the futility of marrying on Staff Pay only or on your pay at all when it depends on your not being wounded to be able to live with any comfort.

43. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
13 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

Tomorrow is your birthday. Many and happier returns of it. I am so sorry that my letters are so short but there is so little to write about. Forte Mason has had

his job removed from him I hear and he is home sick in a hospital in Manchester. He is going to the Majestic at Harrogate where also are going the Wilson Woods so altogether half my acquaintances seem to be foregathering there.

I know the Ratcliffs say they think Nesta is fond of me etc. but I don't think it is likely considering I hadn't met or corresponded with her for about 10 years until the other day. I must have entirely drifted out of her ken. That she was glad to see me that time I took her out to lunch I am quite sure but I shouldn't be surprised if at the bottom it was curiosity to see what I had developed into. Even now that we have renewed our acquaintance I don't think there is the slightest chance of anything ever coming off even if we were thrown together.

The Aylmer son is evidently very restless if he has proposed twice and climbed out each time. He's a wise bird to have had the courage and it's a pity more haven't.

I heard from Vi last night – quite a cheerful letter but containing no news. Must end as post goes early from here.

Your Tammy

44. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
14 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

I enclose a letter from Mrs Ratcliff. It is wonderful how easily and clearly she puts things on paper – almost as if she was talking.

I hear that Lawers is up for sale – I do wonder if anyone will buy it or whether it will drag on and see Charlie out. I daresay that really in the long run it is the best thing to happen because I shall never have enough or be able to make enough to make it as I should like to. If it goes it goes and that is all there is to it.

Today just to celebrate your birthday I have bought £100 National War Bonds – which leaves me with a working balance of about £200 or so.

Still doing nothing and no leave. I shouldn't be a bit surprised to hear that Forte had married or was engaged to be married to one of my Chapman friends. He is going to Harrogate to stay near them when he comes out of hospital. I haven't the least idea what has been wrong with him but he has been laid up in Manchester.

Such a bore my tobacco from the Stores has failed to come so I have had to write and ask them to send me some more. The weather looks very much like breaking just now and surely it must soon.

The last Bosch offensive was on the whole a total failure. He never even got his first objective and of course came nowhere near his second.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

It's rather trying that my new breeches I had sent out to me by Hawke are too good to use when I may be battle fighting any moment. They really are very nice, so I must wait until I can get some leave.

45. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
19 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have less than no news for you as we are doing next door to absolutely nothing. What it amounts to is this – there is a volcano bubbling and heaving and we are sitting smoking on the top of it. Every now and again there is a heave as if it was going to erupt and we get ready for the worst and then it comes to nothing. Someday it will burst and there it remains to be seen if we have been lulled to drowsiness by too many false alarms.

Everything pointed to a break in the weather last night but this morning it has turned out as fine and sunny as ever.

I am sorry Margaret has been having a bad time with Cousin Mabel. I do wonder if she will come across the Chapmans – Forte and see Madge. The latter's father is practically alright again, as he is going to Harrogate with them. His hand has been affected as his writing is more difficult to read than it was. It was he who told me he had seen Lawers in the 'Property for Sale'.

It is extraordinary how these Stalker girls tried with the exception of Vida. I should think that family alone could repopulate the whole of Northumberland. Ian I suppose is still at home. This must go before the mail comes in so no more.

Your Tammy

46. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
21 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

Your consignment of notepaper came alright – many thanks. I don't care particularly for the blue paper as it has a bad surface, but it is quite useable.

My General is going to Grantham for 3 days I think to the short course for Senior Officers in M. Guns. I am glad as he has been perfectly impossible the last few days.

Is C. M. going to have the operation for that universal and most distressing complaint? I have not heard from the Chapmans whether Margaret has been to see them or not. I do think it wonderful how the French people in the fighting zone stick having troops billeted on them. They come in at all hours of the day or night. Of course every place is ticketed so that you know exactly how many men horses and officers each place will hold. So the inhabitants are not disturbed more than is absolutely necessary. Still they cannot call their homes their own.

Everyone one meets now, if the war is mentioned, says "oh yes it will last another two years and yet is either side physically capable of doing it".

General Gough I hear has taken up Agriculture!^[1]

So far my letter to old Haig has brought forth no response. I don't know either if he got it or having got it, if he can write to me.

I'm so weary I can't go on writing.

Your Tammy

¹ After being dismissed from the army, Hubert Gough spent the last few months of the war studying agriculture at Cambridge University.

47. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
23 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

I had a letter from Forte last night and he said that while he was with the Chapmans at the Majestic Margaret walked in so they have evidently met all right.

The powers that be are getting rid of all reserve officers at the place where Forte was and anyway his job had automatically come to an end.

I return to my cave life almost immediately which will be trying [in] this hot weather but can't be avoided.

I am sending this to Hothfield as I see you are due there on the 25th. I have had a really most interesting time lately which I will try and remember to tell you about some time. Something seems to have gone very wrong with the Huns plans as his attack has been expected for some time now but still nothing seems to come off.

I daresay Margaret will bump into the Wilson Woods but I don't like to force it along if their paths don't cross.

My general went to England to Grantham for 3 days yesterday so I am rather busy. One of the Battalion Commanders is acting for him in his absence which does not make life any easier as he has great ideas of his own capabilities.

It is curious how one seems suddenly thrown up against people and they write more or less constantly. Out of a remark in Evie Nicholson's letter I wrote to Miss Cordes about something or other and we seem to have struck up a sort of running correspondence (are you smiling?). Her letters are totally different in every way to any other letters I have ever had from girls, which makes it rather interesting as they show quite a different personality behind the pen. I can't think of anything else to write about.

Your Tammy

48. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 111 Infantry Brigade
26 June 1918

Dearest Mother,

Before I forget it will you send Margaret a cheque for £3-0-0 from me. I haven't got my cheque book up in the dugout with me. It was rather refreshing the other evening to meet people who belonged to the old life before the war. One a Brigadier Major who used to be up doing musketry with me at Kilbride,^[1] the other his Brigadier who is Burnett's brother. I had never met him but recognised him knowing his name (Crathes).^[2] It is refreshing coming across old friends like this and when I find my contemporaries doing the same job I realise I am not really behind them in the race.

The Hun is pretty busy with gas nowadays so one needs to go warily and not take undue chances when you sniff it. It is quite a rest having the Brigadier away and when he comes back I shall try for a bit of leave in this country.

The mail is due in any moment now but unfortunately post goes at the same moment so I can't answer any letters I may get, tonight.

I don't expect much as Tuesday is a bad mail day being Sunday's crossing.

Very best love,
Your Tammy

¹ The British Army had a camp at Kilbride, County Wicklow, about 25 km south west of Dublin.

² Crathes Castle was the seat of the Burnetts of Ley, and Lindsay is probably referring here to the 13th baronet, Colonel James Burnett, 14th Infantry Brigade, and his brother Major Alexander Burnett, 2nd Battalion KOSB.

49. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
6 July 1918

Dearest Mother,

Have arrived and settled into my rooms and very delightful they are.^[1] Before I forget and I really was very foolish in my packing, will you put my brown and white check coat and the soft hat that lives in the hall into my case with the telescopic top and send them off to me. We are allowed to wear mufti while playing tennis.

As I was waiting at the cloakroom a man came up and asked me what my blue band meant and got talking. He asked me if I had any friends interned in Holland and gave me news of them all. He is or was at the Embassy there. I have met many old friends already including one from the first battalion named Youngson.^[2] No time for more.

Very best love,
Tammy

In a round tobacco box or in one of the tin boxes inside my right drawer of the wardrobe you will find some bronze buttons. Send four along with the coat. My servant has scraped mine clean and they look awful.

¹ Lindsay was lodging at Caius College while attending the Staff College at Cambridge.

² Thomas Youngson had been a captain in the 1st Battalion of the KOSB at the start of the war and was now a brigade major.

50. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
14 July 1918

Dearest Mother,

The buttons arrived and are quite right this time. This Sunday we have no work and of course it is wet. We get 2-6 daily for games and with one exception I have played tennis every day. The work is not hard really but continuous and intense. You can't afford to let your attention wander for a moment.

Now I know you will curse me but it is from not knowing how this course was run. I want you to send me my white Shetland sweater – the one you couldn't use – and my two shirts with black lines with the collars to match. I find two insufficient. I wonder where that box of mine has gone to. It was one I sent home from France – about 2 foot long and 4" high with a concertina top. The case you sent me was Violet's old music case which did quite well.

So far I haven't heard from Madge since I came back.

The Chapmans wired me on Saturday asking me to go up for the weekend and they would ask Margaret to meet me but of course I couldn't. Very kind of them.

I enclose a letter from my staff captain whose people I went to see in Town and give news of him to. No more now.

Your Tammy

51. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
20 July 1918

Dearest Mother,

Like a fool I did not enclose Charlie's letter but as I had put on the stamp I let it go. Here it is. I am sorry to hear that Uncle Claud^[1] is dying and yet I am

[not] surprised to hear he has some disease, he always did look unhealthy. It will be interesting to see if he leaves Violet any money. I hope so fervently. I am enjoying this course very much but think we shall get rather bored with it after a time.

It has been lengthened to 3 months and ends on October 3rd. As a whole the set of men here are delightful. What do you feel about parting with Laura and will it be possible to get anyone else. I don't like the idea of you doing everything yourself.

No other news at present so will push this off to you.

Your Tammy

¹ Claud Lindsay, Lindsay's uncle. See Family Tree.

52. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
Wednesday [*no date given*]

Dearest Mother,

Excuse short scrawl but I am rather seedy. Temp 107 and a hell of a throat. Had no breakfast this am as I can hardly swallow. I really will enclose Charlie's letter this time. Had a nice letter from Mrs Baird saying I could go and shoot there whenever I liked. Very kind of her.

I have unearthed all sorts of old friends in this course. We look at each other and wonder and then finally one or other of us remembers.

Can you send me one of my photos without a mount, they are either in my songs – Songs of the North – or my photo album. You probably know.

The doctor wants me to take two complete days off but I simply can't afford the time. If I don't get any better I shall, but if I can stick it so much the better.

Very best love,
Tammy

The senior staff course is here. The course at Farnham is for teaching Senior Officers i.e. Majors and young Lt Cols how to command Battalions.

53. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
25 July 1918

Dearest Mother,

11pm – Much love for your wire. Yesterday (24th) I vanished to my bed feeling very ill. I couldn't swallow anything so I had a pint of milk with an egg in it and brandy – put a mustard plaster on my neck and took two aspirins got back into bed and hoped for the best. I repeated my milk beverage for dinner and settled down for the night. This morning my temperature was normal but my throat still too bad to eat breakfast.

I did my mornings work and at lunch forced myself to swallow as I knew should become too weak if I kept off too long. My throat is now much better. I am practically well again. It was a curious go and I can't think why I caught it.

It was dear of you to suggest coming down but it isn't the least necessary. All my friends here were most kind and kept popping in to see if I wanted anything. No other news.

Your Tammy

54. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
1 August 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am so glad you have Margaret with you and that Vi is coming shortly. I have heard from Madge and also again from Mrs Baird it says she is sorry neither of the shoots can be graced by my presence as she would have liked me to be there. Extraordinarily kind of her.

I am again in difficulties about my clothes. I may get some partridge shooting here and certainly golf after it has become too cold for tennis also we may get a break in which case I should want my evening clothes. I think the best thing to do will be to empty Turnbull's box of everything and pack in brown paper my evening clothes so they won't slide about, my evening shoes, my white shirts and evening collars (Harman) black evening tie and handkerchief. My links and studs from my dispatch case, check knickers, three pair stockings and my green garters. A pair of Norwegian shoes. I can send home my other things when the weather turns cold.

I am finishing this letter in London on my way to Woolwich Arsenal and go back to Cambridge tomorrow night. Looked in on Evelyn – most refreshing – didn't know Uncle Claud was dead.^[1] Also to my delight she thought Caius College was pronounced as spelt. Very best love rather rushed as I am dining out with a fellow on the course and he is coming to my club at 7.30.

Your Tammy

¹ The Very Reverend Claud Lindsay had died on 23 July 1918.

55. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
7 August 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have treated you very badly I am afraid in the matter of letters lately but really I have had precious little time for letter writing. I am quite recovered from my indisposition and am full of life and vigour.

Before I forget again the pyjamas you made for me are perfect only as I said when I was home there are too many buttons. I really am having a top hole time here and enjoying every minute of it.

Evelyn asked me if I could go to their moor at any time but of course it is out of the question in August and they will be south again by October. Vi will be with you in a couple of days now which will be nice.

My suitcase has come all right but I have not gone into its contents. I think you said the shirts were coming separately but they have not arrived yet. Now I must to bed.

Your Tammy

56. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Cambridge
14 August 1918

Dearest Mother,

What a rotten son you have. I haven't written to you for heaven knows how long. The weather here is too hot for words, but very delightful.

We all go to Grantham^[1] on the 19th for a three day course in Machine Guns then I get four days leave and am going up to see the Wilson Woods returning the night of the 25th. I go down to Bournemouth 26th for a Tank demonstration on 27 and return here 28th.^[2]

I am glad Vi is with you and getting a rest. She certainly sounds as if she needed it.

I am in the throes of a most thrilling adventure which I can't write to you about but if you come here on my return from this journey I will tell you all about. No sign of my shirts so far. Here they say they know nothing about them, nor would they if they never arrived.

I am quite an expert punter now and will take you out when you come down if you would care for it and the weather is decent.

I am intensely amused at my reputation here. I am considered a very quick worker as I always get my work done before anyone else and so far have had no adverse criticisms of it. People are envied when they are in my syndicate because everything is cut and dried and we don't go into lengthy discussions but get the thing done. I am also considered rather a gay bird, why I don't know. Anyway I do as much work as anyone and get in more play than anyone else here.

Best love,
Tammy

¹ The Machine Gun Corps had a training school and depot at Belton Park, Grantham.

² The Tank Corps had a training school and depot at Bovington, about twenty miles west of Bournemouth.

57. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
26 October 1918

Dearest Mother,

Above is my address until further notice. I had a very easy journey right up to the last when things went wrong on the last stage and I landed up quite near Venice 4 hours late. I telephoned G.H.Q. and was ordered to return the way I had come. The Major General who was in my carriage when I left Charing Cross was my divisional commander and we both knew it and yet I had to go onto G.H.Q. and be told – so very unnecessary of the War Office.

I had a most amusing time last night trying to get a bed as I don't know a word of the lingo but by dint of drawing I made myself understood even to the extent of drawing myself on a WC. I reached this Brigade at lunch time today and am up about 3,500 – 4,000 feet. The views are glorious but as a rule for five days out of seven we are in the clouds.^[1]

I like the look of my Brigadier who raced me off round the line after tea tonight. Coming up so high suddenly made me rather breathless but I got round quite successfully and kept up. It is a tremendous difference from the French front as we live in huts up here instead of dugouts.

In writing to me don't put my Division and write the word Italian as otherwise it may go to India. I am so weary and must turn in. It was no good wiring as they take as long as letters.

What I want ordered now is:

- (1) 3 lb Navy Cut Gold Leaf per month failing gold leaf medium.
- (2) Another bottle hairwash as I told you.
- (3) A packet of Bromo^[2]
- (4) At New Year a pocket diary about 6 inches by 3½ inches.

Will write again tomorrow.

My fondest love,
Tammy

I think I shall learn Italian easily.

¹ The 48th Division was based at Granezza, on the Asiago Plateau, about 47 km north of Vicenza.

² Bromo-Seltzer was a brand of antacid invented in 1888 by Emerson's, USA.

58. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Austria
5 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

Your letter of 23rd has just reached me and was most interesting. As you see in the papers fighting started out here the day after my arrival. My Brigade has just done a most extraordinary advance bang through the mountains into

Austria.^[1] The fighting was negligible and we took some thousands of prisoners. About two whole divisions surrendered to us in a defile. I walked up to a large fort where an Austrian Corps Commander was, with about 500 officers and men, and told them to lay down their arms and come with me or I would blow them off the face of the earth with artillery – and they did so.

We took a car which my general^[2] and I find most useful. We then continued over the mountains and dropped down about 3000 feet and caught many hundreds more with enormous quantities of stores etc.^[3] Amongst our bag were various Austrian Generals and the Duke of Braganza.^[4] We then pushed off into the blue again and took up a line on the next ridge of hills where we are now. We must have covered about 60 miles in 2½ days. Taken several thousand prisoners and hundreds of guns all on our own – backed up behind of course by the other two Brigades.

Everyone is delighted with us and our splendid marching enabled the Italians to push as far forward as they have before the Armistice was signed which was of the utmost importance to them. The Italian Corps Commander presented us with a beautiful car we took, but we have not got it yet. Altogether the Brigade has done wonderfully fine work since I came.

I imagine we are in the Austrian Tyrol near Trento. The views are gorgeous with snow on all the peaks – coming down one road we looked sheer down 3 to 4 thousand feet on each side at the same moment.

I am so glad you enjoyed your jaunt in town, we will certainly have another. I am afraid I was rather taciturn but my jaw was hurting considerably. In fact it is only now really ceasing to ache. Heaven knows what our next job is to be.

Tammy

¹ Allied forces had launched an attack on Austro-Hungarian positions at Asiago on 27 October. The enemy withdrew enabling the 48th Division, along with the French 24th Division, to push through the Val d'Assa, taking large numbers of prisoners on the way. The 143rd Infantry Brigade was the first Allied contingent to enter Austria-Hungary when it crossed the border at Osteria del Termine. By the afternoon of 3 November they had reached and occupied the town of Levico. The following day the 143rd advanced to Baselga de Piné (north east of Trento). An armistice signed by Austria-Hungary came into effect at 3 pm on 4 November.

² Brigadier-General G. C. Sladen DSO MC, GOC 143rd Brigade, 48th Division.

³ This appears to describe the road that leads from Lavarone to Caldonazzo. The latter was captured by the 143rd Infantry Brigade during their advance on 3 November.

⁴ Miguel de Bragança, duke of Braganza and commander of the 6th Austrian Cavalry Division. He had surrendered on 3 November.

59. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Italy
15 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

I now have time to sit down and write as our journeyings on foot are over. We shall remain here^[1] until it is decided by the powers that be whether we are to come home – go to concentration camps in France – or be on police duty in Austria. At least these seem to be the three alternatives.

Individual officers of course may get sudden orders to push off anywhere. I have not seen a single big city out here yet. Turin, Milan, Verona, Padua I passed through in the train at night but if we remain in this country for a month or 6 weeks I shall apply for leave and go to either Rome or Florence.

I don't think I can add anything to my account of our rush through the mountains except that we marched back the same way as we went and were able to appreciate the waste, destruction and desolation of a routed army better. My General and I rode over Austrian positions and refought battles from their point of view which was both interesting and instructive.

I don't think I shall get anything out of the show as the General says I have been out here so short a time! and that it is the last issue probably of decorations, he wants to give our allotment to people in the Brigade who have been out here a long time. At the same time he admits I served him well. The mental aspect of the various people under whom one serves is very interesting and I have still to find a Brigadier who is not overwhelmed with his own importance and who does not consider self the whole time.

I think the fault lies in the younger of the officers on their staffs who are not in a position to stand up to them and therefore study their comfort etc to too great a degree. Anyhow it is all very amusing. My divisional General is a topper and I get on extraordinarily well with him.^[2]

I shall spend my spare time now in learning Italian and perfecting my French. I wonder what price Lawyers fetched.

Fondest Love,
Your Tammy

¹ The 48th Division had been moved to an area north of Trissino, with its headquarters at Valdagno.

² General Sir Harold Bridgwood Walker. He commanded the 48th British Division in Italy from July 1918 until his appointment in March 1919 as the commander of all British forces in Italy.

60. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
17 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am sending you a letter I have had from Margaret in case you have no written record. It is an unusually long one for her to write. So foolish of CM to send me the woolly out here as she couldn't possibly know my address. I don't in the least expect to receive it. Before I forget don't bother about the Times as it arrives about two days later than anywhere else's.

Snow has commenced to fall in the hills so we just got clear in time. An exceedingly lucky thing as it falls to a depth of twelve feet and all transport is impossible. It is curious how at the end of the war, Providence having hitherto consistently given the Bosch good weather, should have given no good conditions on all fronts.

I don't imagine I shall get a move before the 31 days of the Armistice have run their course though there is no chance of a renewal of hostilities. Since my last letter I find my general has put in for an Italian decoration for me – one of no value except as a souvenir of the country I have fought for. As such it will be nice to have but I rather resent the way in which he has put in for it. No matter.

This 'killing of time' is a boring existence and it is hard to keep oneself and everybody else fully occupied. As fuel is fearfully scarce the problem of keeping warm is serious. From the few Palaces I have seen the gentlefolk? [*sic*] seem to be in much the same plight as the Irish. Big rambling places and no money to keep them up. Incidentally this is supposed to be one of the most prosperous parts of Northern Italy.

No more news.

Your Tammy

61. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
24 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

I am glad my letters I wrote of our walk through the mountains are getting home. I was beginning to think that perhaps they had suppressed all letters

written at that period. It appears almost certain that I shall be put on this demobilisation work as there are so few regular G Officers out here. I don't know that it matters very much as it will be India as an alternative, but it will probably mean that I shall be in this country till next August. One cannot tell for certain because one doesn't know how command and seniority will be in Battalions.

I went to Padua at the beginning of the week but had no time to go and look up Charlie's friend. It is a poor place – no shops and very few buildings of interest. However I am writing to Charlie's friend tonight as I hope to visit Venice shortly.

Quartered where we are is rather trying from the Officers' point of view as we are right against the mountains and there is nowhere to go and whenever you go on a horse you have to walk.

The views of the mountains and the colouring with a perfect blue sky and hard frost are magnificent. Photographs and postcards convey nothing as it [is] all on far too big a scale. My General's name is Sladen in my regiment. He is a man of quick decision and instinct but no brain and is in the Rifle Brigade.

I can't think of anything else to write about so end. I saw Mrs Cleverly's husband two days ago and may go over and dine with him but the invitation given has not matured so far.

Your Tammy

62. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
26 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

Your letters are arriving most regularly now and I expect you have already got mine with reference to stopping the Times which reaches me too late.

Last Sunday we had another fall of snow but again it has melted in the valley and we are enjoying bright crisp weather again – or would be if there was anything to do.

Tomorrow is the review by the King of Italy^[1] and the weather looks settled which is the main thing. I have welcomed being engaged on it as it has given me definite work to get on with.

My General goes on leave to England on the 2nd and I am considering putting in for leave to Rome while he is away. Then I can do Venice afterwards. Where we are now we are up at the head of a valley with the

mountains right on top of us which makes the scenery perfectly lovely. All the hill sides are terraced out by the small holders which gives them a curious appearance until you are used to it. The reason being I suppose that it makes the soil hold otherwise everything would slip down with the melting snow or get washed down.

Our captured car is in the workshops at present being overhauled but when it comes out I hope to do Verona and Milan – the former is only about 50 kilometres from here.

We have moved our Mess from our Palace as it was quite impossible to warm the room enough for comfort. I don't expect any promotion either now or when peace is signed.

I wonder if you can match this paper for me. I got it from Hugh Reece – Lower Regent St – and I should like some more. I enclose a half sheet blank. Also in my bag you took home is a big bottle of hair wash for preventing hair coming out. Will you transfer some to a smaller bottle and send it to me. It is not stuff to be used daily so I don't want a large quantity.

I am getting a certain number of letters from my various friends as I find time to write to them.

Your Tammy

¹ Victor Emmanuel III reviewed the British troops at Castelvetro, Vicenza, on 27 November.

63. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
29 November 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have put in for leave to Rome for ten days commencing Sunday Dec 7. It will probably be pretty expensive but worth doing. I am sorry to hear that Vi has fifty cases of flu, but it was hardly to be expected that a school would escape entirely.^[1] The review by the King of Italy went off well but it was a bitterly cold day.

They say demobilization will not commence out here until about February which is the very devil. In one way I hope I shall not get tied by the leg for it as by then I think I shall be fed up with this Country and nothing to do. When it does start they calculate it will take 200 days.

Fridays are the most interesting days here as it is market day. I stood hours on the balcony of our mess yesterday watching all the various types passing and repassing beneath me. What I noticed most is the care all the women and girls take of their hair. They themselves look grubby beyond description but their hair is always well done and glossy.

My general has got his thirty days leave and starts on Monday so he is not taking much interest in things.

I have not yet seen a palace or villa with either a beautiful interior or garden. Gardens don't stand much chance as we are still in what was the war zone and gardens were used for parking wagons and horse lines. In most cases it will take a year about for them to recover.

Food is ruinously expensive and we are seriously considering having our Xmas ~~turkey~~ dinner without the time honoured turkey.

No other news.

Your Tammy

¹ Lindsay's sister Violet was at Stone House School, Broadstairs, where her husband worked as a teacher. Like many schools, it had been badly affected by the influenza pandemic, which was at its height in Britain when this letter was written. Many schools closed their doors to pupils to reduce the risk of infection, although Lindsay's alma mater took the opposite approach and locked the pupils and teachers inside the school.

64. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
2 December 1918

Dearest Mother,

I meant to have told you in my last letter that I had picked up a picture paper and seen a photograph of Sparrow in the Roll of Honour. It did not say when he was killed but it must have been quite near the end of the fighting.

The Staff College Camberley^[1] is going to start functioning again about February and the force in Italy will get three vacancies. I have sent my name in. Of course there is a small number but I believe there are very few regular officers out here on the staff.

My leave to Rome has been granted so I shall be off next Sunday for a week. Your diary arrived yesterday. Many thanks for it; it is just what I wanted.

I must say the climate here is glorious but now we are stationary what one misses is something to occupy ones spare time like golf or racquets and also there are no people one can go and see.

I am sorry there has been a death at Hothfield.

Will you look in the right hand drawer of my chest of drawers in the window and see if my Advanced Pay Book on Hold is there and if it is post it to me. It's like a small imitation cheque book with a white paper cover. It is somewhere about my room I think but certainly not in my big oak press unless you have been tidying again!

My day's work now consists of breakfasting at 9.30 signing about three papers and then riding around looking at Battalions drilling until about 12. After that there is absolutely nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Very fondest love,
Tammy

¹ The staff college at Camberley, Surrey, had been closed for the duration of the war, but was re-opened in 1919.

65. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
20 December 1918

Mother dear forgive me not writing from Rome but my time was so full I just rolled into bed at the end of the day. This is just to let you know I am back again with the Brigade, and I will write more fully tomorrow.

Roughly I met the whole of Roman society – I saw the Forum, the Coliseum – St Peters – the Doria Gallery – Borghesi gallery – Hadrians Villa – Villa Desdre at Tivoli and Frascati.

I am caught at present for demobilisation and come home when the Brigade has dissolved – unless something else turns up in the interval.

I have applied to go to Albania but don't know if it will come off. It depends on a fellow at present there going sick! Must go to bed now.

Your Tammy

P.S. I have been given the Croze Guerra^[1] – the Italian Military Cross. Nice to have at any rate a ribbon of one of the countries I have fought for.

¹ Croce al Merito di Guerra (The War Merit Cross) had been instituted by Victor Emmanuel III on 19 January 1918.

66. TO MABEL RAMSDEN

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
22 December 1918

Dearest Cousin Mabel,

Very many thanks for your nice letter. It is most awfully kind of you to send me a woolly, it will be most comforting. Situated as we are right up under the mountains it is pretty cold though dry which mitigates some of the discomfort.

I had a most interesting visit to Rome and combined social pleasures with necessary sightseeing. Everyone I met threw open their doors to me and made me most welcome.

I am busily engaged now on demobilisation which is a tiresome job – any quantity of pamphlets and thousands of questions. As my ordinary work amounts to practically nothing at all, I am rather glad of something to occupy me, and when I feel I am getting overwhelmed by people below asking stupid conundrums I get on my horse and go for a ride.

As I daresay you know we demobilise according to trades and professions – officers and men alike so no unit or arm will necessarily get home before any other unless they are required for foreign service in which case they go home en masse and get a month's leave before re-embarking.

Very best love to you all and the best of everything for the New Year.

Yours very affectionately,
Humphrey

67. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
22 December 1918

Dearest Mother,

I have at last found time to sit down and write a more or less full account of my visit to Rome. It cost me roughly £30 which was less than I had anticipated. I went with a fellow called Ash – our Brigade Transport Officer^[1] – totally uneducated. Rome is extraordinarily quiet and at first I thought there would be nothing to amuse myself with after sightseeing. The second day I saw a notice up in a hotel to say that certain Italian ladies would be at home to English Officers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, so on the Thursday I went. They all spoke English in fact were English and Americans married to Italians and English speaking Italian girls. I got on very well with them all and

finally asked if the Sennonetta's were in Rome as I had called and found them either out or away. From that moment I was absorbed by them all and they none of them could do enough – invitations poured on me. The American wife of a Secretary in the Foresight Office was splendid in introducing me – asked me out to lunch twice and dinner once. She told me quite candidly that it had been a perfect joy introducing me as I was the only Britisher she had met who had made his way for himself after being started and when I tried to thank her for her kindness she said that I really done it myself and that without my personality I could never have been so generally received by the big people in Roman society. I wish I could remember all their names but being Italian they don't stick in my head. The outcome was that I danced Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and left by the night train on Tuesday. By going to all these dances I saw the interiors of a good many Palazzo's which is of course what I wanted.

My American friend Brambilla^[2] by name is most anxious for me to marry an Italian girl daughter of Marchese Malaspina di Cabonara^[3] [*sic*] – a very charming girl and very well off. The mother wants her to marry an Englishman and certainly went out of her way to be nice to me. I naturally told Brambilla that apart from other reasons it was out of the question as I was poor and only my pay practically to live on. She said that's all rubbish your personality, good looks and army career are enough for any girl with money. Her last words when I finally left were to urge me to seriously consider the matter. It was as well I left Rome when I did as she had gone out of her way to throw us together. I know the girl liked me but I hope sincerely nothing more.

I hired a car on two days to do Tivoli and Frascati which was the easiest and most comfortable way of doing things. We had perfect weather the whole time and most deliciously warm sun.

Much love for the novels they are what I was badly wanting also the Cornhill.^[4] My first consignment of tobacco has at last reached me so I am content again as I had been smoking anything I could get.

My Italian friends were most anxious I should try and get myself to Rome as an assistant military attache but it would be far too expensive. I shall try and get to Venice about the middle of January.

Best love to M & CM & CW.

Your Tammy

¹ Possibly Captain C. Ash, Mechanical Transport, Royal Army Service Corps.

² Julia Brambilla was the American wife of the Italian diplomat Giuseppe Brambilla.

³ Obizzo Malaspina, marchese di Carbonara e di Volpedo, an Italian diplomat.

⁴ *The Cornhill Literary Magazine*.

68. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
28 December 1918

Dearest Mother,

My letters after my return from Rome should have reached you by now. All my friends have been most kind in writing to me this Xmas. I had 5 yesterday from you, Miss Chapman, Miss Peeke, Mrs Doig.

At present I am feeling very depressed and I can't throw it off but I daresay it will wear off. I am in perfect health but there is something wrong somewhere. It isn't drink because I only have two a day and I am not in love. Karma^[1] seems to have gone all astray at present and yet in some of the things she has been correct. I have not yet [met] my white haired lady though perhaps if I did I should cheer up.

Xmas passed without any fuss here though there seems to be plenty of gaiety etc. at home now and I hear dances are being given all over the place.

I don't expect to get to the Staff College and I don't expect anything out of the New Year's Honours as I was so continuously moved about this year. Altogether I feel there is nothing coming to me for some time to come which is trying.

Tell C.M. her woolly has turned up safely and give her my love. I wrote to thank her for it.

I have finished both your novels and enjoyed them – send me the sequel to Sylvia Scarlett called Sylvia and Michael^[2] when it comes out will you? I will put these two back to you this week. Your Roman book has not made its appearance yet.

In the next seven weeks I shall be busy at Division on demobilisation. Although I work there I am still with the Brigade.

And now to bed.

Your Tammy

¹ Karma appears to have been the name of a fortune-teller consulted by Lindsay. See further reference to her in Letter III.83.

² *The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett* (1918) and *Sylvia and Michael: the later adventures of Sylvia Scarlett* (1919) were novels by Compton Mackenzie.

69. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
5 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

The letter I wrote you after my return from Rome seems to have taken a fearfully long time to get home.

I met a man who was David's boss in S. Africa. He said he was an awfully nice fellow but a square peg in a round hole and thought that no one was equal to a Lindsay – so like them all. He is intensely religious and had absolutely no sporting instincts.

Madge sent me her photograph which I shall send home to you on your return to the Cottage. As you have never seen her you will be interested. We are indulging in most unpleasant weather at present. For three days now it has been pouring in torrents and been fearfully muggy.

We are having trouble with the man in whose house we are billeted. He has got it into his head that we are ruining everything in his house and has removed everything he can from our sitting room, tables, chairs, carpets and cloths. As we have treated him consistently well and keep his house scrupulously clean we are rather fed up. However if he does not come to heel I think the threat of billeting 50 men in his house will frighten him.

I hope to go to a dance tomorrow night at one of the C.C.S. It may or may not prove amusing.

There is a rumour that they are going to offer Brigadiers £600 per annum to retire in order to straighten out the congestion caused by all the promotions. The majority will undoubtedly take it.

I see Miles is a Battalion Major now in the New Year Honours so he has not done so badly for himself. Coke is a Battalion Colonel.^[1]

No other news.

Tammy

¹ Both Eric Miles and Edward Coke had served alongside Lindsay in the 2nd Battalion KOSB at the start of the war, as a second lieutenant and major, respectively. Miles had been promoted to the rank of brevet major in the New Year Honours of 1919, while Coke had been made a temporary colonel in the Department of the Quarter-Master-General to the Forces in December 1917.

70. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
11 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

I have no news for you but am just sending this along as I know you like getting a letter.

I am most awfully sorry to hear that Haig has been affected mentally by his imprisonment. I sincerely hope he will get over it with rest and quiet.

I have heard again from Charlie's friends in Venice and I have written to say I hope I shall go and see them the first week in February.

Don't worry any more about my depression as I have thrown it off and am devoting myself thoroughly to demobilisation.

No other news as I said so.

With best love,
Tammy

71. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
17 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

Your letter written after you had been up to the Leaze's interested me muchly.

I see in all the picture papers portraits of Rosamond Carrick's daughter who is engaged to be married.^[1] It sounds as if it was a good match for her if he has any money and I cannot picture Rosamond allowing her daughter to fall in love with anyone who had none.

My servant has volunteered to stay with me to the end of demob which pleases me. I was not going to stand in his way if he wanted to go home so I feel virtue has been rewarded.

We had two inches of snow yesterday but it is thawing and raining this morning.

I am sending some photos I took in Rome with Madge's photo. I have written on the back where they were taken.

Demob work is keeping me pretty busy just now and will increase. Absolutely no news.

Best love,
Tammy

Did you ever hear from Lucy Train?

¹ Lady Rosamond Butler, the daughter of (Ellen) Rosamond Butler (née Lindsay), countess of Carrick, married Lionel Robertson in 1919.

72. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
20 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

Your novels you sent me from Yorkshire have turned up all right, much love for them.

I am most extraordinarily fortunate in one trait I evidently possess, as you will agree when I tell you that when I took over this demob job which [*sic*] a fellow went on leave; there were two clerks whom he had promised to allow to go as soon as their papers came along. Their papers have come but they both advanced and said that if I remained on here on his return they would like to stop with me, but if I am going back to Brigade they will claim this promise. As demob clerks who will remain are damned hard to get it gives me rather a whip hand in Division. The same thing is happening in Brigade. It will probably end by me combining both my Brigade work and Division work in one office.

We had two hunt ladies to dinner on Saturday last and one of them, a Miss Scott, turned out to be a niece of Mrs Mark Fenwick of Abbotsford and also of Mr Walter Scott of Stow also a cousin of Channie Leigh who was killed at Mons.^[1] It made entertaining very easy indeed.

The weather here is very cold and overcast and looks mighty like snow.

Fondest Love,
Tammy

Yes I saw Kembles engagement mentioned.

¹ For Chandos Leigh, see above.

73. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
24 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

I enclose two snapshots which it may amuse you to have and some bad views of the country which I will try and improve on. Nothing has happened of any consequence and we are all just carrying on.

I am glad Dudley has got the V.C.^[1]

With regard to the 2 months leave etc. don't take any notice of what Mrs J says as she is invariably wrong. Two months leave is being granted to Officers who belong to or are going to native regiments such as West African etc. I shall not get any leave before demobilisation here is completed which may be mid-April or maybe later – no-one knows.

I have had no letters lately so am always hoping to hear from various friends. Today I motored up into the mountains and got stuck in a landslide. It took us two hours to dig the car out and as the sun was below the hills it was bitterly cold.

It is amusing when even the best regulated families have skeletons in their cupboards.

Very fondest love,
Tammy

¹ Dudley Graham Johnson, acting lieutenant-colonel, the South Wales Borderers, had received the Victoria Cross for action at the battle of the Sambre 4 November 1918.

74. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
25 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

I feel I have rather lost track in my letter writing. My work takes most of the day and as we are only 4 in our Mess now it breaks up the Bridge after dinner if I retire to write. I did go the other night but the General was so unpleasant about it that it is not worthwhile. I don't propose to tell him every time I am going out nor do I propose to tell him where I am going so it makes things a bit difficult.

Still no news of any excitement. Various cups have been competed for out here and this Division has practically scooped the lot. My Brigade has taken nearly all those open to the Infantry. I may be going to a dance on Wednesday at a hut near here. If any of them can dance it ought to be rather fun.

There is a young boy who is attached to the staff here who has become violently enamoured of a girl in Rome and excitement runs high as to whether he will be fool enough to get caught or whether he will manage to get clear. At present opinion is more or less evenly divided. He returns from Rome tomorrow so we shall know the worst.

Very fondest love,
Tammy

75. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
30 January 1919

Dearest Mother,

In the Wilderness and Smart Set came today.^[1] Much love for them and I will give you my impressions of In the W.

The dance last night was a complete success. Going there we had an accident meeting another [car] end on which completely removed our near front wheel, so we had to walk the last 7 miles to the dance.

I got a certificate for driving today. The drivers are so bad that if I am to be killed out here motoring I prefer to do it myself.

Demob work isn't nearly over. I have still 11,000 odd men to get rid of before my time comes.

I am sorry Winifred is not coming to stay with you. I don't believe I have ever met her – anyway I cannot remember her if I did.

Today thank goodness is fine and sunny but we have two days snow on the ground to get rid of before we can do anything.

My General is seedy so I can more or less spend my evenings as I choose which is a relief. I hate being tied down to play bridge every evening especially as he is so fearfully bad.

Fondest love,
Tammy

¹ *In the Wilderness* (1917) was a novel by Robert Hichens. *Smart Set* was an American literary magazine.

76. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
2 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

Please give up worrying about me becoming a G.S.O.(2). The chance of that happening is gone for the present. Also don't run away with the idea that I am going to draw extra pay as army of occupation because I am not. No one out here will unless we leave any troops behind and then things will be ante-dated.

You said when I came home from Cambridge that you noticed a change in me but I think when I come home you may notice a greater change. It is really (to me) rather curious. I went through about three weeks fearful depression and had absolutely no confidence in myself but having got through it I now feel a greater sense of confidence and power and also a much greater independence of spirit. It is difficult to put on paper exactly what I do feel except that I have definitely folded up Part I of my life and have embarked on Part II, at the same time I feel curiously incomplete. What is missing I have not yet made up my mind about – it may be a wife – it may be a different sphere of work or action that I require, and when I have found and appropriated what I feel missing that will be the end of Part II.

Of late I have been rather introspective – why I don't know but I have discovered vaguely and in an unformed way many things about myself. At times I feel myself curiously detached and away from everybody and at others very much with everybody yet aloof and able to read them and their minds. I suppose everybody goes through these evolutions of mind and spirit – in fact it accounts for men and women suddenly becoming religious or changing their faith; at any rate for doing the unexpected. What one does must depend on mental poise and balance in which case of course health becomes quite a big factor. It would interest me to know if other people have realised what has been going on inside them when they have come to a similar crisis.

I have just started In the Wilderness and have not got far enough to write about it. I am posting Madge's photo to you today also some snaps of Rome and the bad efforts of the country round here.

Fondest love,
Tammy

77. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
5 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

I have finished 'In the Wilderness' and enjoyed it. It is a curious book and I gather that you read it before sending it out to me. I think all the characters are possible but Dion and Rosamonde are extremes and I don't think that with the intimacy of married life Rose could have possibly maintained her pose though I do think she might have reverted to it suddenly when her son was killed. I can understand Dion swinging over to the other woman for a bit when his wife turned him down but personally if I discovered how low the other woman was I should not have sunk lower but cut women out of my life altogether. Mrs Clarke is a true character though rather superlative and her remarks reference widows if you remember them are true I think. The description of how a man regards his mother is also quite good and fairly true. Anyway when I return the book I will put slips in at these places.

I haven't had a single letter for 3 days but am still hoping.

I have not yet gone to Venice but may get away about the 10th. There has been as you know a complete change in the demobilisation scheme^[1] which has given me a lot of extra work but once I have got that going again I hope to be able to go to the Johnstones.

Fondest Love,
Tammy

¹ Following his appointment in January 1919 as Secretary of State for War, Winston Churchill introduced a new demobilisation scheme based on age, length of service and the number of times a man had been wounded in battle.

78. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
11 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am off to Venice tomorrow 12th for four days to stay with Charlie's friends. I shall be very glad of the rest and I hope the weather will be fine. I have obtained my pass to drive Government cars so I have now another amusement.

Apart from this I have no news. Oh yes the sun shines brilliantly here but the climate is treacherous in that the sun is hot enough to sit out in without a coat but it is freezing in the shade so if you aren't careful you catch a chill very easily.

We shall soon know definitely about the Army of Occupation out here and then I shall be able to see further ahead. Can you send me a good toothbrush (stiff) and another tin of my shaving soap?

Fondest love,
Tammy

79. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
13 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am practicing typriting [*sic*] so you must excuse any very bad errors I may make. My visit to Venice is postponed for the present as there is a rush of work due to the formation of the Army of Occupation being formed. My name has been submitted for a job of sorts but whether anything comes of it or not remains to be seen. It all depends on whether they make the job a G.S.O.1 or G.S.O.2. If the latter I shall probably get it. If I do it will mean going to Fiume which will please me muchly, and will also be most interesting.

My mails of late have been too dull for words, no letters from anyone. Having bought a camera I am compiling a book of snapshots entirely of this country. My latest efforts have been most successful and I took some rather nice ones of a Sports meeting we had three days ago.

Having just started to do this game I find it rather difficult to think and write a running letter so you mustn't mind its raggedness. One reason why I did not go to Venice was that the G.S.O.1 of this Division wanted to go on leave to England today, and if I had gone as well there would have been no-one left who knew about the Army of Occupation left here. I hope however to go next Wednesday without fail.

Tonight I am going to a dance at Vicenza got up by the Machine Gun Battalion. It may prove amusing or not, depending mainly on who the ladies are. After this great effort and as it is a gloriously sunny day I must go out and get some fresh air.

Very fondest love,
Your Tammy

80. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
15 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

Much love for your letters. I felt you would be interested when I wrote you that letter, but I felt in the mood for writing and my room was warm. It is curious how the letter coincided with the horoscope as I had not remembered what Smith said about 1918.

The dance was a great success and I met a most charming Italian lady there to whom I at once lost my heart (for the evening). She is Marcesa Navana d'Hairt of Verona and we got on like a house on fire. I am proposing to motor into Verona to see her soon after I get back from Venice.

You need not worry about me continuing to be introspective as I know too much is bad and I have plenty to occupy myself with now.

Jennie [*sic*] Dove is at last married and very happy. I heard from her yesterday and she says she thoroughly recommends matrimony so that is all right.

I have heard again from Mrs Baird. She always writes me delightful letters.

Eric Nicholson has got away from Orkney and is by way of visiting her now.

Can you trace a Lord Wodehouse (Jack).^[1] I have become great friends with him out here long before I knew he was a Lord. He is one of England's polo players and a great sport. I think he belongs to Norfolk or Lincolnshire but I am not certain.

Sorry this letter is not up to the mark but I am rather rushed having been out all the morning giving evidence of a motor smash.

Vi wrote me a long letter about nothing which I must answer so fondest love,

Tammy

¹ John Wodehouse, the son of the 2nd earl of Kimberley, was known as Lord Wodehouse until he inherited his father's title in 1932. He was a noted polo player and won gold at the 1920 Olympics. He served with the 16th Lancers during World War I and was awarded the Military Cross. He was killed in an air-raid on London in 1941.

81. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
19 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

Before I forget two books of Rome by Zola have come.^[1] One from Smith Cheltenham^[2] in English and one from the Times B.C.^[3] in French. It is fearfully stiff reading but is undoubtedly an excellent description of the place.

My long postponed visit to Venice is coming off at last and I am off tomorrow until Sunday. I may possibly get a job somewhere in this part of the World but nothing definite has been settled yet. I don't want to come home and get my two months leave in March and April. I would far rather postpone it until May and June or preferably the whole of August.

Walker the G.O.C. of the Division is watching my interests most kindly.^[4]

Next Monday I am going to sing at a Concert near here. I didn't let myself in for it but the G(3) here a friend of mine very airily told Miss Talbot that Lindsay would of course help her if she was in difficulties.

We are having I imagine the usual spring thaw now as it is warmer but very wet with fine drifting rain. They tell me they never have wind in this part of Italy but the changes of temperature are rapid.

If I don't get a job out here it looks [like] me coming home about the middle of March as things are shaping now.

Fondest Love,
Tammy

¹ *Rome* (1896) was a novel by Émile Zola.

² Probably W. H. Smith & Son, Promenade, Cheltenham.

³ The Times Book Club.

⁴ General Sir Harold Bridgwood Walker.

82. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
25 February 1919

Dearest Mother,

I returned from Venice on Sunday. I had a most delightful time with the Johnstones. The weather was rotten as they had the Sirocco and so of course I could take no photographs. I saw most of the buildings but the pictures are not back again yet. The J's know everyone in Venice and launched me thoroughly and I played bridge and danced with the Venetians as a result.

Everyone accepted me and asked me to be sure and return. At an evening dance given by one of the oldest families I soon became quite at home as I was seized by one pretty Venetian after another and asked to teach her various steps of the foxtrot. Then I was seized and asked to teach their young men friends. So I felt thoroughly at home. They congratulated me on my French and said how few Englishmen spoke any. Altogether I had a great time.

I should like to go back in the spring when you are certain of getting fine weather. Re Madge's photo. It is not a good one as she depends upon her atmosphere of gaiety and chicness and vitality for the greater part of her charm. Margaret's letter amused me much and I can picture it all so well.

I found a fine mail waiting for me when I got back. Most of the people I like hearing from had written. I thoroughly fused with the J's and I think they liked me. Anyhow I hope to meet them again.

Tonight I am singing at a concert near here having been let in for it by a friend. I met many beautiful women and girls among the Venetian families but came away with a whole heart.

Sinister Street has arrived.^[1] Many thanks.

Yours,
Tammy

¹ *Sinister Street* (1913-1914) was a two-volume novel by Compton Mackenzie.

83. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, Italy
28 February 1919

My dearest Mother,

I have just finished reading *Sinister Street* but I cannot decide if I like it or not. There are parts which leave a sour taste behind. In a way it is interesting to see emotions that one experienced oneself put on paper by someone else.

You remember Karma told me that I should meet a grey haired lady out here who would be a kindred spirit well I studied Mrs Johnstone to see if she would fit the bill and again I am undecided. She is a delightful woman, artistic,

musical and clever to a certain degree and of course knows a great many interesting people. As usual when I take to people I walked straight in and settled down on the hearth as though it belonged to me. That they liked me I have no shadow of doubt though they made no direct statement naturally. Whether she was also interested in me I can only conjecture but I am inclined to think she was from the many and various discussions we had.

Sometimes I can't help wishing I was in the Diplomatic Service. I believe I could be not unsuccessful in that line but of course without a certain amount of private means it would be impossible and anyway it would be impossible to change.

I have a quiet feeling that something is brewing for me but I can't decide which direction it is coming from. The feeling is more intense some days than others and today it is very strong.

Spring I think is on us here as it has turned so much warmer and the snow is vanishing off the mountains rapidly.

Don't run away with the idea that I am or may get a G.S.O.2 job out here because that is out of the question. I merely said if I remember right that Gen Walker was watching my interests.

My own General goes home for good on Saturday. Thank Heavens!

Fondest love,
Tammy

CW is by way of coming to Venice next month to collect his belongings.

84. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, B.E.F. Italy
3 March 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am going to take on another job out here – Staff Captain at Cremona. It means a drop in pay but as I shall not remain a Brigade Major out here for very much longer it will be better than returning at once to regimental rates. If I am wanted for the Regiment they will have me back from where ever I am. Another point is it will give me grounding in Q work.^[1]

My present Division General is remaining as C in C and also Colonel Barnett and they have both more or less said that if it is in their power to get me a better job later they will do so. You see everyone is finding their level again now and some of the drops are enormous. If one has false pride one is apt to get left out altogether and by making up one's mind too late get nothing.

I shall be working under a Colonel Dick Cunningham^[2] who knows all the J's and especially Michael. I don't know quite when I am going – probably about the time you get this letter. I shall apply for leave to come home and get thin clothes for the summer.

Cremona is south of Lake Garda and near Verona and Mantua on the River Po.

Toothbrush and soap came safely thank you. The weather is beginning to turn lovely but still no flowers.

Fondest Love,
Tammy

Will wire you my new address if and when I arrive there.

¹ *i.e.* the work of the quartermaster branch of the staff.

² Probably Lieutenant-Colonel H. T. Cunningham, Royal Artillery, who was an assistant-quarter-master-general.

85. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. 143 Infantry Brigade, 48 Division, B.E.F. Italy
8 March 1919

Dearest Mother,

I go to Cremona on Monday. The job will last two months and in the interval my friends at the top of the tree out here are going to try and find me something else. General Walker has been extraordinarily kind in looking out for my interests.

I shall try for ten days leave about the end of March as I must get clothes.

Your letters from Southam are most interesting and meeting Jim and Nesta must add zest to the visit. I know exactly what you mean about her and that she is stouter. I wonder what she would be like now had she married happily. When I renewed our acquaintance in London there was something about her atmosphere which I did not like. I can't explain what it was. It may of course have been her mother. I am glad Jim seems suited.

Ian wrote me in answer to a letter of mine when I heard from you he was leaving the service. A nice letter on the whole.

My work here is completed so I am not dashing off to the new job before seeing it through which I am glad of.^[1] If you address me

Staff Captain
Lines of Communication
Cremona
BEF Italy

I ought to get your letters all right. I told the General this morning that I did not mind how far east I went if anything turned up.

Fondest Love,
Tammy

¹ The demobilisation of the 48th Division was more or less complete by this time and its service officially came to an end on 31 March.

86. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C,^[1] B.E.F. Italy [Tortona]
13 March 1919

Dearest mother,

What a funny place the army is. No sooner do I get moved to one place than I am ordered on again. As I told you I reported to Cremona on Sunday as Staff Captain, on Monday evening I was ordered away again to report here as D.A.Q.M.G. so here I am at Tortona.

There seems very little work to do which is lucky as my experience of Q work is very small. I don't anticipate much difficulty in getting hold of what there is.

At Cremona I ran in to a fellow who claims to be a first cousin twice removed. His name is Guy Buckland^[2] and his claims seem justified from his evidence. Anyway he is apparently inordinately proud of his Lindsay connection.

I had a most glorious trip here coming by motor all the way. Vicenza – Verona – Mantua – Cremona – Tortona. The country itself is flat and all vines but the atmosphere and colouring perfectly heavenly. I appear to be a sort of spare parts officer as I am only by way of keeping this place warm for someone else, but General Walker is keeping his eye on me and is going to make every effort to find a niche for me to settle down in.

I believe my Roman friends the Malaspinas have a villa near here. If so it looks almost like an act of God me being sent here. They are still in Rome I think but I am writing today to find out. I am within sight of Milan.

Address me

DAQMG
HQ L of C
BEF
Italy

Your Tammy

¹ *i.e.*, Line of Communication. The Mediterranean Line of Communication ran from Taranto in southern Italy to the Channel ports and was used to transport troops and supplies to and from Salonika and eastern theatres. By this time, it was busy with demobilised troops returning home.

² Guy Buckland DSO of the Royal Artillery was the son of Laura Lindsay, who was descended from the Balcarres line of the Lindsay family.

87. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, B.E.F. Italy [Tortona]
14 March 1919

Dearest mother,

My job here is purely temporary; for about three weeks I think. I don't really care for this side of staff work but it is good training. In the interval as I say the C in C is looking round for something else for me. If by the time I am finished here nothing has turned up I expect I shall come trotting home. I shall not apply for leave in case anything comes along as I might lose it by being away.

I am enclosing a letter from Mrs Johnstone as I think you can get a mental picture of people from their writing.

I hope to find an excuse for running into Milan before long.

What a pity Nesta has so to speak ruined herself.

Your letters of the 4 & 5 have just caught up with me here.

Fondest Love
Tammy

My Italian lessons are patchy as I can never say when I can leave my work definitely and the amount varies considerably but I take every opportunity of practising it.

88. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
16 March 1919

Dearest mother,

I have quite settled down here and could easily take root but my future is too insecure at present. I am sorry to disappoint you about my leave but there it is.

Before I forget I have despatched a sack of stuff home by Military Forwarding Officer. It contains books, thick pyjamas, thick socks etc.

Don't knit me any more thick socks. It is too hot out here to wear them. Very thin wool is what I want and I daresay I had better buy them as they will be a bother to knit. If I do come back home for the summer I shall get tennis.

Today I went for a ride to see some new pumping station for fire protection. Of course nothing worked but then no one expected it to. Riding is much curtailed by the grass coming up and other crops. They get as many as 5 crops of grass in the year here.

From my bedroom window I get a magnificent view west and north, over about fifteen miles of country. The house is a summer villa belonging to some people who live either in Genoa or Milan and stands on the top of a hill.

Somehow or other I don't feel as if I am going to settle here and am half hoping I may yet go to South Russia.^[1]

The last two days have been doubtful but today is perfectly glorious and wives are flocking out.

No time for more

Your Tammy

¹ By early 1919, Britain had around 40,000 troops stationed in the Caucasus in support of the White Army in the Russian Civil War.

89. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
25 March 1919

Dearest mother,

Your letters are beginning to arrive direct now so that is all right. I heard from Charlie today and I gather from his letter that he is not over pleased with the new owner of Lawers though he does not say why.^[1]

We have plunged into winter again here. The last two days we have had 6 inches of snow on the ground but it is all away again now and the fields all look like green emeralds [flat] as paving stones. The trees are covered with bursting buds and spring must surely be upon us. I hope to go to Milan next week for a day or two. Charles Vaughan^[2] has given me an introduction to some Italian cousins of his to start me off.

Buckland has gone home so I cannot find out about Rhoda von S. I found him very overpowering and did not like to say definitely that he was snobbish about his Lindsay side but he told me that he did not care about the Buckland side of his family and always claimed the Lindsay. To be quite honest I did not like him. However as I say he has gone and we probably shall not meet again.

From what I gather the Powers that be here like me and are anxious to keep me but my fate (of staying actually here) depends on one man who returns tonight. If he gets AAG, I get DAAG. If he does not he will probably remain as DAAG in which case I shall have to look for a niche elsewhere.

I have heard from the Malaspinas and they live only 15 minutes by car from here so it is more than likely I shall see them when they come up for the early summer. I certainly think I fused with the Johnstones but I shall never know what they thought of me unless they tell Charlie and Charlie tells you.

I am looking round here for someone to teach me Italian but it is very hard indeed to find anybody, especially as I don't want a Tortonese as their accent is so bad and many words they use are peculiar to this district. In fact it is a dialect.

No more now so fondest love

Your Tammy

¹ The estate of Lawers had been sold after the death of David Williamson in 1913.

² Major Charles Vaughan of the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers was serving in Italy as a DAQMG.

90. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
29 March 1919

Dearest mother,

I hope the shawl will reach you safely and you probably find it is not in the least what you expected it to be. However it is the real article and was chosen

for me by a Venetian. This place is slowly beginning to get going. We have a dance coming off next Friday and I hope we shall have many more afterwards. People here will not mix so some of us are trying to force them. This place is too small for cliques and the sooner they all realise it the better for everyone.

I have found a girl to teach me Italian and I meet her every day at 4.30 in a chemist shop kept by her uncle. She was educated in Rome and speaks French fluently so altogether it is quite amusing. Tonight I am going to see an opera called Wally and next week I hope to go and see Madame Butterfly.

My career out here is in the air again and if I do not get a job before two months are gone I shall come home. I am now trying again for [*illegible*] and failing that am seriously considering Russia again.

I shall write to the C in C and ask him to give me a letter to the W.O. and say I should want leave before proceeding. No other news.

Your Tammy

91. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
29 March 1919

Dearest mother,

You will be amused to hear that I am dining with Aunt Clare's^[1] brother tonight about 10 miles from here. I met him three days ago and was introduced to him and then I met him again yesterday. His name conveyed less than nothing to me until he asked me if I was connected with a Leonard Lindsay and on finding out who I was followed it up by asking me to dinner.

I had a glorious view of the Alps this morning when I got up. We were in a cloud but the sun was shining on them. They are roughly 110 miles away.

I had a letter from Vi this morning but she had no news to give me. I wrote to her this morning so you need not repeat this news to her. I had another gallop today on a new horse and then called on another married couple.

Will you send me out a pair of my regimental collar badges you know them or ought to they are bronze castles with a split pin behind. [*sketch of a regimental badge*]

The country here is carpeted with violets and primroses and before I came down the fields were a mass of crocuses they tell me.

I may go with the G.O.C. when he departs to visit Scutari^[2] and I am sincerely hoping he will take me. Meanwhile I am paving the way and have dropped a hint that I should like to go.

I am trying to find out if there is any fishing to be got anywhere round here. I am afraid I shall find it is too far away unless I buy a motor of my own out here.

No other news.

Your Tammy

¹ Clare Vaughan, who had married Lindsay's uncle Leonard. See Family Tree.

² *i.e.*, Shkodër in Albania. Not to be confused with the better-known Scutari in Turkey (which Isabel Lindsay appears to have done – see below). The International Military Mission was based in Shkodër.

92. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
31 March 1919

Dearest mother,

I wrote to Charlie an account of my visit to the Johnstones the day after I left them, and I have since heard from C that he got my letter all right. I don't quite gather what you mean by saying go to Hawkes for my thin things. I have always bought my uniform from him. Unless of course you refer to my plain clothes. I don't feel inclined to launch out into new mufti suits yet as they are so expensive, although I do want two new shooting suits, if I am coming home to be stationed at home. As I hope to go further East I shall start reforming my wardrobe yet.

I am more in the air than ever at present as a new AAG is coming here so the DAAG will remain thus closing that vacancy. I have written to [*illegible*] to try and get there again and if that fails I shall probably come home about the middle of April and try and get a job in South Russia.

Wives are flocking out here but I find them a very poor assortment though no doubt very worthy.

It was only a little plan of mine to go to Scutari and it may not come off at all in fact it is more than likely that it won't.

The letter you forwarded me was from Christy Holme who is trying to get a job as Commissioner in Northern Nigeria. He is also most anxious to get married. He hopes to be home on leave in August and September.

Your Tammy

93. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona
B.E.F. Italy
1 April 1919

Dearest mother,

Today has been a day of surprises.

My General said to me this morning; Lindsay you will go with me to Scutari tomorrow so I said Yessir and walked out. I stepped across the passage and was met by Parkes^[1] with a wire in his hand saying that if I liked I could go to the Caucasus [*sic*] Mountains. So I went and showed it to the General and while we were discussing it another wire came cancelling the offer so I shall still pay my visit to Scutari. I expect to be away about a fortnight. It is not worth the expense to telegraph the fact to you.

I feel more certain than ever that something is moving towards me or that I am moving to some new sphere of work. No English mail in at all today so no letters, and no Times. Curious that having set my mind on going to Scutari it has come about as I wanted. I don't give up all hope of getting further East, yet.

Best Love
Your Tammy

P.S. I do hope the shawl has reached you safely.

¹ Captain Arthur Parkes of the Royal Engineers was serving in Italy as a staff captain.

94. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

San Giovanni di Medua^[1]
3 April 1919

Dearest mother,

My work is completed but whether satisfactorily to those above me or not remains to be seen. Now that it is over and probably it has been in the daily papers I will tell you what it was. The Battalion at Scutari was to be withdrawn quickly and as no one had the slightest idea of the country and the means at our disposal, it was decided to send over a staff officer with full powers to get

away the Battalion, save all the stores possible and sell all the animals. Well I have done it and am inside my time but whether my time coincides with other peoples time is only conjecture and I shall not know until I get back if all is well.

Had I been over here longer I could have bought some nice furs and beautiful silks etc. but one wants unlimited time to bargain with Albanians and in addition I am travelling very light.

You had got hold of the wrong Scutari in your last letter before I left Tortona. My journey took me through Montenegro so that if I have had a roughish time I have at least had an interesting one. The country as can be imagined is like the wilds of Scotland but on a much bigger scale. There is at least one murder a week and every action on the part of the chiefs of the tribes is fraught with meaning.

We sail from here Sunday midday and I shall be back in Taranto Sunday evening. Monday night I shall go north to Rome and on to Tortona Tuesday night.

This letter I shall try and get into the Kings Messenger Bag at Rome so that you may get it fairly quickly, if I succeed. It's been an experience.

Fondest love
Tammy

¹ The Italian name for the Albanian town of Shëngjin, which was the main port for the interior city of Scutari.

95. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Grand Hotel, Rome^[1]
5 April 1919

Dearest mother,

I am having a most amusing time and meeting a lot of new people. We arrived on Thursday and went to some races in the pm. The racing was poor but the people interesting and curiously enough there was only one girl there who attracted me, although there were many beautifully turned out.

The same evening I went up to the rooms of the naval attache^[2] who was receiving friends and there I found my lady and was introduced. She talks no English but French came to my rescue. I am hoping to see her on Sunday at the races again.

Yesterday I lunched with some Russians the daughter being a beautiful girl and then I called on the Sennonettas. In the evening I met some people called Lloyd Thomas^[3] who is at the Embassy and afterwards played bridge at 5/- a 100 with another fascinating lady called Treviz. I am lunching with her outside Rome today.

This evening I shall call on the Malaspinas. I have put it off until I knew when we should move on as they are rather overpowering though awfully kind.

We sail for Scutari on Monday I think from Brindisi.

Fondest Love
Tammy

¹ This and the following letter were written on a sheet of the hotel's headed notepaper.

² Commander Dennis Larking (who is mentioned by name in the next letter) was the naval attaché to Rome.

³ Hugh Lloyd Thomas of the British Embassy in Rome.

96. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Grand Hotel, Rome
6 April 1919

Dearest mother,

I have not been able to post my other letter to you so continue. I lunched at the Castello Cesare yesterday and played Bridge afterwards and won again. We came back rather late so I did not have tea but went up to Captain Larking's rooms again at 7pm. A delightful lady Allatina by name who I had met before blew in and lamented the fact that she had just been given two stalls for the opera (Madame Butterfly) and had no-one to take her. So I offered my services which were accepted. She dined with me and we went on together. The opera lasted from 9-1.30am including a ballet at the end.

Today is more racing. I may or may not go. I am rather tied by the A.D.C. who only has one leg. If he wants to go I shall probably have to go and look after him. As he is mad keen on racing (being a nephew of THE Tattersall)^[1] I may find it difficult to get him away from the course early enough.

We start on the second part of our journey tonight – reach Brindisi tomorrow (Monday) cross over Tuesday and probably start back for Rome on Friday or Saturday.

Fondest Love
Tammy

¹ Edmund Tattersall, the head of Tattersall's, the main auctioneers of racehorses in Britain.

97. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
13 April 1919

Dearest mother,

Back again with a mountain of files to clear off which have accumulated in my absence. I have had a very jolly trip altogether but we did not get to Scutari. We left Rome on the Sunday night and reached Brindisi at Midday on Monday. We called on the Italian Naval Officials and found them awfully nice, and ready to help in every way. As the trip across takes 8 hours we decided to sail at midnight.

We went on board at 11pm. The general had the Captains bunk and I had the Chief Engineers who was on leave. The torpedo boats are wee. We both decided to turn in before we started, as the Captain had told us that 3 ships had already put to sea and had to come back on account of the gale outside. However as we were prepared for a rough passage he would try it.

We sailed at midnight and as soon as we put our nose outside we caught it. It is the roughest weather I have ever met. The seas broke over us incessantly and I spent most of my time climbing back into my bunk having been hurled on to the floor. We returned to harbour about 3am and the Captain apologised profusely for [not] having been able to put us across but he had not dared to face it as everything moveable had been washed overboard including the bridge ladders.

We returned to the hotel and found no rooms available so we spent the remainder of the night in chairs in the hall. At 10am Tuesday we motored to Taranto to inspect there in the pm. I played tennis for four hours and after dinner, bridge.

Wednesday more inspections and Wednesday evening at 6.30 we left for Rome. I could not get a sleeper so had to sit up all night. We reached Rome at midday Thursday.

I saw the Malaspinas at the Races the Sunday I left Rome but never again I hope. The old lady drove me desperate the way she hunted me down. Wanted me to be always fetching her daughters, could not understand that I was on duty with the General and had other friends – in fact became a general nuisance.

Everyone is trying to get me a good job and I may know soon what will happen. The latest is that I may become a DAA & QMG at the base near here.^[1] Not a bad job. I know General Walker likes me at G.H.Q. and my present General Strick^[2] also likes me so I know they will do everything in their power.

We shall probably have another try for Scutari at the end of the month. My leave is now looking more like June. If you let the cottage you had better warn the people that I may want to return and collect either my guns or boots or something. I could get either the Rids or Hartmans to put me up for a night.

Fondest love
Tammy

¹ The British GHQ was located at Arquata Scrivia (Piedmont), mentioned by name in the following letter.

² Major-General John A. Strick was the Inspector-General Communications, BEF, Italy.

98. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
16 April 1919

Dearest mother,

You will be interested to hear that my fate is more or less definitely settled now. I am going off again with the General on the 25th to have another try for Scutari and on our return I am to take Vaughan's place at Arquata as DAQMG as he wants to go home. Then a little later on I shall absorb another man's job and become DAA & QMG – my pay will be £550.^[1]

I can't see anything that will prevent this coming off at present. I shall begin to feel my way about leave. If Vaughan is not in a tearing hurry I shall ask him to let me go on leave before assuming his duties.

Anyhow I think it has paid me well to have dropped down to Staff Captain for these two months, and although I am very glad to get this job I should really

have preferred what we call a G job. However it will considerably help my future career having done G work as well as Q work as it makes me an all-round Staff Officer and not a specialist one.

I am hoping later in the summer to go to Lake Maggiore and again to Venice but naturally I cannot plan anything definite as I may yet be recalled to my Battalion. Getting this job will increase my bonus and gratuity.

My Italian is improving with my daily conversation. I was surprised when my friends in Rome said how few Englishmen spoke any other language than their own and congratulated me on my French. Had only one said it I would have taken it as a sort of flattery but as many said it I feel certain that if I spent 6 months with French people I should talk well. That I shall probably never do but anyway it is a great thing to know as much as I do.

Fondest love
Tammy

¹ Lindsay's was appointed DAA & QMG on 28 April.

99. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

[no address given]
21 April 1919

Dearest mother,

Hasty scrawl to say I am off into the Blue tonight for an unknown length of time. If I can I will write but I very much doubt having time to do so. You needn't worry as I shall certainly fall on my feet all right. It's a chance for me.

Yours Tammy

100. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Headquarters, Taranto
23 April 1919

Dearest mother,

I am through the first stage of my journey and tomorrow I embark on the second and from then onwards it will be interesting but hard work and probably

hard living. However it is amusing to be on one's own and to have carte blanche.

The weather here is distinctly cold compared to Rome and further north. I find it quite exhilarating dashing round and interviewing the various ministries and nationalities and trying to get what I want out of them. I still don't know even approximately how long I am going to be away.

Rome is a very interesting centre just now as Generals of all sorts and sizes are passing through in all directions. You can never tell whether you can get on anywhere or if you start whether you won't be turned back. In some cases officers have to make a detour of several months duration just because one piece of a line is held by certain races unfriendly to us, so back they come to go round.

No other news.

Your Tammy

101. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Scutari
30 April 1919

Dearest mother,

You now see where I have been sent to. My job is practically finished and I shall leave here on the 3rd for Tortona again.

I have had a most interesting trip. A torpedo boat took me over from Brindisi to Antivarri where I landed at 7 am on Saturday morning. I called on the French and Italian representatives and the French officer wired his General here to ask for a motor boat to come up to the north end of the lake for me.

I left Antivarri at 9.30 on Sunday morning and motored over the mountains to Virbuzaar. Perfectly glorious scenery but a most dangerous road as it is cut out of the mountain side and you have the feeling that the lorry cannot possibly get round the corners without going over the edge. I reached Virbuzaar on Lake Scutari at noon and lunched with the Italian Major in command there. At 1.30 I left in the French boat and steamed off for this place. There was bright sun and the mountains all round were grand. I took one or two photographs, but the scenery is on too big a scale to be photographed successfully.

I reached Scutari at 4.30 where a horse was waiting for me and rode up to New Scutari where one of our Battalions is. Here I found General Philips^[1] whom I had met in Rome and whom I told at the time that if he was ever in want of a Staff Officer I would come to him. He was very pleased to see me

and suddenly remembered my remark and said he wished he had asked for me as he had been let down badly by the man he had started with.

This place is a mass of colour owing to the mixture of Mohomadans [*sic*] and Christians in fact it is one of the most oriental places in the Balkans. Unfortunately the weather is cold and wet so I cannot get any good snapshots. It is especially bad luck it being wet today as it is market day in this old town and now they won't hold it. For market days the people come down from the mountains from immense distances and the various national costumes are wonderful.

There is a remote possibility that I may return to this part of the world in the near future but at present I cannot say for certain. If all goes according to schedule I shall be back in Tortona next Thursday morning.

Fondest love
Tammy

¹ Brigadier-General George Phillips, head of the British Military Mission in Albania.

102. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Tortona
9 May 1919

Dearest mother,

Home again. Quite a short scrawl as I am busy getting even with work accumulated in my absence. I am going to bother you again to post things to me.

I want my brown buckskin tennis shoes – my flannel trousers and three white oxford mat tennis shirts and COLLARS to match also a pair of links for the sleeves and brown leather body belt and a regimental tie. I think three parcels by post is the safest way.

My leave I think is now almost certain for June. Colonel Campbell goes on leave Monday or Tuesday and as soon as he starts back I shall apply to go.

My breeches arrived safely many thanks. Of course I shall refund you any of these expenses if you have no money of mine. Damn it I forgot to mention my tennis racquet. It is in its brown cover and press somewhere. Tie him up nice and tight.

General very pleased with my work at Scutari.

Your Tammy

Glad you had Vi & are going to have P. Will write tomorrow

103. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
10 May 1919

Dearest mother,

I don't think I really have any fresh news for you and I have already given you an account of my journey. The morning of my return I was told there was a dance on here the same evening so of course I went. It wasn't bad fun but the dancers were bad. I got home to bed at 3am dead tired as I had not been able to get a sleeper from Rome and it is a fourteen hour journey.

The tennis court is at last ready and I played with the General last night. The court is not good but better than nothing. Everyone was apparently very glad to see me back and I am full of invitations to dinner etc.

The gardener at my billet presented me with a bouquet of white snowballs and tea roses. As you say I am pretty happy out here.

I have written twice to Evelyn but no answer. I asked her if my two suitcases were in the way moving house to send them home to you.

When I come home I propose to come via Havre landing in London at 11am in the morning. My leave does not commence until I put foot in England. I have some summer uniform waiting for me to try on at Hawkes so it ought not to delay me there very long.

Fondest Love
Tammy

104. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
14 May 1919

Dearest mother,

I have been back a week now and every day so far has been a blank mail day.

I heard from Mrs Johnstone at Venice that Charlie having got as far as London to get his passports etc flunked the journey at the last moment. I don't know if he intends to come out here still but the new owners of his rooms in Venice must have moved in by now.

We are at last basking in the sun really properly. We sit out after dinner in the garden and I am already wearing only a cotton shirt. When it gets really hot I shall be reduced to painting a khaki uniform on my skin.

No other news at present.

Your Tammy

105. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
21 May 1919

Dearest mother,

For some unknown reason your letters are taking 7 days to reach me now and I had not had one for nearly a week until two rolled in today dated 13th & 14th.

My job at Arquata is still mine although I remain here until Colonel Campbell comes back from leave. There is an awfully nice man called Major Matthews who has quite fused with me. He married a French girl, a Labouchin I think and they live quite near us at Admington Hall Shipston on Stour. He expects to get quit of the army at the end of this month and I should not be surprised if he called on you with his wife.

Many thanks for sending off the clothes. You are right about the links now I come to think of it. I went to Milan last Sunday with Matthews to the Races and met some of my delightful Roman friends. I have fixed up provisionally to go to Venice in August to meet one lady who has captivated my heart and also to see Mrs Johnstone again.

As I think I told you it was not so important to make a great success of my job at Scutari as not to fail and bungle things. I can always do my work better when I am given a definite job and left to myself and that is why G work appeals to me more than Q or A. It seems probable I shall hit off Margaret if I am lucky.

The Army out here is like a shifting sand as we are slowly leaving the country and various places, as they diminish in size and importance, vanish. General Strick I know will always look after my interests now so that when Arquata vanishes as it must do in time (probably by October) and then I think it quite probable I shall get another billet out here.

No other news

Your Tammy

106. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

H.Q. L of C, Tortona, B.E.F. Italy
23 May 1919

Dearest mother,

No sign so far of my flannels but they will arrive any day now. I have just been vaccinated against Smallpox which is pretty prevalent just at present. If it takes I shall know all about it in four days.

My Gazette as Staff captain is in The Times of the 20th if you want to cut it out. Matthews, I forgot to tell you, is most anxious for me to go and stay a day or two with him when I come home on leave. I believe she is most awfully nice. Anyway he wants me to meet her and some other friends of his.

Some friends of mine at Cambridge, Holloway by name, have asked me to go to them for the Cambridge May Week which of course is quite impossible. It was kind of them to think of it. While I think of it my getting the Italian Croce de Guerra was in the Times on the 19th. No other news.

I am sending home my Norwegian boots (want repairing) a winter tunic and my riding breeches. Has that sack of things I sent off from the forward line ever turned up. If not let me know.

Your Tammy

Should you go into either Oxford or Cheltenham before I come home I wish you would take my racquet which has one string gone and get it replaced. I don't expect it can be done in Stow.

107. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Italy [?Tortona]
26 May 1919

Dearest mother,

Your letter this morning was full of interest. I have written to Nesta to congratulate her and I dare say she will answer me. If she does I will send on her letter to you.

I had a rotten bit of bad news in another letter. Jean Dove who was on her way out to India to be married when war broke out and whose fiancé went through the whole of the Mespot [*i.e.* Mesopotamian] campaign, was married

soon after the Armistice. He got a delightful billet at Cork and everything seemed to be right for them. Two months ago he was killed in a motor smash.

My flannels etc have arrived quite safely thank you and so has the racquet. Tonight Matthews and I are going to motor out to a place 13 kilometres from here to dine.

No other news.

Your Tammy

108. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Headquarters, Arquata^[1]
25 July 1919

Dearest mother,

Much love for your last letters. I am sending you another from Mrs Baird which may interest you. She really is a most exceptionally kind woman and seems genuinely pleased at my D.S.O. – more definitely pleased than anyone I know I think except yourself.^[2] I see the [?W.R.] strike is over so you will get to Hexham all right after all. It would have been an awful bore for you to get stuck halfway.

General Strick, the man who took such a fancy to me here, has now gone to Paris for a conference. Of late he has taken to calling me up on the phone and having a talk. Buffit tells me that he usually does it when he is worried as it cheers him up to talk in a lighter vein.

I don't know why I was so oppressed when I was home and am still. I think I really want a long leave. After all I have only had 20 days in the last 20 months which is very measly a record for a staff officer. Also I was sleeping badly at Oddington – coming up from nearly sea level here I think caused it.

My work here has eased off the last two days which has been a comfort. I can understand the peoples view of the gentry so well and certainly our neighbours deserve all they get from their village folk especially the Fenwicks. Mrs Oatley I should say has not the least idea of coping with anyone but a schoolboy – still she couldn't have done worse than leaving well alone.

It has been trying hard to thunder here for three days now but it can't bring it off the result is everybody is rather on edge. For the time being I am all alone in my house with a very bad soldier cook but in a few days' time I shall have an Italian. Miss Mayhew who runs a Soldiers Club here is a cousin of Arthur Blairs who lost his wife in South Africa if you remember. No more now.

Your Tammy

¹ In this and subsequent letters from Arquata, Lindsay also included the Army Post Office code for the base: APO LI.

² Lindsay's award of the DSO had been announced in the *London Gazette* 30 May 1919.

109. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Grand Hotel Campo dei Fiori, Varese^[1]
24 August 1919

My dearest Mother,

I am up in the hills for the week end – above Lake Maggiore and it is perfectly wonderful. I came up by car and after having six punctures fetched up here at 6 o'clock in the evening. I came because a Madame Boconi and her sister were here. I have spoken of them before in Rome. The sisters name is Villerhanna a very old Sicilian family I believe. My room looks out right over the Lakes towards Milan and the Villa is exquisite. As a welcome I found some heather growing outside the hotel on the mountain side. We all dined together last night and danced afterwards. My friend who I will call Anna as it is shorter is a wonderful dancer and we go just like one person. The result was that when we danced which was frequently everyone else stopped. She sings delightfully and plays the guitar. I am going to try and get ten days leave about the 12 of September and go to Stresa with a car to see them again. The brother in law has a lot of horses there.

This morning I am playing tennis. After lunch we go to some races and after dinner we shall dance again. Both my Italian and my French have improved a lot so on the whole I get along quite easily.

There is a very big Italian marriage coming off at Stresa in September and I am told I shall be very welcome by the Aunt of the bride. It will be a very gay time.

I hope your tour is still delightful as it sounds. The air here is like Scotland and the joy of getting away from the heat is immense. I shall not close this down yet but finish later and post it when I get back on Monday.

Milan. Monday. At 9am.

My weekend is finishing and I am writing while waiting for the Colonel. I did nothing Sunday morning except wander around the place until 11.30am. We had a Scotch mist and I sniffed it with joy. Then we lunched and after lunch motored to Como and had tea at the Villa D'Este – a wonderful place furnished like a private house and quite moderate in charges for its style – all in 40 lira a

day. We motored back in the cool of the evening and fetched up at our eyrie at 8.15.

My friends dined with me and we danced a bit afterwards but it was really too hot for dancing. Fifteen of us sat down for supper at midnight and a hilarious time. I got to bed at 3am, got up at 6am and left for here at 7.15am. I am arranging to go for ten days leave to Lake Maggiore and shall stay at Stresa.

Anna and her sister are only 38 kilometres from there and I shall know a fair number of people there. If I can bring off a plan of mine I shall do it very comfortably.

And now I must be on the move again so no more.

Fondest Love
Tammy

¹ The letter was written on a sheet of the hotel's headed notepaper.

110. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Headquarters, Arquata
10 September 1919

My dearest Mother,

I am off to Lago Maggiore tomorrow for ten days and I shall be very glad to get away from here for a bit. I am lunching with my friends on the way up.

Last night Colonel Pitcairn and I gave a small dance in our villa and had a great success. I only asked people who could dance and made up a bridge four for some fellows who I wanted to come but who don't dance. We had 6 Austrian musicians and a light supper and everyone said it was the best dance they have been to in Arquata.

What a bore missing Violet like that and having the walk for nothing. It is splendid you enjoyed your tour so much and I am glad you are still in comfy surroundings. If T'Annie is getting worse in the short time you have left her perhaps her end is not very far off.

I have been working at a case which involves the disappearance of heaven knows how much petrol and a good many tyres. I have been gradually closing in and in and tomorrow I spring the trap I hope successfully.

It won't be any use writing to me at Stresa because I shall be back here again before your letters reach me. Now I must get on with clearing up my office before I go.

Fondest Love
Tammy

P.S. If I do marry, you must set your mind at rest on the subject of religion. If the woman is R.C. she must come over or I shall depart.

111. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees, Stresa^[1]
20 September 1919

My dearest Mother,

My leave is just terminating and I shall be back in Arquata on Monday. On the whole I have enjoyed it and it has been a great rest. I do not enjoy this hotel life. Although I know everyone in the hotel, I cannot go round talking nothings to these girls day after day. There are only two subjects they any of them talk about – themselves and love, and of course other people.

The Lake and the country is wonderful and the lights on the mountains in the evening exquisite. I did a motor run up to another lake – Ortar [*i.e.* Orta] by name. It is not a great distance from here and I thought it really rather nicer than this lake as it is smaller. The people I went with are called Trevis whom I have known for a considerable time as he worked on our staff. They have asked me to go and stay with them on Lake Garda in October, but of course I don't know if I shall get away. I am staying this week end with Anna. They are so nice and have a nice comfy place an hour from here.

I think I shall have to fade from the landscape for several reasons. Here she is surrounded by every luxury which I can never give her and I can't see her happy as a regular officer's wife and one thing quite certain is that I can never leave the Army unless the unforeseen happens and Charlie leaves me enough or Mary Harkness for some unaccountable reason left me anything. Even if Anna were rich which she isn't, I feel she would be taking an awful risk in marrying me and I don't even know if she more than likes me. I do know that her sister with whom she lives knows I am fond of her but how much she knows about me I don't know so I am going to tell her, as I don't want her to imagine that because I came on a bust for ten days and live among them that I can always live at the same rate.

Yesterday I went over to some races at their place. The races one could not see much of as the course – cross country – was mostly out of sight, but I saw a good deal of Anna which is what I went for. We dance here most evenings in the hall. The band is bad and the floor is stone but it whiles away an evening. During the daytime I have had some good tennis and some delightful trips on the Lake. Last night there was a thunder storm in the Alps and the lightening was magnificent. We had the storm ourselves about 3am right overhead.

I have heard since I left Arquata that every nerve is being strained to get out of Italy by the middle of November which will suit me quite well. Anna's sister comes to England in December and I hope Anna with her. At any rate I shall get in some shooting.

There is a nice fellow called Leslie staying with his wife at the next hotel. She is a Scots woman quite young and was a Brodie Gordon – a name I have never heard before. They want me to visit them in London. At present he is A.D.C. to Seely^[2] and has done very well flying.

Then I also met a Sir Charles and Lady Dudgeon from Dumfriesshire^[3] – nice people but they live on the continent. Last night I was presented to the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia^[4] who wore a King's ransom round her neck in pearls. She had apparently signified a desire to know me – mainly because I am the only British officer here in uniform. However I sat and chatted to her for about ten minutes and liked her.

It is a pouring wet day at last and every body looks lost and I have occupied this table long enough. I had better stop.

Fondest Love Tammy

The Trevis are connected with Trevis cousins I think.

¹ The letter was written on a sheet of the hotel's headed notepaper.

² John Seely MP, a serving soldier, was Under-Secretary of State for Air and President of the Air Council.

³ Sir Charles Dudgeon, a retired British diplomat. He was the son of Patrick Dudgeon of Cargen, Kirkcudbrightshire.

⁴ Grand Duchess Anastasia Mikhailovna.

112. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
24 September 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am back again from Stresa having spent my last week end [*sic*] with Anna and her sister. She has a delightful country place with beautiful things, in fact except for the stone floors it is just like an English country house.

On Sunday night we went back to Stresa for a Ball given privately and all the girls wore the dress of the Louis XIV period. I cant [*sic*] tell you how charming they all looked. Anna did not wear a crinoline but a charming dress with full skirts and her [*i.e.* ?hair] done for the period. The room was too small for dancing in comfort unfortunately so we left about 2.30 am. I came back here to find that my boss had done nothing in my absence and whenever anybody came to ask about anything he said 'oh wait until Lindsay comes back. He knows all about that!' It was a stupid thing to do as it showed him up so badly to the people who asked for things. Although most of the personel [*sic*] and material will be out of here by about mid November I dont [*sic*] expect to get away myself much before Xmas. Anyway I am not counting on it and I dont really see that it is possible. Winter is on us like a drop scene for the moment though the natives quite expect it to turn hot again for a short period. The result of sleeping under a sheet only during the night it changed is that I am suffering badly from muscular rheumatism in my shoulders. We had a tremendous thunderstorm up north on Saturday night and snow fell in the Alps and the cold wind off the snow caught me through my open windows. It will pass off but its damned painful while it lasts.

The Cambridge lady has at last given up all hope of me and says that while she can never change her feelings towards me she feels it is not fair of her to write to me as she does and bother me. It is wonderfully nice of her and I had made up my mind that the break must come from her and not from me. I had always hesitated to cut the knot myself brutally as I was uncertain what effect it would have on her but now I feel a free man and able to breathe more freely.

I am going [to] study french [*sic*] and Italian and try and perfect both. After that unless my life is changed I shall take up Russian.

The new rates of pay are certainly an increase but as we come under civilian rules of income tax the increase will not be very enormous and we still have to go 15 years for a pension of £150.

I think I must advance on Charlie on my return and ask him if he is still decided to leave me what he has and if so what I may reasonably expect.

Someday I suppose I shall marry and even if I dont I would like to know what my prospects are.

I dont think Arnold will ever go down well with manly men as there is something about him that makes us suspicious of him and anything that raises one mans suspicions of another is very hard indeed to kill. In fact I doubt if it even can really be killed. However I am glad Vi took him to see our north country cousins.

I hear from Joynson^[1] that the 2nd Battalion is going to Devonport to be quartered – if it has'nt [*sic*] already gone there which bears out your remark in your letter. I feel better for my leave as I had plenty of sleep and rest on the whole but my greatest relief is in my Cambridge friend giving me up as a bad job as I now feel no responsibility – not that I ever need have, but I did.

Fondest love,
Tammy

¹ Joynson and Lindsay had served together as lieutenants in the 2nd Battalion of the KOSB. He was now a captain in the battalion, which was to be stationed in Devonport, Plymouth, after reorganisation in Scotland.

113. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
1 October 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am firing this off to you though you may not receive it for weeks with the coal strike on the Railways. I forgot to tell you that I had received and read the *Keeper of the Door*.^[1] I did not think much of the characters portrayed and in places their actions were highly improbable – still it was quite readable.

No I did not lay my position before the sister because it struck me when I was staying there that things had not come to that state yet and very likely never would. The sister I know likes me because at the dance she was sitting on the sofa and there was just room for me so I said Madame Bocconi is there room for a small one and she said my dear Lindsay I have always room for you. Then my last evening I tried to thank her for her kindness in English because she understands a certain amount and she said in Italian I cannot understand you but I am very fond of you. They wanted me to stay for another week and I nearly told her how stupid she had been in thinking that hotel life appealed to me more than homely country life. It makes things very difficult when one

has not got command of a language. I know I am considered cold blooded and heartless and that my head governs my heart but having let myself go partially as I did with my Cambridge friend has shown me what misery can be brought about when it is not the real live Thing and I dont want it to happen again. There are quite good reasons against being so controlled, first that you dont give the girl a chance of sounding your real self which I dont believe because she will see through you and secondly that everyone must take their chance of getting hurt and the chances are equal on both sides. What I am quite certain of is this that for real happiness the two must dovetail completely and that unless each can give the other the something that they lack they will end by merely drifting. I sometimes think that I am too exacting and analytical but even if I am I would rather live my life out as a bachelor than take a chance and regret it.

I have written to Haig^[2] asking his advice as to my future action as I see there are several brevets in the regiment now and though I am a junior captain I am senior Brevet which is apt to make things awkward.

I am afraid we are in for a month of wet weather and then have a burst of fine autumn weather. The Italian papers seem to make out that the Railway strike is fizzling out.

Your Tammy

¹ *The Keeper of the Door* (1915) was a romance novel by Ethel M. Dell.

² Probably Major Alfred Haig, who was back with the 2nd Battalion KOSB after spending most of the war either as a prisoner or as an internee.

114. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
6 October 1919

Dearest Mother,

Things may move quickly with me in the next few days. For no apparent reason and without consulting my Boss one of General Stricks staff officers suddenly cut down our command and took two stations Genoa and Rivalta from us and confined the Arquata area to a strip of country which just embraces our camp outside which no officer N.C.O. or man is allowed to proceed either on leave or duty without the sanction of General Stricks Headquarters. A more deliberate insult could never under any circumstance have been sent. Though I am no admirer of my Boss I cannot in honour bound allow an insult of that

sort pass and my only means of protest is to place my request to give up my job as GSO 2 here in his hands. I have put it in his hands today and I told him that when he interviews General S on Monday, if he does not get an apology and a reversal of the letter he can show it to General S and I will sign it on his return. I have given as my reasons for wishing to resign

1. That I am virtually a prisoner in Arquata and not even my commanding officer can give me leave to go out.
2. That as all command and responsibility has been removed from me by this letter my retention seems unnecessary.
3. That my resignation is my only means of protesting against the treatment of my superior officer.

What is going to happen remains to be seen. One thing we are all certain of is that the letter was sent out by a staff officer who is insufferable and who has a grudge against my boss without General Stricks knowledge. Being a friend of General Stricks and having been placed here by him I know that my resignation worded as it is will wake him up and will strengthen my boss' hand. If it comes to it going on he will probably send for me. If he accepts it I shall send a copy of my resignation and of the letter that caused it to the Director of Staff duties at the War Office. So also will my boss Col Riddell.^[1] Then the fat will be in the fire!! Everyone here is prepared to stand by Riddell but I have told them that they had better do nothing until they see what happens to me – to let my action be a test case. I have not acted in a hurry but thought the whole thing out carefully first. It means a loss of £200 or more to me but that does not affect my honour. Two generals in France remarked on my loyalty to my superiors but no one can say I am not standing by this man whom I really dislike, and who has shown me no consideration up to date.

This will be or may be rather a bombshell for you. If my resignation goes forward I will wire you.

Still having wet misty weather – no other news.

Your Tammy

¹ Colonel E. V. D. Riddell DSO of the Royal Artillery.

115. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
13 October 1919

Dearest Mother,

At last General Strick is putting his shoulder to the various wheels out here and trying to make them turn faster. Everything is cut and dried and sorted for sale and removal. The real obstacle lies in what is called the B.I.C. British Italian Corporation^[1] – a body of swindlers who are given 2½% on all sales effected. They make additional money by selling information to rival firms.

I believe that when General Strick was home on leave among other things he did was to look after the future interests of four of his staff of which I was one but naturally he has said nothing to me as having done so. Our usual yearly confidential reports are in process of being written since we are all bound to see them when they are finished we know roughly what the people above us think of us. This job will by no means do my future harm but rather the reverse I should say if I have carried out satisfactorily from General S's point of view. I do wish they would hurry up as I want to get out of this country and get back on to the broad highway of soldiering again. We are and yet we aren't [*sic*] side tracked if you can follow what I mean. They can't keep vacancies for us indefinitely. The next course at Camberly is February I think, but what grade of staff officer will be taken I don't know.

It is getting really very cold here now and stone floors don't help make a villa any warmer. I heard from Vi a few days ago – not much news but she seemed contented. I know I am becoming self centred and that is why I want to leave this country because the longer I remain here the more I shall become. There are no games here now to fill in time and no men friends I can foregather with and no English [*sic*] people that is any joy to go and see with one exception a Mrs Martin connected in some way with the Cunninghams?^[2] of Ireland either Blane or Blair Castle or maybe Slane in Meath? Anyhow she is the only lady I have met out here. Being thrown back on myself I have much regretted that I never learned an instrument.

When I come home and get my leave I shall run down to Devonport and stay with the battalion for a week end to see them. I am feeling rather doubtful of my 2 months.

No more news. I am glad Isa has been up even for a short time as it has given you some human companionship. I wonder Smith can stick it and I think you have been wonderful to have carried on as you have.

I may drop into Switzerland for ten days leave in November or December but it will depend on how things shape here.

Fondest love,
Tammy

¹ The British Italian Corporation had been created earlier in the year to supplant German financial influence in Italian commerce and industry.

² The question mark (and a letter 'y' inserted above the 'i', not shown here) was added by Lindsay to show he was uncertain of how to spell the name. 'Conyngham' was the correct form, and Slane Castle, County Meath, was the family's residence.

116. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
12 November 1919

Dearest Mother,

I have been much too busy to write any letters for the last week. All sorts of things have been happening here, in fact the place is rocking but I won't put anything on paper until it is over. The books arrived safely many thanks. I have read the two magazines and enjoyed them. The other two books I have lent to Mrs Martin as I have no time for the moment for reading. Cornhill has also turned up and been dealt with.

I am sure you will be glad of a rest from T'Annie; it must have been an awful strain. I am very comfy in my new quarters. They are much warmer and I have an open fire to sit by of an evening. I am fervently hoping we shall have no local trouble on Saturday and Sunday the days of the Italian elections. There is sure to be trouble in some places near here.

I am not at all certain that I like the idea of being left out here in command of this place. If it has got to be so I must make the most of it, but I feel from what I know of things and people that it might very well prove to be the grave of my career. Don't take this too seriously but certain things are almost certain to happen and we have not got the discipline of the old days in either the officers or the men.

No time for more.

Your Tammy

117. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
20 November 1919

Dearest Mother,

My boots and tunic arrived safely as also has Strange Hours [*sic*] and strange roads^[1] which apparently you posted on September 20. I enclose a list of books which has been sent me by a girl friend whom you don't know.

I am taking up another passtime [*sic*] in the shape of shorthand and am teaching myself as I feel I may need it some day. Of course it needs a hell of a lot of practice to do it quickly but it helps to pass my spare time.

I had a latish call tonight saying an english [*sic*] driver had run over and killed an Italian. Mann and I got into the car and drove off to the scene of the accident and made our investigations. The man had been struck and thrown against a stone pillar by the road and the whole of the back of his head had gone – not a pleasant sight.

We are having alternate three days of snow and thaw. We dont lie anything like high enough for it to lie but being right against the mountains we get the snowstorms.

I am going to try and wangle out of being left here to the bitter end. I dont feel it is good enough, but as there are so few reliable officers I may find it difficult unless they send one out from home, and they are unlikely to do that.

The Base Commandant asked me out to dinner two nights ago – the first time since June 3rd. I was rather amused as I know the reason for it. A few days previously I went past him and brought off a coup of my own and said nothing till afterwards. He was furious with me but I told him I should do the same again in similar circumstances. So we parted rather stiffly. However that is also past history which I cant write about.

I shall not take any more leave in Italy – I'm fed up with it all and Venice is out of bounds on account of D'Annuncio.^[2]

No other news. I expect you find the cottage rather restful after T'Annie. I enclose the de Brett^[3] thing and a letter from Mr Baker, also two pieces of poetry^[4] of myself as another saw me.

Fondest love,
Tammy

Cant find Bakers letter – must have destroyed it. Get me for 2/6 what the Cheltonians have done in the War from Darters.^[5]

¹ Two novels by Maud Diver: *The Strong Hours* (1919) and *Strange Roads* (1918).

² The poet, playwright and army officer Gabriele D'Annunzio. In September 1919 he had led an expedition to seize the city of Fiume in the hope that it would be annexed by Italy, contrary to the plans of the Paris Peace Conference.

³ Perhaps *Debrett's Peerage and Titles of Courtesy*, which included information about Lindsay.

⁴ Lindsay wrote 'Keep' at the foot of this letter with an arrow pointing from the word 'poetry'.

⁵ Darter's was a bookshop in Cheltenham.

118. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
23 November 1919

Dearest Mother,

I hope to be able to write to you more fully at the end of this week about the trouble I told you of. There will be a court martial either Thursday or Friday and as soon as it is over I will let you know about it.

With regard to Cornhill I don't feel it is worth it on the whole as I am pretty certain to be home during the first four months of 1920.

I shall be sending home a hamper containing my summer gear soon and I will pass the key to you when I do.

Yesterday was a lovely day – fine sunny and frosty. I took Mrs Martin off immediately after lunch and walked her to the top of a mountain not so very far from here from the top of which we could see right across the plain northwards and the Alps in a complete semi circle. It was perfectly glorious and as Mrs M is a damn good walker there was none of the rubbish of 'you're going too fast etc.'

I told you didn't I that I am working at shorthand – I find it really very interesting.

I heard from the Miss Chapman whom I thought Forte might marry but she gave me no news.

This is a dull letter but I have nought to tell you.

Your Tammy

119. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
29 November 1919

Dearest Mother,

I received your letter this morning containing Aunt Harriet's^[1] P.C. I cant imagine why she wants my address or why she should want to know when I shall be home next considering I have scarcely seen her for the last twenty odd years. Perhaps we shall know in time.

I am sorry you are losing the Hartmans as it will make you rather dull at the cottage.

We are indulging in the one of our usual snow squalls today which makes this place perfectly beastly. Thank goodness I wrote for those boots when I did as they are the very thing here. By the way when you sent them there was only one knee strap. I expect the other had slipped out in the box. It is a narrow buckle strap of shiny leather. If it is there will you post it out to me. What I should like is a couple of writing pads of good smooth paper and envelopes as you cannot get any decent writing materials here and I have'nt [*sic*] time to go to Milan or Genoa. At present as you see I am using foolscap.

A letter from Violet arrived this morning – not very much news also a long one from Madge and Jack Matthews so I had a fairly decent mail on the whole. Mrs Matthews is going out to India next month for three months as she suffers from English winters so much. He cannot get away as he is doing a re-mount job at home which keeps him fairly busy.

I have plenty to do at present as we have a number of courts martial on hand and they all have to pass through my hands.

Mrs Martin I am sorry to say goes home on the 8th spending a week in Paris en route – lucky devil. I am sorry for her but why I will tell you when I come home.

All prices in canteen stores go up 33% tomorrow on account of the low value of the lira so Mann and I laid in about 1000 lira worth of stuff today to carry us on.

I am using my last shaving cake of soap now so will you lay in another store of ½ dozen tins for me. Burgin York. Shaving soap with Lanoline it is called.

Our prisoners of war ought to be away in a fortnights time with any luck and then we can settle down for the final stage of the Force in Italy.

Fondest love,
Your Tammy

Can you order me two Hags [sic] to be well packed and sent out to me. The last arrived last winter almost falling out of the packing. In fact it was a wonder they arrived at all – I have a Turkey fattening for Xmas.

¹ Harriet Lindsay was one of Lindsay's paternal aunts. See Family Tree.

120. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
21 December 1919

Dearest Mother,

I am so sorry I have not written regularly lately but I have had a heap of work in the Court Martial line to get through and in law you have to be damned careful that everything is absolutely right.

No I am not in command here yet but it has been my custom to go ahead and follow my instinct and tell my boss what I have done afterwards. It is really that that he dislikes. Ever since his reception of me here I have been absolutely independent in every way and in the two big instances where I usurped authority I beat him. Had I had a really free hand when Mann and I caught the thief we should have had two more on [*i.e.* ?but] they were screened by the Colonel. He is bound to go when General Strick goes home as the man who will be left i/c [*i.e.* ?in charge] at Tortona is junior to my Colonel. General S cant last here very much longer and I should say he would go with the advent of the new year.

I say April will see me home because although I am due for leave in January it will be impossible to take it. One reason is I think I shall take command then and secondly my staff captain leaves next week and will not be replaced so that I must run this place single handed and I cant afford to let anything go wrong by being absent. To put it bluntly I shall not take any more leave until this place is wound up.

The Haggis came safely and the soap came this morning but so far there is no sign of the puddings. All the puddings for the troops are lost in France and I am afraid they wont be here in time for the 25. [*The following two lines have been scored out*]

I am enclosing a letter from my last servant and wonder if anyone in Northumberland can do anything for him. He speaks English, French, Italian and some German. I would trust him with anything and he has been a valet to

a very rich man on a yacht also he was head waiter at the Piccadilly hotel. He is a frenchman [*sic*] by birth.

We kill our Turkey tomorrow and are eating it Xmas Eve to let our servants enjoy all day Xmas day.

My reputation here amongst the officers and men is that I do my job – never let anyone down and and [*i.e.* am] perfectly straightforward. I dont think any of them actively dislike me but rather fear me which is curious. The reason they dislike me is because I always pull them up if they step off the track even if I have dined with them the night before.

I am really better now than I have been for a very long time – sleeping and eating well and ready to get up when I am called so you must not be anxious on that account.

There is no other news floating round. I heard from Charlie who gave me no news but said that Aunt S was failing bodily every day and he found it very trying but that thank goodness her mind was all right. I hope he would make some mention of me marrying so that I might pin him down and ask him what I could reasonably expect from him when he goes out.^[1]

I am taking no notice of the two communications from the lady.

Fondest love,
Tammy

¹ Lindsay would have a long wait for any inheritance: Charles Williamson did not die until 1943.

121. TO ISABEL LINDSAY

Head Quarters, Arquata
26 December 1919

Dearest Mother,

Xmas is now over for us thank heavens and so far without trouble. All the men have been filled up with Turkey – plum pudding and beer until they were fit to burst which had the desired effect of keeping them in camp instead of wandering about outside.

You will have got my letter by now telling you the Haggis and note paper had arrived. The pudding and Diary came on the 24.

I dont know what Mrs Matthews can have had to say about me to the Scotts.

Of course I will tell you when I take command here but your train goes too fast – so far I have only said there is every likliehood [*sic*] and nothing more has transpired.

I am hoping for a fairly decent Xmas mail but today it missed the connection at Turin so it may come in about 6 in which case I shall walk up for mine. At present my only outside correspondent is Madge who sent me some shortbread.

Perhaps I shall soon know why Aunt Harriet wrote for my address. I can [*i.e.* ?can't] think it will mean anything very exciting. Mrs Martin wrote and told me that while she was shopping in Goods she saw an enormous tumbler and at once thought of me so ordered them to send me the largest one they had much to their surprise and amusement. I am rather wondering what sort of a Bath it will be when it arrives.

We are still having fine sunny yet crisp weather but with no golf course and no nothing it is extremely boring.

I hope Vi will come and stay with you for a change.

Let me know when a hamper rolls up and I will send you the key. It contains all my summer clothes.

I intend writing to Hawkes to find out if from my army measurements they could make up the check tweed for me previous to my return home. What do you think of it?

No more at present.

Your Tammy

[The surviving correspondence from Italy ends here. The next letter in the collection dates from July 1920 when Lindsay was travelling to Egypt to join the 10th Division as a DAAG.]

APPENDIX A

The following newspaper clipping was found among Lindsay's correspondence.

High Praise for K.O.S.B.

The following is a letter to the K.O.S.B. from the General Officer Commanding 5th Division at the front. A copy of the letter has been sent home by Private William Patterson, C. Company, 2nd K.O.S.B. to his mother in Woolmarket:

15th October 1914 – Will you please tell your battalion that their work during the last three days has been spoken of in the highest terms by General Hickie, and the Corps Commandant directs that you and your men should be informed of his great admiration and appreciation of their pluck and grit. I cannot say how proud I am of them, and the fact that we are all Scotsmen adds to the pleasure. I will take the earliest opportunity of coming to see you, but shall not bother you until you have had a sleep and rest, of which you must all be in need. Sir Charles Ferguson.

APPENDIX B

Portraits of the officers of the 2nd Battalion KOSB mentioned in Lindsay's letters who lost their lives in World War I. (All photographs courtesy of the Imperial War Museum)



Captain A. F. Anderson

Killed in action
23 April 1915



Captain R. C. Y. Dering

Died of wounds
18 April 1915



Lieutenant R. H. P. Holme

Died of wounds
9 November 1914



Major Chandos Leigh

Killed in action
29 August 1914



Captain H. V. C. Turnbull

Killed in action
13 November 1914



Captain T. P. Wingate

Killed in action
18 April 1915

FURTHER READING

The original letters can be consulted at the John Gray Centre, Haddington, where they form part of the Colstoun Papers (EL568).

The war diary of the 2nd Battalion KOSB provides day-by-day reports of its movements and activities and is especially useful for placing Lindsay during the early months of the war. A digital copy can be downloaded from the National Archives [website](#). First-hand accounts of the KOSB's early engagements can also be found in the published work of two of Lindsay's fellow officers: Pennyman, J B W. *The Diary of J. B. W. Pennyman*, Middlesbrough, 1915; and Dolbey, R V. *A Regimental Surgeon in War and Prison*, London, 1917.

The *Berwickshire News* and other local newspapers contain a range of valuable material relating to the battalion, before and during the war, including social engagements, promotions, lists of men who were dead, injured or missing, and excerpts from letters sent home by soldiers.

The official account of the British war effort was published in 109 volumes as the *History of the Great War based on Official Documents ...* (1922-49). The relevant volumes for the 2nd Battalion KOSB's early engagements are: *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914: Mons, the Retreat to the Seine, the Marne and the Aisne, August-October 1914* (London, 1922), and *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1914: Antwerp, La Bassée, Armentières, Messines, and Ypres, October-November 1914* (London, 1925), both of which were compiled by J E Edmonds. For a more detailed history of the battalion during the war, see Gillon, S A. *The K.O.S.B. in the Great War*, London, 1930. For the wider history of the regiment, see Royle, T. *The King's Own Scottish Borderers: a Concise History*, Edinburgh, 2008; and Gale, I. *Always a Borderer: a Regimental History of The King's Own Scottish Borderers*, Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2016.

The KOSB museum in Berwick upon Tweed has a collection of documents, images and objects that tell the 317-year history of the regiment. It is also home to the regimental archives. Details about the collection and further online material is available on The King's Own Scottish Borderers [website](#).

For the history of the Machine Gun Corps, and its role in World War I, see Hutchison, G S. *Machine Guns: their History and Tactical Employment (being also a History of the Machine Gun Corps, 1916-1922)*, London, 1938; and Stevens, F A. *The Machine Gun Corps: a Short History*, Tonbridge, 1981. Vera Brittain's memoir *A Testament of Youth* provides a picture of life in Étaples at the time when Lindsay was at the nearby machine gun school.

The official history of the campaign in Italy is Edmonds, J. E. and Davies, H. R. *Military Operations: Italy, 1915-1919*, London, 1949. See also Wilks, J. and E. *The British Army in Italy 1917-1918*, Barnsley, 1998. For the role of the 48th Division in particular, see the account written by Lindsay's colonel, George Barnett, *With the 48th Division in Italy*, Edinburgh, 1923.

Online resources for studying World War I are many and varied. The [website](#) of the Imperial War Museums provides access to a large number of digitised documents, objects and photographs. For a range of digitised original documents, accompanied by over fifty specially commissioned articles, see the British Library [website](#). A small collection of mainly official war photographs is presented on the National Library of Scotland [website](#). There are also several personal websites that provide valuable information about the British Army and its soldiers, a notable example of which is the Long, Long Trail [website](#).

See the Introduction for other relevant works.

SOURCES IN LOCAL HISTORY

GENERAL EDITOR: KENNETH VEITCH

The *Sources in Local History* series was established by the EERC in 1994. Its aim is to provide edited transcriptions of diaries, letters and other personal documents that can be used to study everyday life in Scotland over the past three centuries. Six volumes were published between 1994 and 1997, making available a range of original sources, from the diary of an eighteenth-century Orkney farmer to that of a nineteenth-century Dundee millwright. The series was re-launched in 2015 as a free-to-access digital resource and forms part of the EERC's Regional Ethnology of Scotland Project.

If you have a document that you would like to see included in the series, please contact the general editor at: kenneth.veitch@ec.ac.uk.