

Private Collection.

Captain Herbert Johns, "A" Company 1st RGLI

Herbert Johns of Brierton, Vale was a 2/Lieutenant in the Militia. On active service Johns corresponded very frequently with the members of his family, often on a daily basis. Many of his letters to his sister Chrissie have survived. Chrissie obviously informed him of his family's activities in great detail, and Johns responded with his own comments. The letters, by their cosy normality must have provided great comfort to him. He very rarely mentioned his own life at the Front.

Captain Johns served through the winter of 1917-18, but was killed in action on 11th April 1918, typically tending wounded men. He was 22 years old.

Letter from Capt. Johns to his sister Chriss

France
7/12/17

Dear Chriss,

I received yours of the 30th today. Things seem to have taken the old groove again and letters are quite regular again. I hope mother and father won't mind me not answering all their letters, as we understand the word answer. But I've read them all again and again when I got them. It was a pleasure to read all through the budget(?) I hope your anxiety will be over by now. If its not, then let it be now because we might as well be in Guernsey as here for all the appearances of war. I had a shave today for the first time in 10 days. Since Nov. 20th I've only shaved twice, so you can imagine what sort of a slob I looked. I haven't changed my underclothes since that date, but my box of stuff I packed to follow me has arrived so I'll have a hot bath and a change tonight. I'm not going to write a yarn of all we did, I'll tell you when I get home.

I should like to have seen you playing netball. You're so handy at new games. I see Ern still carries on his same old ways. I must write to him in a day or two. Thanks for the programme. It ought to be quite good. What does Prelude sound like? I'm afraid Winkie will have to wait a long time, as I haven't found any more bands(?) for him yet. However tell him I don't forget him ever.

By the way, has my tunic arrived yet? You had the letter telling you I had sent it didn't you?

Mildred has written every day. What do you think of that? She's had your letter, and a good job too.

The weather isn't quite so cold today. It hasn't frozen today.

I hope everybody is alright. I'm picturing father up to his eyes in slate club work. has mother finished the 2nd 6 months yet?

Well I must close now. I intended writing a much longer and interesting letter today, but I've been flying round the whole time, so you'll have to wait till tomorrow.

Au Revoir. Love to all

Your ever loving brother

BertXX

Letter from Capt. Johns to his sister Chriss 18.3.18

My dear Chriss,

I'm very sorry I've so long delayed the letter I promised so long ago. But really as you will have noticed by the number of field cards you've been getting lately that I've been very busy.

Well, we moved up to the trenches last night, and now I'm actually sitting in my Coy. Hdqrs (400x away from the bosch) writing this letter. Its very quiet, and only the occasional boom of a gun reminds you that the war is actually on.

This morning I stood at the door of my wigwam (its alright you're not going to get another dose) and watched the sun rise. There wasn't a sound to be heard. I'm in the same pillbox as last time, and am sharing it with the same Coy Commander of the other regiment as last time. So we're quite at home.

Now seeing that I've got your letter of March 1st before me, I think anything I might reply to will be rather stale.

You must have had a fine time with Uncle George. I'm glad I wasn't there together isn't it?

I've forgotten what you told me to tell Manson. However he's been over there just lately, so you'll have had a chance of seeing him I expect.

My stick hasn't turned up yet. I have my doubts now that it ever will. However there's not much intrinsic value in it. Well I must write to mother and Mil tonight, or rather this afternoon.

Au revoir

Pat Winkie for me.

Your loving brother

Bert