

*Jean Roberts who lives in Wellesbourne has shared with us a collection of photos and cards that were exchanged between members of her family during the Great War.*

City pride was as strong then as it is now and being a Birmingham family, no doubt this card made them all smile. However the publisher no doubt was easily able to sell to another market by inserting another city name.

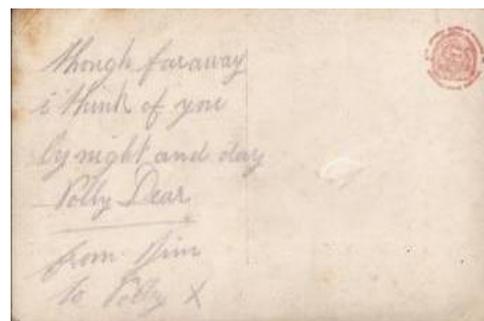


James and Mary Southerton were Jean's grandparents and William George was their son (Jean's uncle) who was born in 1895. Jean's mother Charlotte, "Lottie" was born in 1900. The family lived in Birmingham.

Both James and William joined up and both were in the Royal Artillery.

James' medal record suggests he joined before his son. He is shown as a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery and went to France in May 1915.

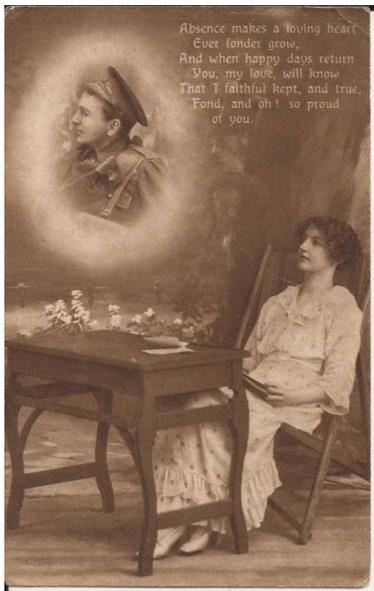
We have a card he sent to Mary (Polly)



Sometime probably in 1917 James suffered serious injuries.

He was discharged from the army on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1917 and was awarded the Silver War Badge which was awarded to servicemen who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness. The badge could be worn on your civilian clothes and perhaps was to counter the habit of women giving white feathers to men who appeared to be able bodied but not in uniform.

We do not know what injuries were suffered by James but there are postcards sent to him whilst he was in Plymouth Hospital and reference is made by Lottie to his "accident".



*The card on the left was sent to "Gunner J Southerton" at Plymouth Hospital presumably by Polly but the message is illegible.*

*The card on the right was sent by Lottie whose message includes, "hoping you are getting better. I was very sorry to hear of your accident but we hope it's no worse than you say, hoping to see you again soon happy and well."*



William joined up later and from the photos of him on page 3 it looks as if he was in the Royal Artillery too.

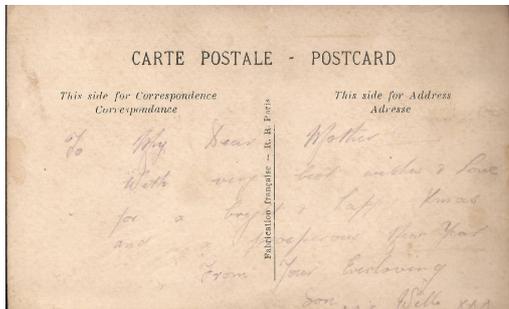
His Medal Record or the one we think is his, shows that he served with the Royal Garrison Artillery in the 120<sup>th</sup> Battery. He would have been part of the crews firing heavy siege guns. He was certainly not serving in France before 1 January 1916 as he was not awarded the Star service medal.

We have a series of cards he sent home.

William sent silk greeting cards to his mother and Lottie for Christmas 1916.

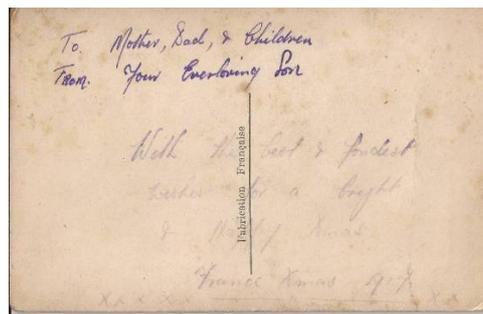


The messages read:



In a pocket in the silk card was a further dedication card and William wrote to his mother

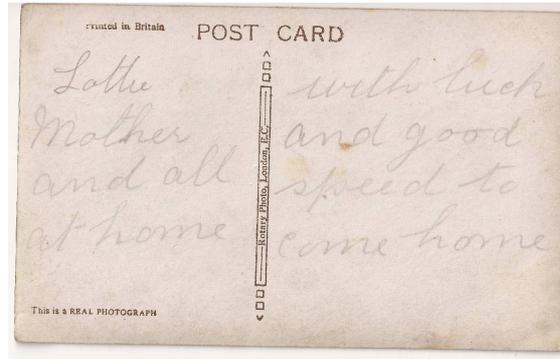
He sent another card for Christmas 1917 and this time it was also to his dad as well as mum and Lottie.



We have two photos of William:

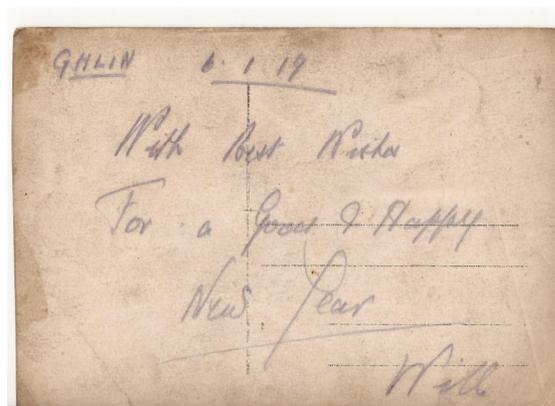


William sent this photo to Lottie and his mother sometime before his father was invalided out of the army. He is wearing a bandolier which is part of RA uniform.



The second photo was one which "The Five Bills" must have enjoyed and it no doubt was sent to four other families. The War is over but they are still longing to come home. The photo was taken apparently in 1919. It is sent by William as a Christmas Greeting.. It is assumed William is the second from the left standing and he appears to have a Royal Artillery cap badge and is wearing the RA white lanyard.

They are stationed at the Belgium town of Ghlin near Mons. Ironically there they are in 1919 in the place where the first engagement took place in 1914 between the British Expeditionary Force and the Germans.



Fortunately both James and William came home.