

HONOUR REDEEMED

The Life and Times of
Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor MM



*No thorny crown, only a woolly cap
He wore – an English soldier, white and strong.....*

Siegfried Sassoon

**By Barrie H Bertram
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Introduction

This is a brief account of the life of Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor, MM (15th January, 1869 to 24th December, 1918). It is not complete, nor with the passage of the ninety years since his sad death, can it possibly be. Hopefully however, the major events have been identified, but there are gaps, and his circumstances and those of his wife and children were such that little if anything can be added from that direction. Any new material will, of course, be added by revision to this account.

Rediscovery

It is difficult to say exactly when Coutart de Butts Taylor was “re-discovered”, but it probably began during the course of a lengthy period of research into Jersey’s Roll of Honour and Service (JRoH&S) during 2004.

The JRoH&S had him listed as having died of wounds on 24th December, 1918, while serving with the 1st (West) Battalion of the Royal Militia Island of Jersey (RMIJ). Carrying out a cross-reference check, it was confirmed that he was also listed in the Debt of Honour Register that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) maintains in recording the names of those men and women of the then British Empire who gave their lives in both World Wars. But, there was a mismatch as his entry showed that he was serving with the Royal Irish Rifles (RIR), even though it made no reference to the RIR Depot or any of that Regiment’s Battalions. It certainly made no reference to the Regiment’s 7th (Service) Battalion to which the Jersey Overseas Contingent of 300 men had been attached in March, 1915, serving as its “D” Company, or indeed to the 2nd Battalion where the surviving members of the Contingent would later be sent when the 7th (Service) Battalion were disbanded. Nor indeed, was there a reference to Jersey’s Militia in the Debt of Honour Register.

The mystery was further compounded when the CWGC entry also made reference to him having served as 59747 Sergeant C Collins of the 17th Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) and that he had been awarded the Military Medal (MM), apparently while serving as a Sergeant. The JRoH&S had made no reference, however, to a MM, but, there were references to him as a Captain in the 1st (West) Battalion’s Nominal Roll files held by the Jersey Archive.

His CWGC entry was useful in other respects, in that it referred to his age, his late father who was a former Army Chaplain, his wife Lilian and her address in Jersey, service in the South African Campaign, and that he had gained a Master of Arts degree from Christ College at Oxford. Importantly, his CWGC entry also recorded that he was buried at Bear Road Cemetery in Brighton, Sussex.

Further cross-checks were made using two other sources of data that are useful for research into the men who died during the Great War. One is the “Officers

Died during the Great War” (ODGW) database, the other is the “Soldiers Died during the Great War” (SDGW) database. Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor did not appear in the former, yet 59747 Sergeant Charles Edward Collins did in the latter, having enlisted at Holborn in London!

All of this information, the “technical” detail so to speak, might be described as a small number of jig-saw puzzle pieces, not enough in themselves to have been adequately assembled to gain a complete picture, and so they were set to one side until there was time to find yet more pieces. After all, there was the war service of another 7000 plus Jerseymen to be analysed!

Yet, throughout that period, more odd pieces emerged from time to time during research, and these were filed away for future use. There was a Jersey Evening Post (JEP) item here or an entry in the London Gazette there, and some of this was not helped by the various ways one would discover as to how Coutart de Butts Taylor’s first names could be misspelt!

The catalyst for further research came by pure chance, when a JEP article was published, carrying an enquiry into the origins of a silver kettle, shown in the pictures below, that was being made by its owner. The kettle had been inscribed as follows:

*“Presented To
Mrs C de B Taylor
By
St John’s Company,
1st West Regiment.
August 1st 1906.”*



Conjecture had been made that the 'de B' might have stood for de Beauvoir, or some similar Channel Islands name. However, the JEP was contacted and the detail regarding Coutart Taylor up until that point was provided to them, including reference to his service as Sergeant Charles Edward Collins.

Two things then resulted. First, a JEP reporter – Alastair Crosby – gave a rather prescient insight into Coutart Taylor, comparing him to Harry Feversham in AEW Mason's book, "The Four Feathers", which as readers will know, is a tale of Harry being given feathers in regard to perceived cowardice, and then performing a number of heroic acts whereby the feathers are returned to the donors, not least the girl whom Harry is in love with. Secondly, the kettle's owner – Len Rowlands – contacted the author. As a result of this, the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle were dusted off, and, at last, some further research was undertaken.

It almost goes without saying that there were one or two blind alleys, rabbit holes and red herrings! In retrospect, an earlier trip to locate the personal file(s) of Coutart Taylor/Charles Collins at the National Archive at Kew should have been made. But, that was all part of the author's learning experience!

Coutart de Butts Taylor's War Office file, WO 339/39151, seems to be typical of the War Office bureaucracy of those days (and today?). It contains many position papers, recommendations, comments, comments on comments, complaints and the minutiae that underpinned the decisions that affected Coutart. However, there is also a particular poignancy about the file as it also contains two letters in Coutart's handwriting, one written in August 1916, the other one in May 1918, as well as letters written and forms completed by Lilian in 1919 and 1920.

Parents and Siblings

First of all, it is worth spending a little time looking at the others of Coutart's family and background, for it is clear that there was a powerful mixture of the church and the military to influence his upbringing, not least from his father. Two of his sisters would marry military men while another would marry a vicar. His elder brothers would also join the Army.

Coutart's parents were as follows:

The Reverend Haydon Aldersey Taylor

Haydon Aldersey Taylor, who was born in Southwark in 1826 and who would die in N/K. From his birthplace, it is believed that he was from a family of clergymen, and had formerly been an Army Chaplain, serving with the Army sent to the Crimea in the 1850s. Even at the age of 74 in 1901, the Reverend Taylor would appear to have been still ministering in Portsmouth, having previously served as the Chaplain at Her Majesty's Prison at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. He may also have been the Chaplain at Her Majesty's Prison Portland also. He had

gained a Bachelor of Arts degree on 9th November, 1848 from St John's College, Oxford, and a Master of Arts degree on 29th May, 1852 while also being ordained into the priesthood.

Though still unconfirmed, the Reverend Taylor may have had two brothers:

- Daniel Aldersey Taylor who was born in 1820 and who died on 2nd April, 1884 at The Oaks in Surrey. His profession is N/K but he was living in Southwark on 11th June, 1846.
- Francis Aldersey Taylor, who was born in N/K, and who died in N/K. He was a Barrister in Law at Putney, London SW, and had a Doctorate in Law.

Mary Coutart McCrea

Mary Taylor (née McCrea), who was born in Guernsey on the 25th March, 1834 and would die on the 13th September, 1890, came from a family with a strong military and naval background. Her father was a Guernseyman, Admiral Robert Coutart McCrae, who appears to have had fifteen children, one becoming an Admiral, while another was a Major-General. The McCreas also had family links in Ulster, Canada and New Jersey, USA. Mary's mother was Charlotte Dobree.

They had married on the 10th September, 1856, and between them, Haydon Aldersey and Mary McCrea Taylor would have the following ten children:

- Charlotte McCrea Taylor, who was born in 1857 and would die in 1938.

On 30th October, 1883 Charlotte would marry a Commander Royal Navy (RN) in Malta, an Edward William Lloyd. Edward would later retire from the RN, and would work for Vickers Shipbuilders in Newcastle before retiring from his civilian career to Weybridge in Surrey. Edward was the second son of W Butler Lloyd of Preston Montford, Shrewsbury.
- Lilian Aldersey Taylor who was born in 1858, and would die, unmarried in 1873.
- Anna Katharine de Saumarez Taylor who was born in 1859, and would die, unmarried in 1947, in Leicester.
- Haydon D'Aubrey Pottenger Taylor who was born in Guernsey in July 1860, and who would die at Bournemouth, Dorset on 28th September, 1939. Haydon would marry twice, both times to widows. His first wife was Violet Bonamy Dobree (née Chase), the widow of Bonamy Dobree (who died in 1891). His second wife was Ernestine Mary Dolphin (née N/K, and who died in 1950), the widow of Cyril Dolphin.

Haydon D'Aubrey would be gazetted into the 28th Regiment of Foot (North Gloucestershire) which in 1881, following the British Army's programme of amalgamation, became the 1st Battalion while the 61st Regiment of Foot (South Gloucestershire) became the 2nd Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment. His army service would include time spent with the 2nd Battalion when it was stationed in Jersey during the period September, 1897 to September, 1899, to be followed by service in South Africa. Later, during the Great War he rose to the rank of Colonel, and he would be assigned to the War Office's Censorship branch.



The above photograph, taken in 1906, shows officers of the 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment with Haydon D'Aubrey Pottenger Taylor, at this stage a Major, seated third from the left of the photograph.

In his will, dated 12th March, 1931, he would leave monetary legacies to his nieces, (Lilian) Mary and Doreen Taylor.

- Oswald Albon Aldersey Taylor who was born in 1862 and who would die in 1930. He would marry Janie Pinkerton Kerr and would serve as a Captain with the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.
- Marian Louise Taylor who was born in 1864 and would die in 1944, having married Colonel George Francis DB Davidson of the Royal Highlanders' Regiment.
- Harriet Mary Taylor who was born in 1865, and would die in 1953, having married the Reverend William Philip Hurrell, was the Vicar of Hinckley in Leicestershire from 1892.
- Frances Arabella Taylor who was born in 1866, and who would die in 1953, having married George Harry A Connor, a Land Agent and Factor.

George's father had been the Dean of Windsor and the personal Chaplain to HM Queen Victoria.

- Coutart de Butts Taylor
- Leonora Eliot Taylor who was born in 1870, and who would die in 1950.

We will return to Charlotte and Edward, Haydon D'Aubrey and Leonora again in this account.

Life before Jersey (1869-1901)

Coutart was born in Weymouth, Dorset on 15th January, 1869, although Portland has also been quoted in some documents. It is possible, that at the time, his father was Chaplain to Her Majesty's Prison at Portland.

He had suffered from pneumonia when aged fourteen in 1883 or thereabouts.

Coutart was educated at St Mark's School in Windsor (which would later become part of Imperial Services College in 1911), entering School House in the Midsummer Term of 1883, before going up to Christ Church College in Oxford in October 1887. It was from there that he left with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1891, this degree later being upgraded to a Master of Arts.

Incidentally, Coutart's older brother Haydon D'Aubrey had also been at St Marks School, entering Bythe House in the Midsummer Term of 1873, leaving after two terms at Christmas 1874, and then attending Cheltenham College between 1875 and 1878.

Surviving records of St Mark's School, now held by Haileybury (which subsumed Imperial Services College in 1942) indicates that Coutart went abroad to farm after leaving Oxford, and the subsequent ten years of his life remain a mystery until he re-appeared in England as can be seen in the 1901 Census entry.

There is, of course, the CWGC entry that he had served during the South African War of 1899-1902, and there was some support of this statement in a reference made in his officer attestation papers that Coutart had previously been granted a temporary commission with the 1st Battalion, RWF and had served with them for six months during the Boer War. He undoubtedly was present at same stage in South Arica and it is possible that he did serve with the RWF. However, the direct connection between the 1st Battalion and the Boer War may be incorrect as there is no evidence of it in RWF records held by that Regiment's Museum in Caernarfon. However, any previous service that he may have had with the RWF could have been a factor that would also have made later service in the 17th (Service) Battalion RWF as Collins understandable. It might also be noted that for a period of six months from April, 1902, there was a detachment of some 400-

500 men of the RWF forming part of the garrison in Jersey. This period coincided with his first six months with the RMIJ, and might form the basis for confusion later on.

Moving on to the Census that was taken on 31st March, 1901, it showed that Coutart was living in Glendower House (pictured below) at Clifton Down in Bristol (then in Gloucestershire). The Census recorded that he was 30 years old, single, a boarder, and being described as a man of his “living on his own means”, i.e. that he was not employed.

In the line above Coutart’s name we also notice the name of a certain Lilian Florence Blunden McGinnery, although it would appear that her proper maiden surname was McEnnery and that this had been an error in transcription by the Census Enumerator. It cannot be a coincidence that Coutart and Lilian were under the same roof, for from Bristol, from where it would appear that the next port of call for both was to be the Channel Island of Jersey!



The above photograph shows Glendower House as it appears today, having been converted into flats. In 1901 it had been a boarding house, apparently for the more affluent. But, there is another interesting fact about it in that the house was the birthplace of Sir Fabian Ware, founder of the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission was born on 17th June, 1869. It is curious to think that he became the CWGC’s founder after he had been told that

he was too old for military service, yet he was some five months younger than Coutart!



Life in Jersey (1901-1915)

The first note of their presence in Jersey would be when Coutart De Butts Taylor married Lilian Florence Blunden McEnnery on 11th July, 1901 at St Brelade's Church in Jersey, with the witnesses being Edwin De Saumarez Dobree and Julia Harriet Dobree. At the time of the Census, Lilian was recorded as being aged 24 years and that she originally came from Dublin. However, the marriage records also informs us that her father James was described as a gentleman. Coutart was still described as a man of his "living on his own means".

Meanwhile, Edwin Dobree is listed in the 1901 Census as a retired Major having served with the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, and lived in the parish of St Brelade with his wife Julia and their two children, Hugh Leslie and Dorothy Blanche. It can be assumed that the Dobree's were related to the Taylors through Coutart's maternal grandmother, Charlotte Dobree McCrae.

Coutart and Lilian Taylor would have three children who were all Jersey-born:

- Lilian Mary Manderville Taylor, born 16th March, 1902 at St Brelade
- Terence D'Aubrey De Saumarez Taylor, born 8th June, 1903 at Havre des Pas, St Helier
- Doreen Gladys Graham Taylor, born 15th May, 1905 at St Lawrence.

Unusually, Lilian Mary's birth would not be registered until 2nd July, 1902, while Doreen Gladys would not be registered until 31st August, 1905.

One can probably assume that the Taylors were the Dobrees' house-guests from the date that the Taylors arrived in Jersey before their marriage, until after their first daughter, Lilian, was born. Clearly they had moved out to Havre des Pas before their son, Terence, was born.

Shortly after Lilian Mary was born, Coutart would be commissioned as a Lieutenant with 1st (West) Battalion, RMIJ on 24th April, 1902 according to the London Gazette No 27487 dated 24th October, 1902. Coutart would remain with the RMIJ for the best part of thirteen years, having been promoted Captain on 1st July, 1906 according to the London Gazette No 27939 dated 10th August, 1906.

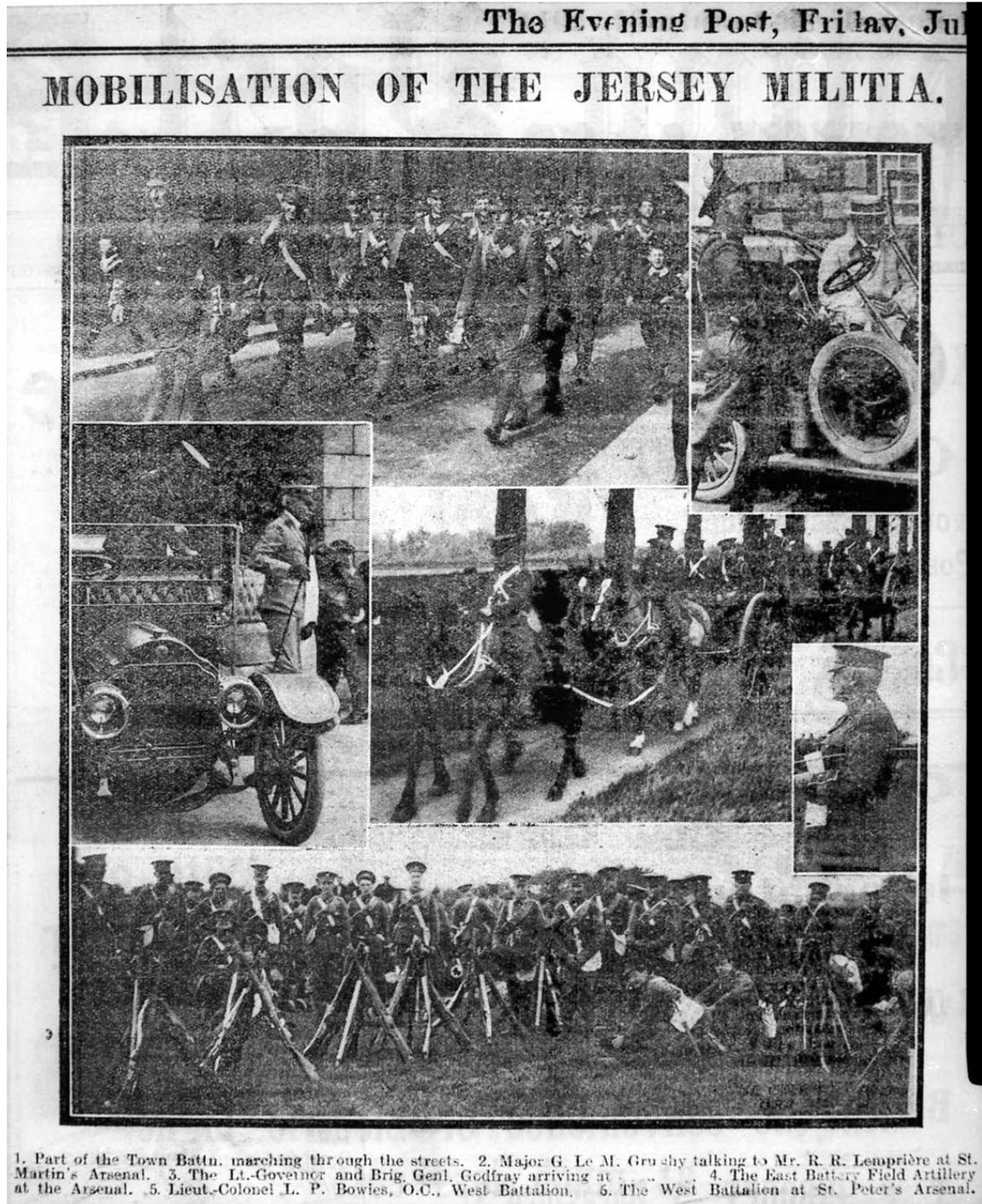
At this time, Jersey's Militia consisted of the 1st (West), 2nd (East) and 3rd (South or Town) Battalions, two field artillery batteries, two garrison artillery companies, a medical company and an engineering company. The 1st (West) Battalion would take its men from the Island's western parishes of St Lawrence, St Peter, St Mary, St Brelade, St Ouen and St John, while the 2nd (East) Battalion would do likewise from the eastern parishes of St Saviour, St Clement, St Martin, Trinity and Grouville. The 3rd (South or Town) Battalion would take men from St Helier. Overall command rested with the sovereign's representative on the Island, the Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Jersey



As implied by the inscription on Lilian Taylor's kettle, Coutart would serve with the "C" (St John's) Company that was part of the 1st (West) Battalion and this Company is shown in the photograph above. To date it has not been possible to determine whether Coutart is one of the four Officers shown, and if so, which one. It is however believed that the photograph was taken in 1906 and during the 1st (West) Battalion's summer training camp.

The Taylors sojourn at Havre des Pas was comparatively short, for they had clearly moved to Mont Félard and "Clifton" in the parish of St Lawrence prior to the birth of their younger daughter, Doreen. "Clifton" became their home, and was a farm owned by a George Winter Bertram (Author's Note: To the best of my knowledge, we are not related), and it seems that at this stage, Coutart may have become a tenant farmer. There is evidence to support this with the discovery of a Times article dated 11th June, 1912, which reported, that on the previous day in Jersey's Royal Court, Coutart had successfully sued the Great Western Railway (GWR) Company for the non-delivery of 350 baskets of unripe tomatoes to Newcastle-Upon-Tyne! The GWR were experiencing a rail strike and had sold

these tomatoes at Cleckheaton and had subsequently only offered Coutart the sum of £2.11s.0d. Coutart won the case and the sum of £43!



The approach of the Great War would find Coutart still serving with the 1st (West) Regiment, which would be mobilised by the Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Jersey, Major-General Sir Alexander N Rochfort KCB, CMG, along with the other units of Jersey's Militia on 30th July, 1914. Much of

Coutart's time would be spent seeing that guards and picquets were furnished at the various key facilities and places where an enemy landing might have taken place. "C" Company would be responsible for part of Jersey's northern coastline with its 400 foot cliffs and rocky inlets and small bays.

As the war progressed, many officers and men from Jersey's Militia would look to join the Army and Royal Navy, and a steady succession of volunteers would be accepted for enlistment, yet all the while the requirement was recognised of an obligation that the Island's defence had to be maintained. Coutart's turn would come, when on 3rd October, 1915, having attested and been assessed as medically fit by Colonel JR Yourdi, Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). He would be gazetted into the British Army as a Temporary Captain in the RIR.

With The Royal Irish Rifles at Salonika and the Salient (1915-1916)

Undoubtedly he would have undergone induction and training with the RIR before being assigned to one of their Battalions, and it was in the 6th (Service) Battalion that, according to that Battalion's War Diary, he was taken on strength on 18th February, 1916, being appointed "A" Company Commander on the following day, 19th February, 1916.

It may be also interesting to note from the 6th Battalion's War Diary that four days later on 23rd February, 1916, his Commanding Officer (CO), Temporary Lieutenant Colonel Cecil ML Becher had been promoted to that rank from Major.

The Battalion formed part of the 29th Brigade which itself was in the 10th (Irish) Division. At the time of Coutart's joining, the Division was based in Salonika, where the British Army had been since the previous October when, along with the French, they had landed with the intention to assist the Serbs in fighting off the Bulgarians, with the agreement of the pro-Ally Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos. However, the Anglo-French landing was too late as the Serbs had already been defeated, although the decision was made to keep the force in place for future operations, including opposing attacks from pro-Central Power Greek forces if they arose. In the first few months of 1916, the British Salonika Force as it was known would be involved in creating a defensive boundary by digging in and laying barbed wire. Yet, if a human enemy was not enough, there would also be malaria, influenza and a range of other diseases to combat during the summer months in particular, with eventual death rates in the Salonika theatre from these diseases more than three times the number caused by enemy action.

Coutart did not spend a very long with the 6/RIR. In fact, he was in Salonika from 18th February, 1916 for a period of ten weeks, during which the final four of those weeks would see him in hospital, where, according to the Battalion's War Diary, he had been admitted on 31st March, 1916, apparently through insomnia. It is difficult at this stage to determine whether there was any malarial outbreak at this

time. What is interesting though is the War Diary's account of the succession of men from the 6/RIR being admitted to hospital from illness shortly after Coutart's admission. With nine on 12th April, 1916, twelve on 14th April, 1916, a further sixteen on 23rd April, 1916, there appeared a high incidence of hospitalisation, and although the date has not been noted, forty-four men were admitted on one occasion soon after. Of course, other officers were being admitted also.

To pick up on what occurred, we are fortunate to have Coutart's own words where, in a letter written as Collins in 1918 (henceforth referred to as the "1918 letter"), to his Company Commander in the 17/RWF, he sets out his account by describing the events in Salonika. In this letter, he stated that he had allegedly made an approach to a Staff Sergeant in the Military Police enquiring as to the address of a particular "house of ill fame!" It appears that both were joined by a Corporal from the Provost Marshal's staff, whereupon Coutart stood both Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) a drink, spending a further fifteen minutes with them.

Some three weeks would elapse, and by Coutart's account, he felt that he had been performing his regimental duties more than adequately, when he was placed under arrest for "Conduct unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman." As a result, the Army's disciplinary process was now applied whereby a Summary of Evidence was held so that Coutart's conduct could be investigated and statements taken. In Coutart's case, he acknowledged drinking with the NCOs, but refuted the "house of ill fame" claim, and he would request that he be tried by Court Martial. After a few days, Coutart was released from arrest, and appears to have returned to normal duty under the impression that no further disciplinary action was intended. At about this time he was hospitalised, apparently with total insomnia, hardly unsurprising given the circumstances. In the "1918 letter", Coutart could not explain how he had got into such a predicament, and would go on to write that the incident was totally out of character.

Coutart was clearly wrong in thinking that no further disciplinary action was intended, for, while he was in hospital, further actions were in hand! His CO had the time to sit down and write an "Adverse Report" on Coutart's performance as an Officer. This report would follow Coutart on his eventual return to the United Kingdom, thus blighting any further prospects for him to continue as an officer. Couched in the military jargon of the day, Colonel Becher did not pull any punches and the report stated that Coutart:

- Was incapable of conveying a coherent command
- Was apparently at a loss as to how to act on a definite order
- Had not had the requisite training to enable him to assimilate up to date requirements
- Was too old to mould into the requisite shape of a Commander for wartime.

In a final “throwaway” line, Colonel Becher also stated that Coutart had been “drinking with an NCO, sufficient to justify removal.” Much of the Colonel’s comments appeared to take Coutart by surprise, as he claimed that it had never been indicated previously that the Colonel had been dissatisfied with Coutart’s military performance. Today, one is left to wonder whether Colonel Becher’s “Adverse Report” had been produced on his own initiative, or that the Colonel had received direction from “up on high”! The Provost Marshal’s influence can be read between the lines, and it would not be a surprise that he saw his role as ensuring that military discipline was rigorously enforced in Salonika, a town for which the word “seamy” would have been invented!

Coutart was struck off the strength of the Salonika Force on 27th April, 1916 and would commence his return to the UK on the SS Formosa. The file reports that he was at the Military Hospital at Tigné on Malta on 30th April, 1916 and, irrespective or perhaps because of the disciplinary cloud hanging over his head, it is clear that, whatever the reason, he was still ill. Given the earlier reference to total insomnia, there must have been something else seriously wrong with Coutart’s health, particularly his mental condition, and possibly Colonel Becher’s words may have inadvertently suggested such a problem. It seems that at this time the Egyptian Expeditionary Force GHQ, who were responsible for Salonika operations, were trying to locate his whereabouts so that Colonel Becher’s “Adverse Report” could be formally acknowledged by Coutart. But, by the time Malta had been contacted, he was on the next stage of his journey home.

The next date that is relevant is 5th July, 1916, when Coutart would report for duty at Belfast with the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion of the RIR. One assumes that during the period between early-May and the above date he had been in hospital and subsequently convalescing. He appeared fully fit for, nine days later on 14th July, 1916, he was sent to France and Flanders, and the 12th (Service) Battalion of the RIR. Given the existence of the “Adverse Report” this seems surprising. However, the paperwork would eventually catch up and after nearly five weeks the order came for him to return to England once more, and to report to an office in the War Office building in Whitehall.

Unfortunately the 12/RIR War Diary does not mention Coutart during this period, and one might assume that he had not joined them. However, it is to be noted that no other Officers were referred to, and this seemed the normal administrative practice for this Battalion. It was during Coutart’s time here that the Prince of Wales visited the Battalion on 20th July, 1916 when they were out of the line at Poperinghe.

Disgrace and Disappearance (1916)

Reporting to the War Office on 18th August, 1916, Coutart was told of the existence of the “Adverse Report”, that it was being looked into, and that he would be required to report back shortly.

At this stage, Coutart was staying at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square in London, pictured below, and it was from there, on the Hotel's headed notepaper, that a letter (the "1916 letter") was written to the War Office on the 22nd August, 1916. This letter, retained in his Officer's File at the National Archive at Kew, recounts that when he went to his bank, Cox and Company, in London on the previous day, the 21st August, 1916 the bank's staff told him that they had previously been informed that he had relinquished his commission in the RIR, an action that Coutart claimed not to have been aware of! This was reiterated in the "1918 letter", and interestingly, although it was referred to a number of times by senior Officers in post-war comments, these claims were never disputed as an incorrect statement!



Having complained to the War Office about his treatment, he was sent a terse response that as he still held a commission in the RMIJ he should now refer his complaint to the CO of 1st (West) Battalion, RMIJ further for consideration. The military authorities in Jersey having previously been made aware of the situation and having been suggested to that it was now inappropriate for Coutart to continue as a Militia Officer, would write to him on 2nd September, 1916 requesting that he resign. Nothing was heard from Coutart since he vanished from sight, probably having vacated the Imperial Hotel, and the letter was later returned undelivered to the War Office.

Having vanished in such a manner, it is clear that Coutart did not turn up in Jersey to resume his Captaincy with the RMIJ, which was not relinquished at the same time as his Temporary Commission in the RIR. This was because Jersey's

Militia Commissions were granted or taken away by the Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Jersey as the sovereign's representative.

In due course, Coutart would also lose his Militia commission. An entry in the London Gazette No 29996 dated 23rd March, 1917 reported his removal from the rank of Captain from the Jersey Militia on 2nd September, 1916 for being Absent without Leave (AWOL). This action undoubtedly had undoubtedly been prompted by the suspension of the RMIJ for the rest of the Great War by Jersey's Military Service Act of 1917 and the establishment in the British Army of the Royal Jersey Garrison Battalion as a consequence. By this stage, the Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Jersey was Major-General Sir Alexander Wilson KCB

A small article in a JEP written shortly afterwards would state that he had been cashiered from the RMIJ in September, 1916 for being AWOL, even though this is technically incorrect as an Officer cannot be cashiered without due process, i.e. as the result of a Court Martial. In such circumstances however, it would have been administratively appropriate to have him removed as an Officer for being AWOL, an action that would not have required a Court-Martial.

In the "1918 letter" Coutart stated that he felt that he had lost his honour and it almost goes without saying that he was at a very low point in his life. He may have felt unable to return to Jersey, to see his family if they had still been there, and his friends and associates, he certainly could no longer turn up at the Army and Navy Club. One can only speculate! Having discovered that he was no longer an officer in the Royal Irish Rifles, it was at that point Coutart must have jettisoned everything in his life to date, to become Collins. One might even think that Coutart de Butts Taylor 'died' at that point, for, during the remaining two and a quarter years of his life, he would be known as Charles Edward Collins.

There would now be a five week gap while he performed his "vanishing act".

Rebirth (1916-1918)

It is fortunate that, in this case, the service papers of Charles Edward Collins had been attached to those of Coutart's in 1918 or 1919. Had they not, there would be a high probability that they would have been destroyed with those of many soldiers' records during the German blitz in 1940. Collins' attestation paper survives, and it can be seen that he enlisted on the 29th September, 1916, stating that he was from Dublin, and that he was staying at the National Hotel, Upper Bedford Place in London WC. Considering that he had adopted a new name and identity, many answers were clearly going to be fictional. He stated that he was 39 years old, in so doing, deducting 8 years from his true age of 47, he had not served previously, and he was not married!

These fictional answers pose a couple of interesting questions. In respect to age, by this stage, the UK government had established national registration and had

later followed it up with a Military Service Act in early 1916. One wonders whether the recruiting authorities had asked sufficiently detailed questions of Collins' background, or had the manpower demands of the day predominated. Perhaps it was his "born in Dublin, Ireland" statement that circumvented the need to question him in detail since the 1916 Military Service Act did not apply to Ireland. Having stated that he was not married, the War Office would thus have been unable to pay a separation allowance to Lilian Taylor, and deduct a similar amount from Collin's army pay. Had she been provided for in some other way, since a letter that she would write after the war points to no previous knowledge of Coutart's existence as Collins?

In enlisting, Collins would indicate a preference for service with a London Welsh Battalion. At that time the 1st London Welsh were the 15th (Service) Battalion of the RWF, while the 2nd London Welsh had recently become the 18th (Reserve) Battalion before being absorbed into the Training Reserve at the start of September, 1916. After going through basic training in the 63rd Training Reserve Battalion at Kinmel Park near Bodelwyddan in North Wales with the number TR4/24476, Collins now given the regimental number of 59747, would join the 17th (Service) Battalion of the RWF, then in France and Flanders as part of the 115th Brigade in the 38th (Welsh) Division. One wonders whether he was suspected of having served previously or that he was sufficiently mature, for he was promoted Acting Corporal on 2nd December, 1916, and Sergeant on 23rd December, 1917. Subsequently, his record of service would show the following:

- France and Flanders – 12th December, 1916 to 4th August, 1917
- United Kingdom – 5th August, 1917 to 7th December, 1917
- France and Flanders – 8th December, 1917 to 25th November, 1918

The period in United Kingdom was one of convalescence following a bullet wound that had been received at the outset of the Third Battle of Ypres. It appears that after he was wounded in 1917, he spent the period 5th August to 26th September at the Middlesex War Hospital at Napsbury near St Albans. It is not known what he did or where he went after that period until 7th December, 1917 when he returned to France, but clearly he must have convalesced and taken leave somewhere before reporting back for military duty. The question, although it may never be answered, is where?

He would maintain the fiction of being Collins until May 1918.

Discovery and Death (1918)

As the Great War progressed, the continued loss of Officers required more and more men to be commissioned from the ranks. On the 30th May, 1918, Lieutenant Colonel RL Beasley, the CO of 17/RWF would be moved to write to his superiors that Collins should have his commission reinstated since he had: "[set a] splendid

example under fire, [displayed] exemplary conduct since he enlisted and his total regard of danger in the presence of the enemy!”

Clearly, his deception was out, and Colonel Beasley had presented Collins with the opportunity to have his honour fully restored. This was surely the straw to be grasped at with both hands and was the reason for Collins to write the “1918 letter” setting out the situation as he had seen it, and closing the letter with the statement that he was in fact Coutart de Butts Taylor.

In recommending reinstatement, Colonel Beasley had to provide evidence, and would do so over the next few months as the paperwork went up (and back down) through the British Army’s chain of command. Colonel Beasley cited the following acts performed by Collins:

- At Boesinghe in January 1917, while his company was being shelled by the German equivalent of 5.9” artillery, he went up and down the main street calming the men, keeping them under shelter, and helping to avoid casualties.
- At Pilckem in July 1917, he helped to ensure that the company performed well in action, and received a bullet wound to his right shoulder.
- At Armentieres in March 1918, he conducted a particularly arduous reconnoitre of a German trench system, and would be prominent in the subsequent raid, being the first man into the enemy trenches.
- At Albert in September 1918, he took over as Platoon Commander even though wounded in the leg, and having only just returned from hospital following an earlier wound.

As a general comment, Colonel Beasley also stated that Collins invariably volunteered for dangerous work, while it appears that there was a recommendation for a MM on 26th May, 1918 that went unrecognised. Reading the file today, one senses an element of heroic recklessness in Collins’ behaviour, but clearly it would pay off, albeit sadly too late, as Colonel Beasley’s recommendation was endorsed as it moved up the chain of command reaching Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig’s desk for approval on the 14th November, 1918, before being finally sent to the Army Council back in Whitehall.

One senior Officer would later comment that Collins was wounded four or five times, and from Colonel Beasley’s evidence there were at least three such occasions up until the end of September 1918:

- The bullet wound to the right shoulder at Pilckem which would see Collins being treated at 61 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) before returning to the UK for treatment and convalescence.

- He would receive a further bullet wound, this time to the right wrist on 7th September, 1918, being treated at 38 CCS.
- The leg wound referred to above, also in September 1918.

There was one final wound received and this would eventually prove fatal.

From August 1918, the Germans would steadily retreat as the British and French Armies pushed forward, with the Germans maintaining an orderly rearguard defence. For the British Army now, Sir Douglas Haig's instruction was for his subordinate Army commanders to take risks that Haig would not have countenanced in the earlier battles. While his hoped for reinstatement was being progressed, Collins remained in action with his Battalion throughout the period.

On 4th November, 1918, a date that is widely noted for the death of the poet Wilfred Owen, the 17/RWF was advancing through the Fôret de Mormal, to the north-east of Le Cateau. As they moved forward, Collins' platoon was engaged by a German machine gun. Collins sent three men to the left flank, and another three to the right flank, and on his own, immediately pressed forward with a frontal attack that eliminated all German resistance and capturing the machine gun. The Battalion's advance could continue, but not so Collins for, during the assault, he had received a bullet wound that penetrated his chest.

For his bravery, he would receive an immediate award of the MM which would be later announced in the London Gazette No 31405 dated 14th June, 1919, while his injury would see him returned for treatment in military hospitals based in France. Three weeks after being wounded for the last time, he would depart from France to be admitted to the Kitchener Military Hospital in Brighton on 26th November, 1918, and would die there on 24th December, 1918 from his chest wound, although it also appears that he was suffering from dysentery.

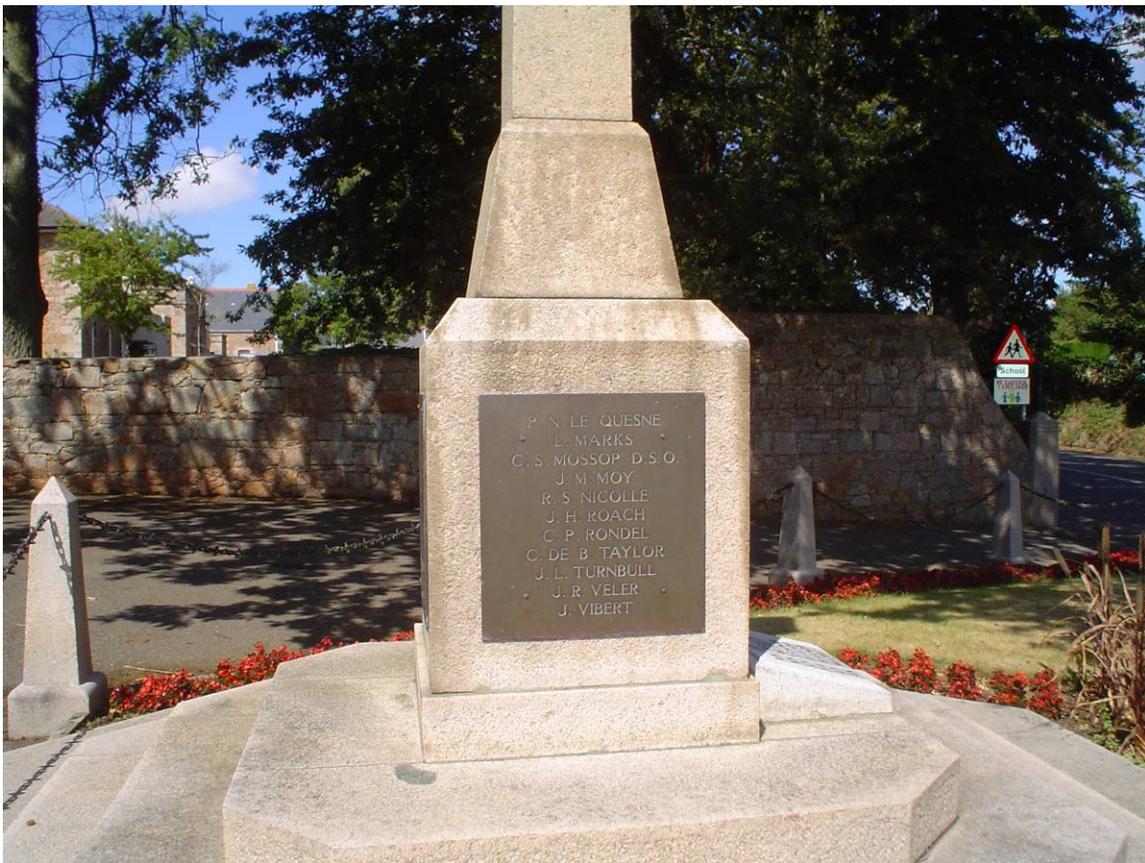
Coutart de Butts Taylor was buried in Brighton (Bear Road) Borough Cemetery, but while still Collins. It appears however, that the funeral was attended by one relative, one of his sisters, a Miss TE Taylor. It was written as such on the typed transcript of a letter in his Officer's File, but it may actually have been LE for Leonora Eliot, who was 12-18 months his younger, and who then lived at 64 Clarendon Road in Southsea, Hampshire. How had she known to attend the funeral is unclear, and one might speculate that she had known that Coutart had been Collins for some time before his death. If so, was she sworn to secrecy because of the deep disgrace that Coutart had felt, and had withheld this knowledge from others of the Taylor family and of course, from Lilian?

Redemption

Following Sir Douglas Haig's endorsement of Coutart's recommended reinstatement on the 14th November, 1918, all the members of the Army Council

saw fit to approve it in early January, 1919, accepting Sir Douglas's view that Coutart was an officer who had "made good" and as a consequence the decision was taken that Coutart was again a Captain in the Royal Irish Rifles and this was accordingly published in the London Gazette No 31120 dated 10th January, 1919. However, it appears that at the time the Council reached its decision, it was unaware that Coutart, still Collins, had died on Christmas Eve.

However, prior to the next full Army Council meeting Coutart's death had become known by at least one of its members, the Military Secretary, who took it upon himself to revise the date that Coutart was reinstated to the 23rd December, 1918, the day prior to his death, and this was soon published in the London Gazette No 31144 dated 24th January, 1919



The Parish of St Lawrence Great War Memorial in Jersey

It is clear from the subsequent memoranda that, at this stage, the Army Council was demonstrating a great degree of pragmatism and fairness since, in respect of the date change they had acknowledged their own slowness in decision making, and that the outcome was the right one, even though not all had been involved. Furthermore, on 31st January, 1919, they wrote to Headquarters, Jersey District, strongly recommending that Coutart should also be reinstated as a Captain in the RMIJ. There are no references in his War Office file to suggest

that this was ever followed through in Jersey, while a search of London Gazettes for 1919 has also drawn a blank.

In due course Lilian would discover that Coutart had been serving as Collins and, in one letter to the authorities, would request that Coutart's grave in Brighton be correctly shown as being his grave and not that of Collins, while in another letter, she would seek to have his personal effects returned from the Kitchener Military Hospital, few as they were.

Seventy Pounds, One Shilling and Nine Pence

With Coutart having died as Collins, Lilian would experience a number of bureaucratic hurdles that would have to be cleared by having to demonstrate that she was who she said she was. This was necessary in terms of having Coutart correctly commemorated and also to receive his personal effects. However, there was also the question of a gratuity that required proof of identity. This would take time with numerous letters to be written and forms to be completed.

During 1919 and 1920 matters became complicated in that, although Coutart was now recognised as being an Officer, the Finance Branch within the War Office only regarded him as having been newly commissioned and, because of his death, he had not yet served as an Officer. As such, their logic ran, Coutart's widow would only be entitled to a Sergeant's gratuity! This situation would continue for some time, and in due course Lilian would be assisted by Coutart's older brother, Colonel Haydon D'Aubrey Taylor to "walk Whitehall's corridors of power" and have the matter raised at the level of the Army Council.

Debate ensued! Concern was expressed that the Army Council's decision that Coutart had not been newly commissioned but reinstated was either being ignored or disputed at a comparatively junior level in the Finance Branch! In due course the situation would be resolved and a money draft to the value of £70.1s.9d would be forwarded in July, 1920 to Lilian, a sum that was roughly triple what she would have received as a Sergeant's gratuity.

Learning about Lilian

Little of Lilian's life is known before she is referred to in the 1901 Census, and subsequently the details of her marriage which describes her as the daughter of James McEnnery.

However, the recent discovery of two items from the Bath and Wiltshire Chronicle for the 21st and 24th December, 1937 does shed a glimmer of light in that they refer to the death and subsequent funeral in Bath, of an Irish lady, a Miss Eileen Blunden McEnnery, who had been born in 1880 or 1881, and would have been some 4 or 5 years younger than Lilian. In the articles, Eileen McEnnery's father was referred to as a country squire, while there were no near relatives living and:

“Her brother, who was a doctor in practice at Clifton, died some years ago.” These details strongly suggest that Lilian, Eileen and the unnamed brother were siblings, and may help in explaining Lilian’s appearance at Clifton in the 1901 Census. If further proof is needed, reference is also made that among the chief mourners at the funeral were “the Misses Graham Taylor (nieces)”!

The War Office file does contain a certain amount of information that can be gleaned about Lilian and the three children, due to her need to write letters and fill forms after being widowed. In one, there is an indication that there is financial pressure with regards to their son’s schooling, while both she and Colonel Haydon D’Aubrey Taylor highlight the fact that Coutart’s siblings had been supportive of her and the children. In another of her letters, Lilian wrote that she had left Jersey in late-1915 to nurse, and the addresses on letters written at various times indicate that would nurse at two establishments in the UK at least:

- British Red Cross Hospital, Highfield Hall, Southampton, Hampshire (Today it is part of Southampton University’s campus)
- Officers’ Convalescent Centre, Thornleigh, Bolton, Lancashire. Today the building is the Thornleigh Salesian College and it is pictured below. Thornleigh was used as a Convalescence Centre between 1919 and 1923, with 60 Officers been treated before the building was sold off at auction in November 1923.



The length of time that Lilian was at Southampton is uncertain, but it closed down shortly after the Armistice, and she would certainly be at Thornleigh in Bolton between July, 1920 and July, 1921, where she described herself as a Matron of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England, and quite probably she would remain there up until the time that Thornleigh was closed in 1923.

At various times, she would also write from a number of addresses in London, including 10 Palace Green, Kensington, London, W8 on 31st October, 1919. However it may be that this was also the Royal Palace Hotel which she also wrote from and which was also in W8.

Finally, there is a reference in the Births, Marriages and Deaths (BMD) registers to a Lilian FG Taylor dying in 1934 in Kensington aged 58. As has been noted, Lilian Florence stayed in Kensington when she came to London from her nursing duties. However, although the initial 'G' may seem puzzling, there had been a letter written by Leonora Taylor to the War Office in 1919, in which she had referred to Lilian as Lilian Graham Taylor! This would also be consistent with "the Misses Graham Taylor (nieces)" referred to at Eileen McEnnery's funeral.

The Taylor Children

We return to Charlotte and Edward Lloyd who had married in Malta in 1883 while Edward was in the RN. In due course Edward would retire from the RN as a Commander, and go to work for Vickers at Newcastle before finally retiring and buying a house in Weybridge which he would name 'Monkmoor' after an area of Shrewsbury from where he originated.

On a form in Coutart's War Office file that that Lilian had completed on 21st January, 1920, she listed the children as follows:

Name	Age	Address
Lilian Mary	17	Monkmoor, Weybridge
Terence D'Aubrey	16	Imperial Services College, Windsor
Doreen	14	Upper Mount, Southsea

At this time, Coutart's eldest daughter, Lilian Mary, was thus residing at 'Monkmoor' with Charlotte and Edward whilst her mother was busy nursing and form-filling. Clearly, Colonel Taylor was not alone in rallying around to help Coutart's family, and seems to have continued long after the war, since he made small bequests to Coutart's daughters in his will of 1931, as was mentioned earlier.

From subsequent research into the Imperial Services College, Terence entered there in May, 1916, and left in December, 1920. Terence, who later preferring to use de Saumarez for a middle name rather than D'Aubrey, became a tea planter at the Rasagalla Estate at Balangoda in Ceylon, and later made an unaccompanied number of trips back to the UK, namely:

- 14th August, 1925, staying at 13 Queen's Gate Terrace, London W.
- 11th December, 1930, staying at 2 Glendower Place, Kensington, London
- 31st January, 1936, staying at Royal? Hotel, Cromwell Road, London, W.
- 19th October, 1953, staying at 1A Victoria Grove, Kensington, London, W8.

One might assume, from the above address in Southsea that Doreen was staying with Leonora Taylor.

Finally, from a search of the BMD registers:

- Terence de S Taylor died in Bodmin District in the fourth quarter of 1971
- Doreen GG Taylor died in Thanet in the third quarter of 1972
- Lilian MM Taylor also died in Thanet, in July 1993.

In her will, Doreen left her estate to Lilian unless Lilian preceded her, in which case, the estate would go to Terence. This will, made in 1954, had Doreen and Lilian living at 1A Victoria Grove! One can safely assume that none of them married.

Some Thoughts

In following Coutart's trail the author has strayed into family research as well as into the subject of the Great War, but in many respects it has been necessary to understand the disruption caused to just one family through a man's sense of patriotism, honour and duty being slighted by accusations that may have had little relation to the conduct of war. However, could those family disruptions have also upset Coutart's sense of balance?

By 1915, Coutart, Lilian and the children appear to have become well settled, living in Jersey. However both Coutart and Lilian would leave in separate directions, Coutart to the Army and Lilian to nursing duties in England. Of their children, in May, 1916 Terence was at school in Windsor. It may be assumed that the two girls were by this time with Taylor family members in England. Thus, the family was effectively broken up within six months, this covering the time that Coutart was serving in Salonika.

It is clear from his account that he was unwell in Salonika, and this is supported by 6/RIR's War Diary and some of the papers in his officer's file, however, it may have been more serious than his reference to "insomnia" implies. Later, he could give no explanation for enquiring about the "house of ill fame", nor of standing a Military Policeman and a Provost Staff Corporal a drink. These breaches of military discipline look trivial today, but in 1915, social fraternisation between officers and the men that they led was totally unacceptable. The severity in how Coutart was dealt with was not solely dependent on this fraternisation, for Colonel Becher saw that it was necessary (or had been told!) to write the

“Adverse Report” listing Coutart’s perceived shortcomings in leadership skills. In that area, later reports would paint a different picture.

Conclusion

The case of Coutart de Butts Taylor is possibly unique. To the best of the author’s knowledge, three officers had their commissions removed during the Great War but, were later reinstated. For two, Lieutenant Colonels Elkington and England, removal was as a result of courts-martial while their reinstatement came with the King’s Pardon. Because Coutart had not been tried by a court-martial, the subsequent reinstatement did not involve the Sovereign, and was, in that sense, simpler. However the uniqueness of the case is that the two Colonels were still living, whereas Coutart had died, and so his reinstatement was posthumous.

After relinquishing his commission, Coutart was too proud a man to live with that decision made for him, and it became the spur to everything that he undertook after that fateful visit to his bank in August, 1916. His leadership skills, doubted in Salonika, were proven in the trenches of France and Flanders. His heroism, as the citation for his MM testifies, bordered on the reckless. His loss of life as a result of a serious wound so close to Armistice was tragic, and it clearly had an impact on his wife and children. Sadly, we may not know how much he was missed.

For my part, he was a remarkable man who sought to overcome what might have been an injustice, and it is a privilege to have been able to research his life.

Barrie H Bertram
27th April, 2009

www.greatwarci.net

Postscript

It is very much hoped that in the near future, the final chapter in the military career of Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor, MM will be written in that his commission as a Captain in the Royal Militia Island of Jersey will be posthumously reinstated as of 23rd December, 1918.



For England's Sake (Photograph: Roger Frisby)

Notes:

Technically, 1st (West) Regiment, RMIJ as shown on the kettle was 1st (West) Battalion, RMIJ.

The reference to Havre des Pas prompted the kettle owner's memory that he was renting accommodation in Dicq Road by Havre des Pas in 1970 when he first came to work at the Airport in Jersey. It seems that his late wife was given the kettle by the lady who owned the house, and who was then in her 90s, with words like "I don't have any further need for it".

For many years, the Jersey Evening Post was simply titled the Evening Post. The current name has been used throughout for the sake of consistency.

References:

1. http://www.cwgc.org/search/casualty_details.aspx?casualty=659367
2. <http://www.1901census.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
3. <http://www.gazettes-online.co.uk/>
4. <http://www.greatwarci.net/>
5. Officers Died In The Great War
6. Soldiers Died In The Great War
7. London Gazette No 27487 dated 24th October, 1902
8. London Gazette No 27939 dated 10th August, 1906
9. London Gazette No 29328 dated 15th October, 1915
10. London Gazette No 29708 dated 15th August, 1916
11. London Gazette No 29996 dated 23rd March, 1917
12. London Gazette No 31120 dated 10th January, 1919
13. London Gazette No 31144 dated 24th January, 1919
14. London Gazette No 31405 dated 14th June, 1919
15. Army List, March 1917, Column 1826b
16. National Archive - WO File WO 95/2506
17. National Archive - WO File WO 95/2561
18. National Archive - WO File WO 95/4835
19. National Archive - WO File WO 339/39151
20. Jersey Evening Post, dated 23rd March, 1917
21. Jersey Roll of Honour and Service, published 1919
22. Unreferenced Papers C Lloyd/BH Bertram
23. Unreferenced Papers RL Rowlands/BH Bertram
24. Bath and Wiltshire Chronicle dated 21st December, 1937
25. Bath and Wiltshire Chronicle dated 24th December, 1937

Acknowledgements:

Thanks go to the following who have so kindly provided input to the research that has gone into discovering much of Coutart de Butts Taylor's life and into related items:

Mr Len Rowlands – The current owner of Lilian Taylor's kettle.

Mrs Christine Lloyd – The granddaughter-in-law of Edward and Charlotte Lloyd

Mr Brian Owen – Curator of the RWF Museum, Caernarfon Castle

Miss Anne Pedley – Archivist of the RWF Museum, Caernarfon Castle

Mr Richard Walduck – Owner of Imperial Hotels Ltd.

Mr Toby Parker – Archivist of Haileybury

Father ?? – Archivist of Thornleigh Salesian College, Bolton

Mrs Sue Le Ruez – Reporter, Jersey Evening Post

Mr Alastair Crosby - Reporter, Jersey Evening Post

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Mr Roger Frisby – Researcher and Webmaster, Member CIGWSG

Mr Mark Bougourd – Researcher, Member CIGWSG

Mrs Linda Romeril plus Staff – Jersey Archive

Mr Danny Wright – Jersey Field Squadron, RE

Mrs Anna Baghiani - La Société Jersiaise, Member CIGWSG

Mr Gareth Syvret - La Société Jersiaise

Miss Anne Archer – Archivist of the Lloyds TSB Group

Capt Jackie Knox, MBE - Curator of the RIR Museum, Belfast

Mr Brian Nelson - RIR Museum, Belfast

Supporting Material

The subsequent pages contain the following supporting material:

Medal Card of Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor/Sergeant Charles Edward Collins

Advertisement for the Auction Sale of “Thornleigh”

1901 Census sheet showing a list of residents at “Glendower House”

Photographic Evidence

Coutart de Butts Taylor’s “1916 Letter”

Coutart de Butts Taylor’s “1918 Letter”

Citation for the award of a MM to Sergeant Charles Edward Collins

**59747 Sergeant CE Collins – 17/RWF
Photographic Evidence**



For a considerable time, a photograph of Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor (see Front page) had been sought in Jersey via various sources, including the Société Jersiaise Museum, the JEP and the Jersey Field Squadron, Royal Engineers, today's successors of the RMIJ.

However it was thanks to Curator, Brian Owen and Archivist, Anne Pedley from the RWF Museum at Caernarfon that the likely discovery of a photograph was made and has been used on the front of this document. It has been taken from the postcard-sized image shown on the previous page, which had included a list of the men's names on the reverse side. There was another photograph (not included) that was sent and that had been taken at the same time as evidenced by the background, and had been dated January, 1918. By that time Coutart, while still serving as Collins, had been promoted Sergeant on 23rd December, 1917. If one looks at his Sergeant's chevrons, the topmost one is different and appears to be a recent addition above those of a Corporal after a promotion.

Of course, his name appears on the reverse, and as far as is humanly possible it has been established that there was not another Sergeant Collins serving with the 17/RWF at that time.

What was considered as the clinching piece of evidence was the presence of two officers that are named. Seated in the second row up and on the far right of the photograph is Captain O Jones. According to the Battalion's War Diary, he was the Officer Commanding (OC) of "A" Company 17/RWF at the Armistice. His predecessor as OC, "A" Company was Captain Jenkins, and it was to Captain Jenkins that Coutart wrote his "May 1918" letter revealing all! As a result, the Museum and I are satisfied that it is Coutart de Butts Taylor.

A great deal of thanks goes to Curator Brian Owen and Archivist Anne Pedley at the RWF Museum at Caernarfon Castle for allowing use of these photographs.

See No 59747. Sgt. Charles E. Collins m.m. R. Welch & Co

TAYLOR	Identical with Charles E. Collins	Rank	Regtl. No.
	R. Ir. Rifles	+ Capt.	
	R. Welch & Co	Sgt	59747

COUTART DE BUTTS.

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
Royal Ex. Ref. + BRITISH	OFF 59 48 do do	48	D of W. 24.12.18 W-4554W/d/3-11-2111W/1/1234
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in	1		
Date of entry therein	12.12.16		

K. 1380.
W/1/1234

9/20/11/21.

Correspondence.

O/C No 2 Inf. Recs makes app: re-B. W & V. Medals in respect of the services of the late 59747 Sgt. C. E. Collins m.m. R. Welch. For Correspondence contained in the Docs. shows that deceased was originally Capt. C. de Butts Taylor. Gained O/C of the Army on 16-8 or 16-9-16. His widow has stated that he was posthumously re-instated to his former Comm'd rank. 7.7.20

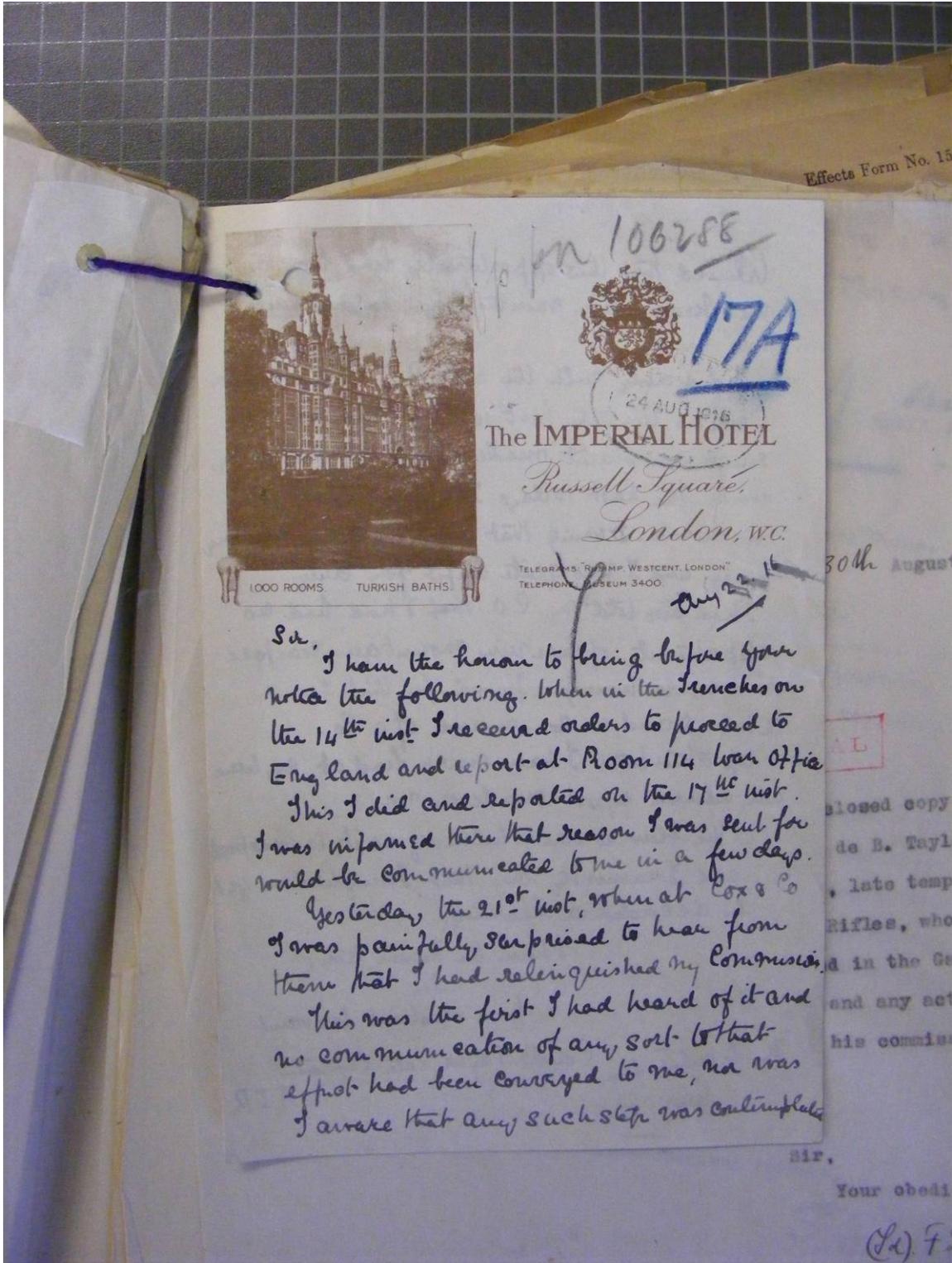
Address for medals 28/7/21

Address. The Rectory School
Shrewsbury.
- + Mrs C de B Taylor
The Matron.

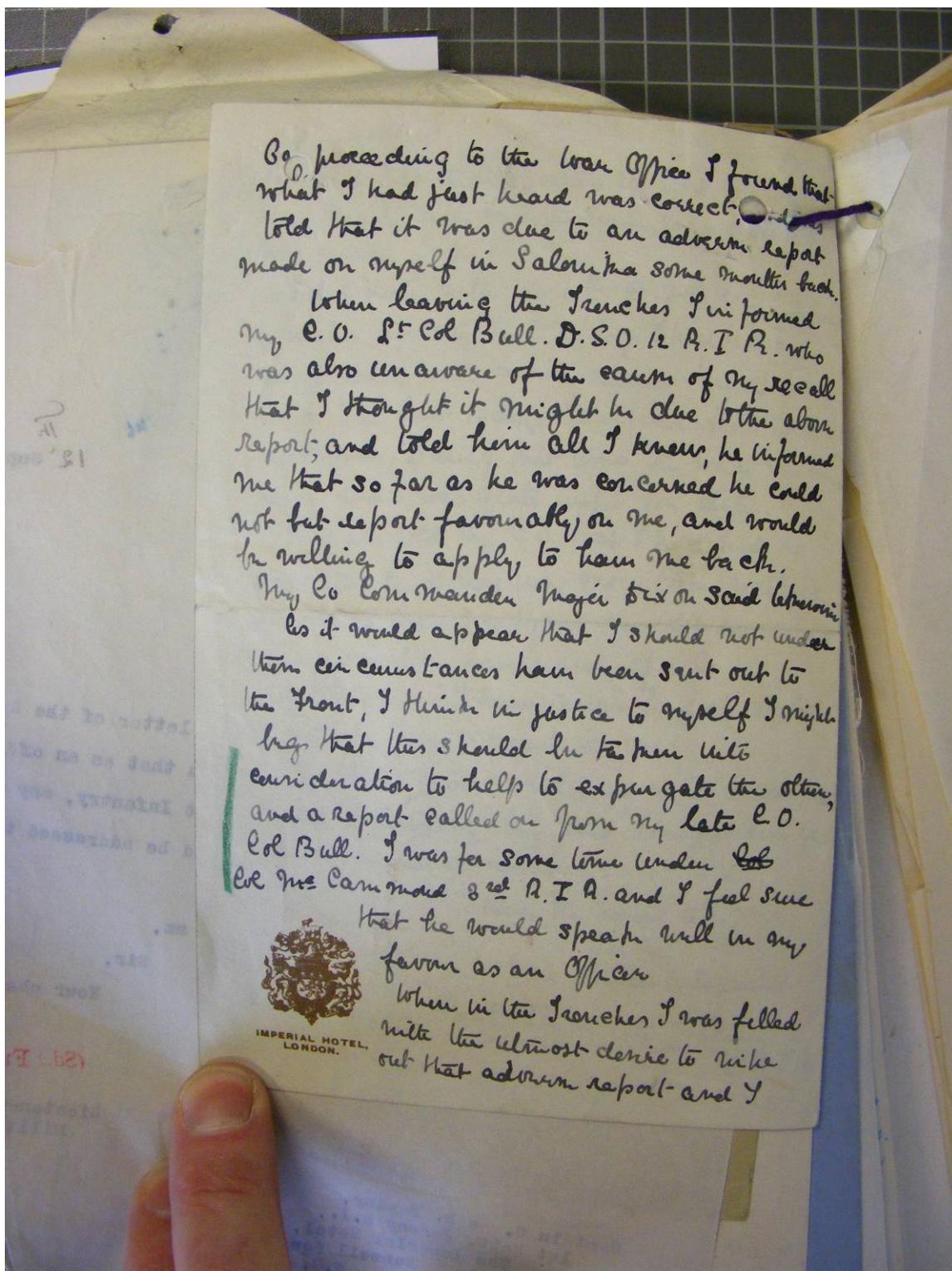
Officers' Conspicuous Centre
Botton
Lancs

23451-14a) Wt. W 3347-H.P. 6451 200cm. 10/19 H. St. Est. 5450/1236

**Medal Card of
Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor/Sergeant Charles Edward Collins**



“Painfully surprised to hear from them [the bank] that I had relinquished my commission.”



Co, proceeding to the War Office I found that what I had just heard was correct. I was told that it was due to an adverse report made on myself in Salonika some months back.

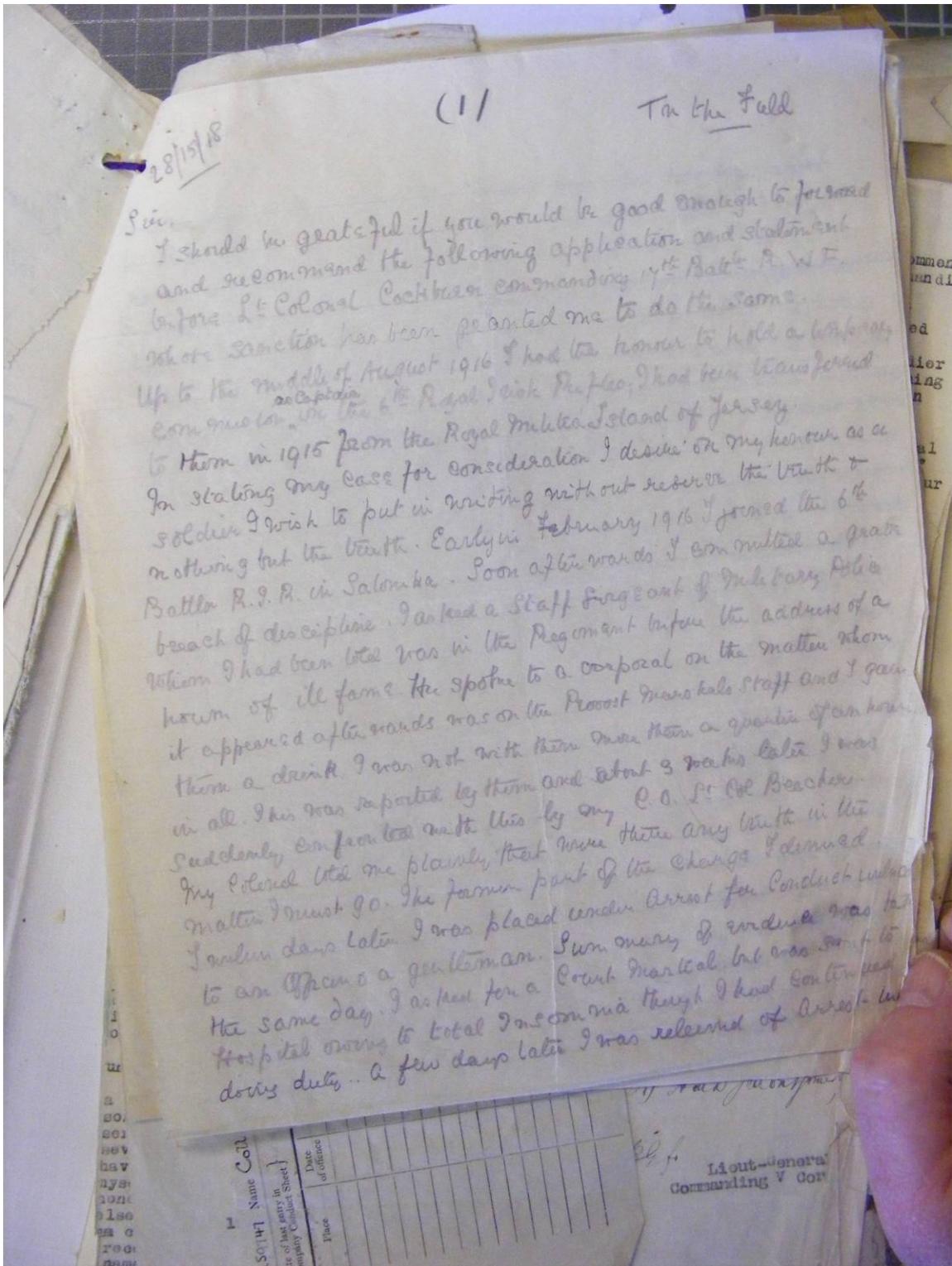
When leaving the Trenches I informed my C.O. Lt Col Bull. D.S.O. 12 R.I.P. who was also unaware of the cause of my recall. That I thought it might be due to the above report; and told him all I knew, he informed me that so far as he was concerned he could not but report favourably on me, and would be willing to apply to have me back.

My Co Commander Major Dix on said occasion as it would appear that I should not under these circumstances have been sent out to the front, I think in justice to myself I might beg that this should be taken into consideration to help to expunge the other, and a report called on from my late C.O. Col Bull. I was for some time under Col McCommandant 3rd R.I.A. and I feel sure that he would speak well in my favour as an Officer.

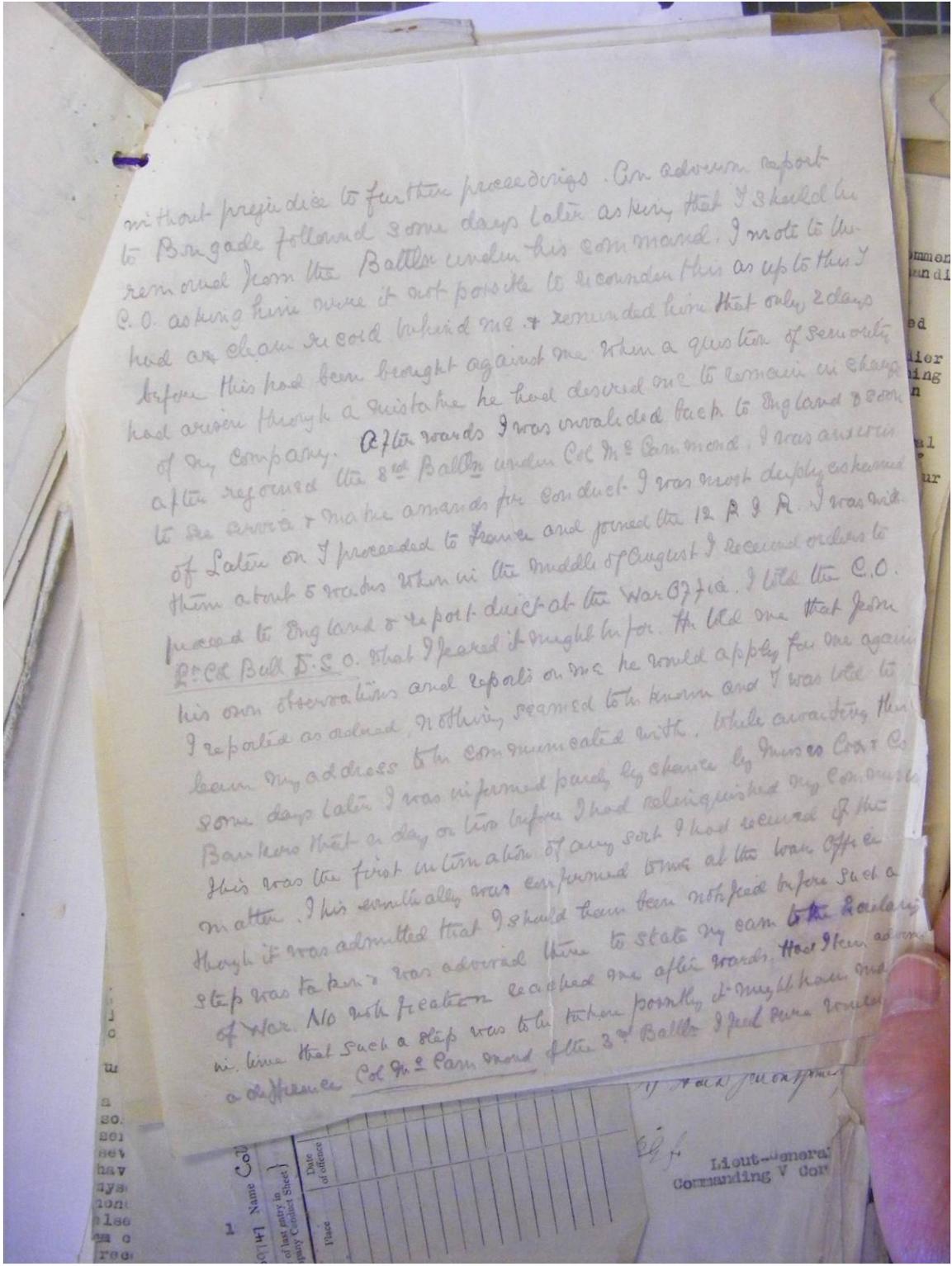
When in the Trenches I was filled with the utmost desire to wipe out that adverse report and I



“When in the Trenches I was filled with the utmost desire to wipe out that Adverse Report.”



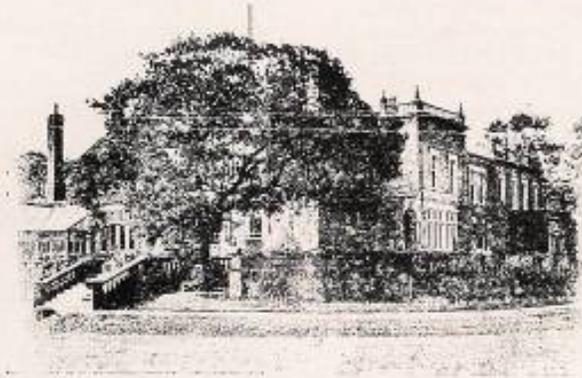
“Soon afterwards, I committed a great breach of discipline. I asked a Staff Sergeant of Military Police whom I had been told was in the Regiment before the address of a house of ill fame.”



“While awaiting this some days later I was informed purely by chance by Messrs Cox & Co, Bankers that a day or two before I had relinquished my commission.”



By Direction of the Disposal and Liquidation Commission.



Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF

The Desirable and Substantial Mansion

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“THORNLEIGH”

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THOMAS CROMPTON & SON,

AT THE

Pack Horse Hotel, Bradshawgate, Bolton,

On THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15th, 1923,

At Seven o'clock in the evening.

AUCTIONEERS' OFFICES :

4, Fold Street, Bolton.

[113422] W7670/M2618 2000m 9/17e 191 G & S E.1738. Form W.3121/5

115th Infantry Brigade. 38th (Welsh) Division. Vth

Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regtl. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by
	17th (S) Bn. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers	59747	SERGEANT CHARLES COLLINS	On 4th November during the attack on MORRAL FOREST this S.C.O. showed great coolness and leadership, rallying his men under very heavy Machine Gun fire on several occasions. On being held up by an enemy Machine Gun he sent 3 men to each flank and he himself personally rushed forward at the gun. He was wounded in doing so but was successful in capturing the gun.	O.C. 17th (S) Bn. The Royal Welsh Fusils.

AWARDED MILITARY MEDAL No previous reward. H. De PREE

16th NOVEMBER, 1918.

Brigadier General
Commanding 115th Infantry Brigade
(Signed) T. Astley Cubitt
Major General
Commanding 38th (Welsh) Division

Not included in New Years honours Recommendations.

Administrative County BRISTOL		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the											Page 11	
Civil Parish of Gloucester		Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District of Bristol		Ward of Municipal Borough or Urban District of Clifton		Rural District of		Parliamentary Borough or Division of Bristol (West)		Town or Village or Hamlet of		
No. of Schedules	ROAD, STREET No., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES			Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Usual Residence	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lunatic (4) Imbecile, feeble-minded	
		Uninhabited	In	Not in										Number of Persons
	Clifton, Victoria Buildings				John Leopold Baker	Head	27	Stock Broker Agent	Own acc		City of Bristol			
					Emily E. Johnson	Wife	43	Wife of Stock Broker			Gloucester			
					Gene W. do	do	22	Son			do			
					Sarah Baker	Wife	60	Living on own means			City of Bristol			
					Edwan F.S. McGinney	do	74	do			England Dublin			
					Conrad B. & J. Taylor	do	30	do			Devon Weymouth			
					Edith A. Tyffe	do	40	do			United States of America			
					Margaret Woodsford	Servant	30	Cook (Domestic)	Worker		London South London			
					Mary Ann Lewis	do	40	Housemaid			London			
					Mary Snadley	do	49	Charwoman			Devon Tewbury			
					Florence Thompson	do	27	Parlourmaid			Devon North Devon			
					Frank Colley	do	16	Butchermaid			Devon Gravesend			
38	Campsey Road, (New)	1			William H. Winks	Head	30	Wife			City of Gloucester			
					Emily do	Wife	30	do			do			
					Eric P. W. do	Son	4	do			City of Bristol Clifton			
					Orill A.	Son	2	do			do			
					Annie Taylor	Visitor	35	do			Somerset Bridgwater			
39	" " Shell Cottages	1			Albert E. Raikes	Head	35	Gardener (Domestic)	Worker		do Cannock			
					Georgina do	Wife	35	do			do Slipton Devon			
					Mabel M. do	Son	8	do			do Frome			
40	" " Campsey Cottages	1			George Church	Head	45	Gardener	Worker		do Henbury			
					Mary do	Wife	51	do			Devon Hockland			
41	" " Hurley House	1			Charles Wright	Head	40	Gardener Labourer	Worker		do Bathurst			
42	" " Rosemont	1			Robert Wright	Head	55	do			Devon Oatford			
					Milda M. do	Son	78	No occupation			Som' Westonsuper-Mare			
					Bonny K. do	Son	76	do			do			
					Jessie J. Davenport	Housekeeper	45	Lady Housekeeper	Worker		Middlesex Hackney	Lon		
					Edith Mary Lewis	Servant	31	Cook (Domestic)	do		Mon. St. Prades			
					Emily Wide	do	22	Housemaid (do)	do		City of Bristol Totterdown	Som		
5	Total of Schedules of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms	5			Total of Males and of Females...		10	20						

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

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