

# Private James Albert Brill

BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

Peter Daniel

Section  
3



came on to Port Said where we are now under canvas. The food they gave us on the Cawdor Castle was rotten. I would not feed a dog on it. They allowed us 4/- a day messing allowance but we could not by anything as they had nothing good at the canteen on board. Well I can't see our food to very poor fat bacon for breakfast etc. We must expect to rough it a bit on active service. Dear Flo it is very hot here & quite different when I come home for the service hardens a chap. Dear Flo we have an idea that we are going on to Cairo about 140 miles. This morning I was vaccinated at the Government Hospital Port Said & I shall be jolly glad when I am back home again. Seeing the world is a alright very but give me Dear Old England, & London in

...came on to Port Said where we are now under canvas. The food they gave us on the Cawdor Castle was rotten. I would not feed a dog on it. They allowed us 4.1/2 d a day messing allowance but we could not buy anything as they had nothing any good at the canteen on board or under canvas. Our food is very poor fat bacon for breakfast etc. We must expect to rough it a bit on active service. Dear Flo it is very hot here and I am quite brown I shall be quite different when I come home for the service hardens a chap. Dear Flo we have an idea that we are going on to Cairo about 140 miles. I was inoculated on board ship and this morning I was vaccinated at the Government Hospital Port Ship. I shall be jolly glad when I am back home again. Seeing the world is a alright in its way but give me Dear Old England, and London in...



The Journey from England to Gallipoli—PORT SAID, EGYPT



Bell tented camp beside the Suez canal at Port Said

Hospital ship at Port Said



Inoculation of Indian soldiers at Gallipoli



Sir Almroth Edward Wright

During the Boer War (1899-1902) more British soldiers died from typhoid than were killed in action. Consequently on the eve of war in 1914 Sir Almroth Edward Wright (1861-1947) persuaded Lord Kitchener to inoculate British troops against typhoid. Thanks to Wright Britain was the sole combatant with troops immunised against typhoid at the start of World War I.



The Journey from England to Gallipoli—CAIRO EGYPT

particular Dear Flo I hope you  
& Dear Baby & mother & all at  
home are quite well I hope you  
keeping your fingers up & that  
you will be true to me for re-  
member Dearest I make tempt-  
ations that come my way & yours  
& will & what I'll don't let  
do is to fight: then down &  
be true to each other you know  
I got a chaps nature I's of the  
& I am tempted sometimes but  
I fight it down for I mean to  
be true to you. How we shall  
be happy when I come home.  
I am posting this letter at  
Port Said in the town & I have  
whether you get it or not. I am  
dying to hear from you & I  
have not had a letter for 3  
weeks. Yesterday was Good-  
Friday & I am writing this  
in our tent let me know if  
you had my lock of hair  
that I sent & his is all now  
Your loving husband  
XXXXXX Jim XXXXX

...particular. Dear Flo I hope you and Dear Baby and mother and all at home are quite well and I hope you are keeping your pecker up and that you will be true to me for remember Dearest there are temptations that come my way and yours as well and what we want to do is to fight them down and be true to each other. You know what a chaps nature is Flo and I am tempted sometimes but I fight it down for I mean to be true to you. How we shall be happy when I come home. I am posting this letter at Port Said in the town I chance whether you get it or not. I am dying to hear from you as I have not had a letter for 3 weeks. **Yesterday was Good-Friday and I am writing this in our tent let me know if you had my lock of hair that I sent this is all now.**

Your Loving Husband,  
XXXXXX Jim XXXXX



**Florence Brill and baby Jim 1915**



"The Marines provided a firing party for Rupert Brooke. Of course we'd never heard of him then...of course we have now!" Pte Baker RMLI



At 4:46pm on 23rd April 1915, St George's Day, Rupert Brooke died of blood poisoning on a ship moored in Trebuki Bay, Skyros. In a hurry due to having to embark for Gallipoli the following morning, Brooke's friends hastily arranged his burial, witnessed by the Chatham Battalion RMLI.

"We buried him in the same evening in an olive-grove where he had sat with us on Tuesday - one of the loveliest places on this earth."

**Rupert Brooke** was most well known for his poem *The Soldier* written after fighting with the Royal Naval Division at Antwerp in October 1914. It is one of the most famous poems of WWI. You can read this poem on page 62.

'The Soldier'

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field

That is forever England. There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,

Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,

A body of England's, breathing English air,

Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,

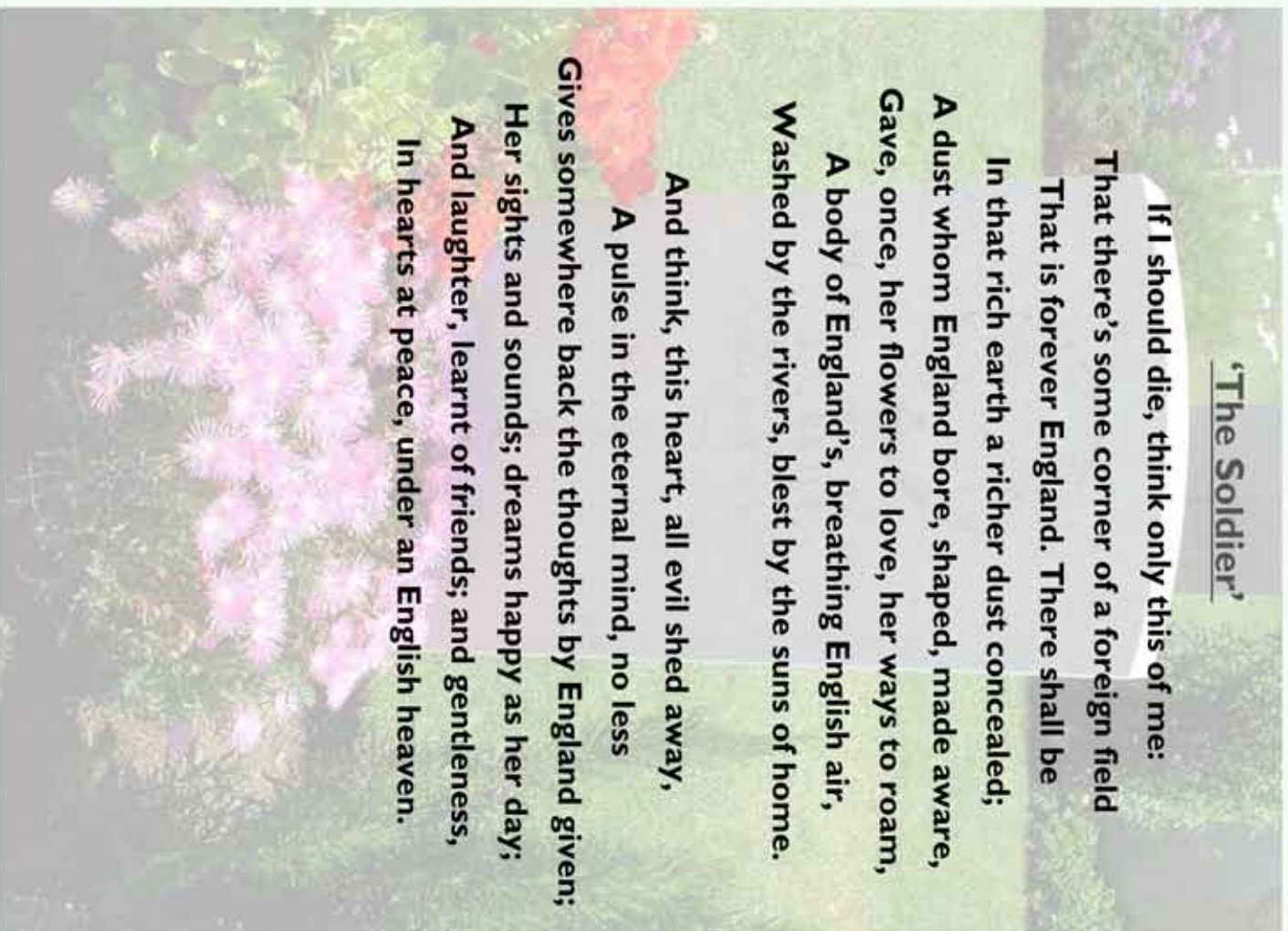
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less

Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;

Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;

And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,

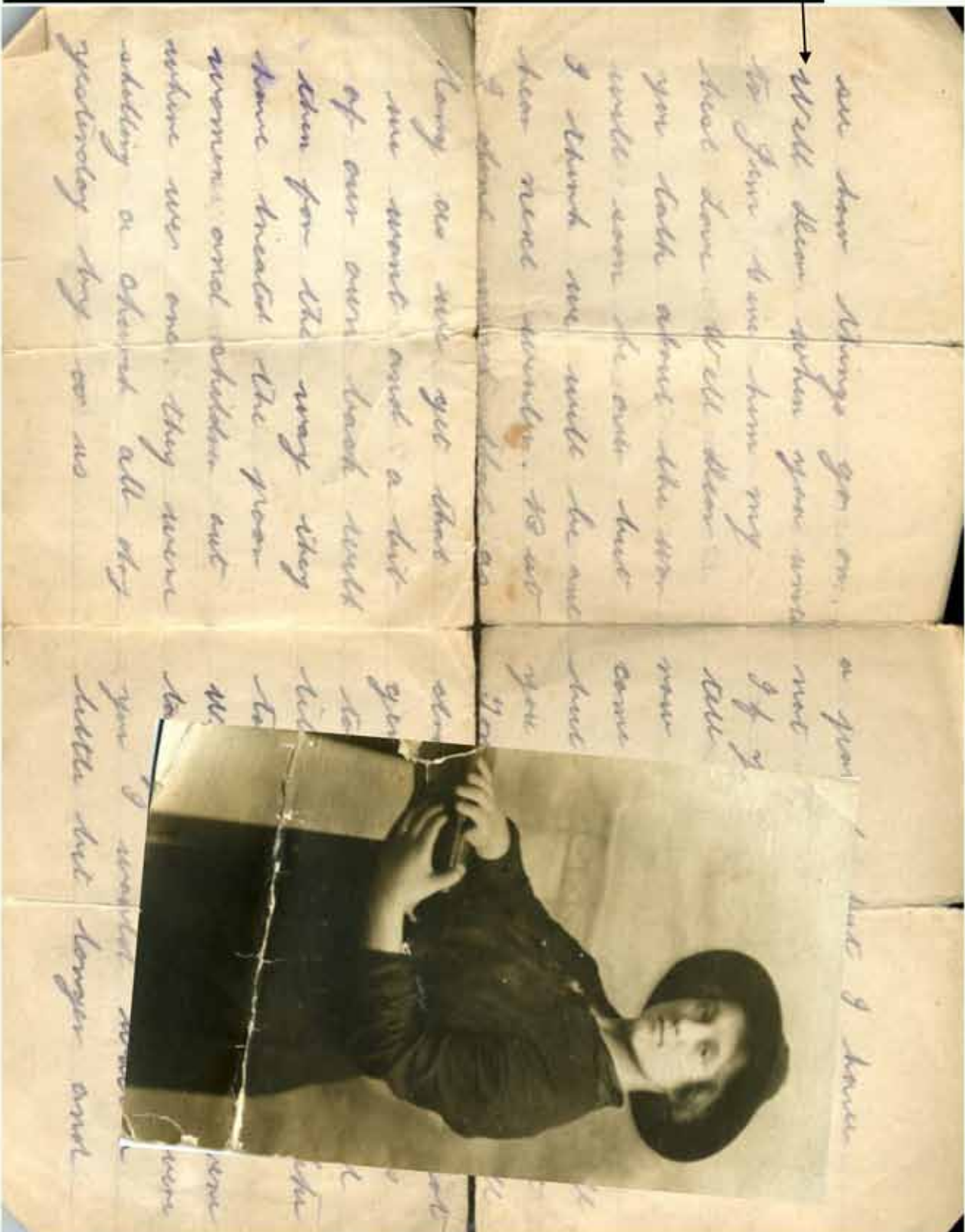
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.



Following his death, Brooke, who was already famous, became a symbol in England of the tragic loss of talented youth during the war.

Source 22 Letter sent from France 25 April 1915 from Florence's brother Richard Tompkins

**“Well dear when you write to Jim give him my best love. Well dear, you talk about the war will soon be over but I think we will be out here next winter. But I don't mind as long as we get what we want and a bit of our own back with them for the way they have treated the poor women and children. Out where we are they were shelling a church all day yesterday by us.”**



Remember our

Diggers



25th April



Source 23 (a) ANZAC DAY

**Lancashire Fusiliers, pictured in a boat bound for Gallipoli.** Many people today are not aware of the presence of British soldiers at Gallipoli. **The men of the Royal Naval Division fought beside the Anzacs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps)** during the Battle of the Landing between 25th April and 3rd May 1915. The 25<sup>th</sup> April is now Anzac day, a public holiday in Australia and New Zealand.

# A CALL FROM THE DARDANELLES



*“Coo-ee-  
Wont YOU  
come?”*



## ENLIST NOW

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**Leonard Maurice Keyser VC** from Paddington emigrated to Australia shortly before the outbreak of WWI and enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force in August 1914. On 7 August 1915 at Lone Pine, Gallipoli he won his Victoria Cross for catching hand grenades. **Billy Hughes (inset top)** was Australia's Pimlico born PM from 1915-23. Before emigrating to Australia he attended Burdett Coutts School as both teacher and pupil.

**ANZACS:-** Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

# A ONE MAN LANDING AT BULAIR.

## NEW ZEALANDER'S SWIMMING

Some of the gallant deeds of the Royal Naval Division in Gallipoli are described in a despatch from Reuter's special correspondent, who says that of all the British divisions on the peninsula, none, with the exception of the 29th, has seen more and more varied work and fighting than the Royal Naval Division.

With the exception of the Plymouth Battalion of the Royal Marines, none of the R.N.D. took part in the landing on April 25th. The greater part of the division was sent up to the head of the Gulf of Saros to carry out demonstrations at Bulair and on the Thracian side of the gulf.

Here one of the finest deeds of gallantry recorded during the campaign was performed by Commander Freiburg, a New Zealander, serving with the Royal Naval Division. It had been decided to send a boat ashore at Bulair to light flares on the beach and make the Turks think that a landing was to be attempted there. The commander, who is an exceptionally fine swimmer, volunteered to swim ashore alone in the dark and light the flares himself, pointing out that the boat's crew would be running very great risk.

The offer was accepted, and the officer swam ashore, crept up to the Turkish trenches until he could hear the men talking, to make sure of his ground; then he returned to the beach and lit a flare he had brought with him. At once the Turks took alarm, rifle fire was opened on the beach, and the New Zealander, knowing that the water was safer than the shore, swam down the coast half a mile, then went ashore and lit a second flare.

By this time the hills were alive with the enemy, and Commander Freiburg took to the water again and swam off to meet a destroyer which was to pick him up. He had to swim about for an hour before she found him.

Wanganui Chronicle, 19 January 1916



BRIGADIER-GENERAL B. C. FREYBERG, V.C., OF WELLINGTON.  
(IMPERIAL FORCES.)





**On 3 May, 1915** the RMLI Chatham Battalion, Brill's battalion, was ordered forward to capture the ridge line at the end of **Monash Valley** at Gallipoli. The Royal Marines were bravely led up the steep slope of Dead Man's Ridge and when they reached the top, they were mown down by the Turkish machine guns 'with great slaughter.' Major Quinn, an Australian VC, said the counter offensive led by the Chatham and Portsmouth Battalions was **"the bravest thing [he'd] seen so far..."**

At Anzac Cove, there was constant fighting but neither side could gain ground. Bodies of Turks and Anzacs piled up, but nothing changed. Days and weeks went by...



The Monash Valley and ANZAC Cove Gallipoli



**Charles Bean wrote about the Royal  
Marines at Gallipoli:**

*“Young and but partly trained, thrown without preparation into a terrible struggle, over-ried, gallantly but often needlessly exposing themselves, they had suffered heavily, and their dead lay thickly among the Australians and New Zealanders upon those dreadful heights.”*

*“For many days afterwards on the ugly bare shoulder at the top of Monash Valley, their dead lay like ants shriveled by a fire, until a marine climbed out at night and pushed them down into the valley, where they were buried. The name ‘Dead Man’s ridge’ clung to this shoulder when its origin was almost forgotten.”*

**Source 25 (a) Wounded at Gallipoli**

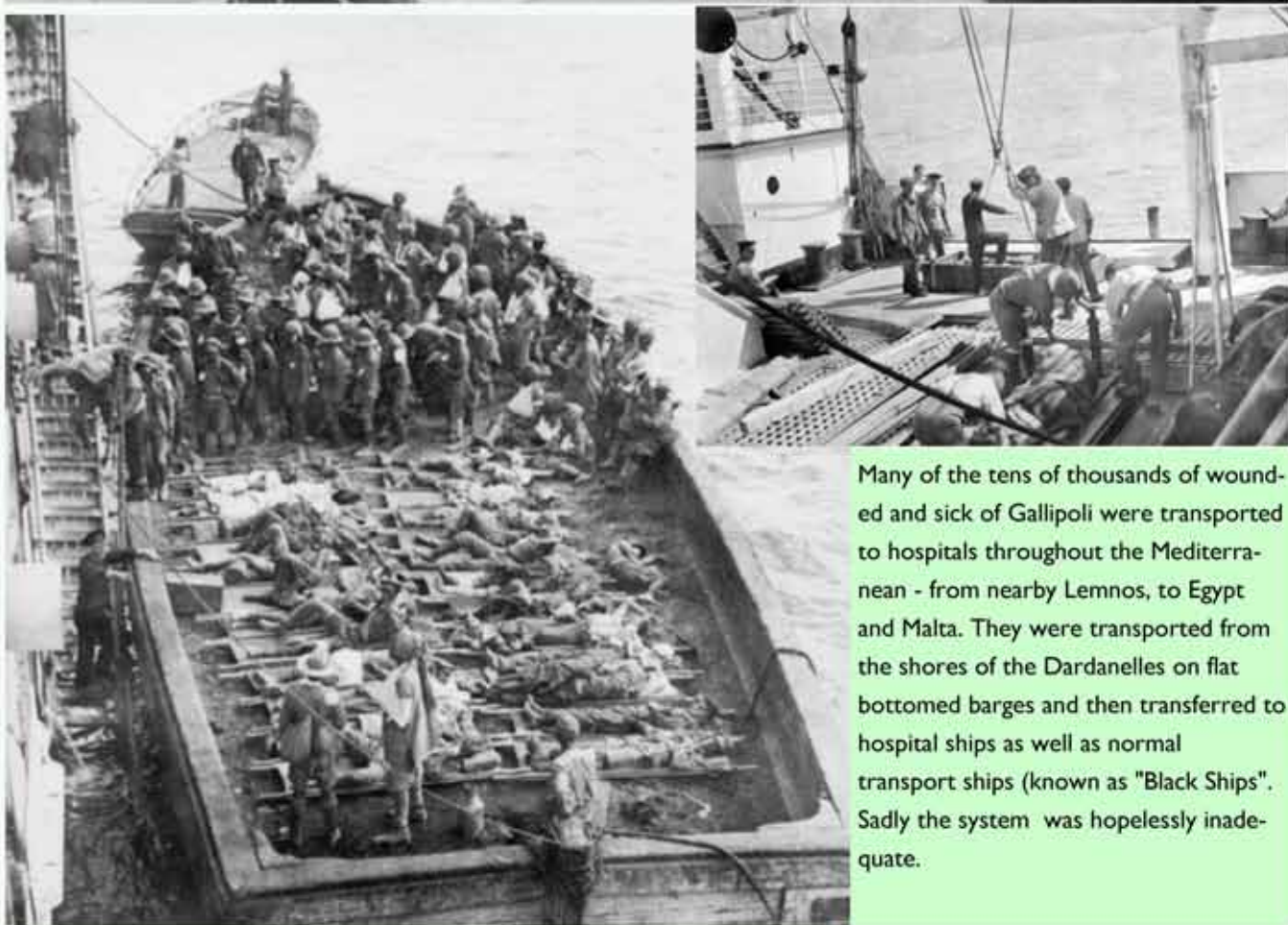


After the disastrous landing at Gallipoli many men are wounded. John Simpson Kirkpatrick, an Australian soldier born in England, obtained a donkey upon his arrival at Gallipoli and for three weeks rescued the wounded from the battles and took them down to the beach. Pte Henry Baker of the Chatham Battalion Royal Marines was rescued a donkey. This may well have been the way by which Private James Brill was taken from the battlefield to the awaiting hospital ship HMT Mashobra.

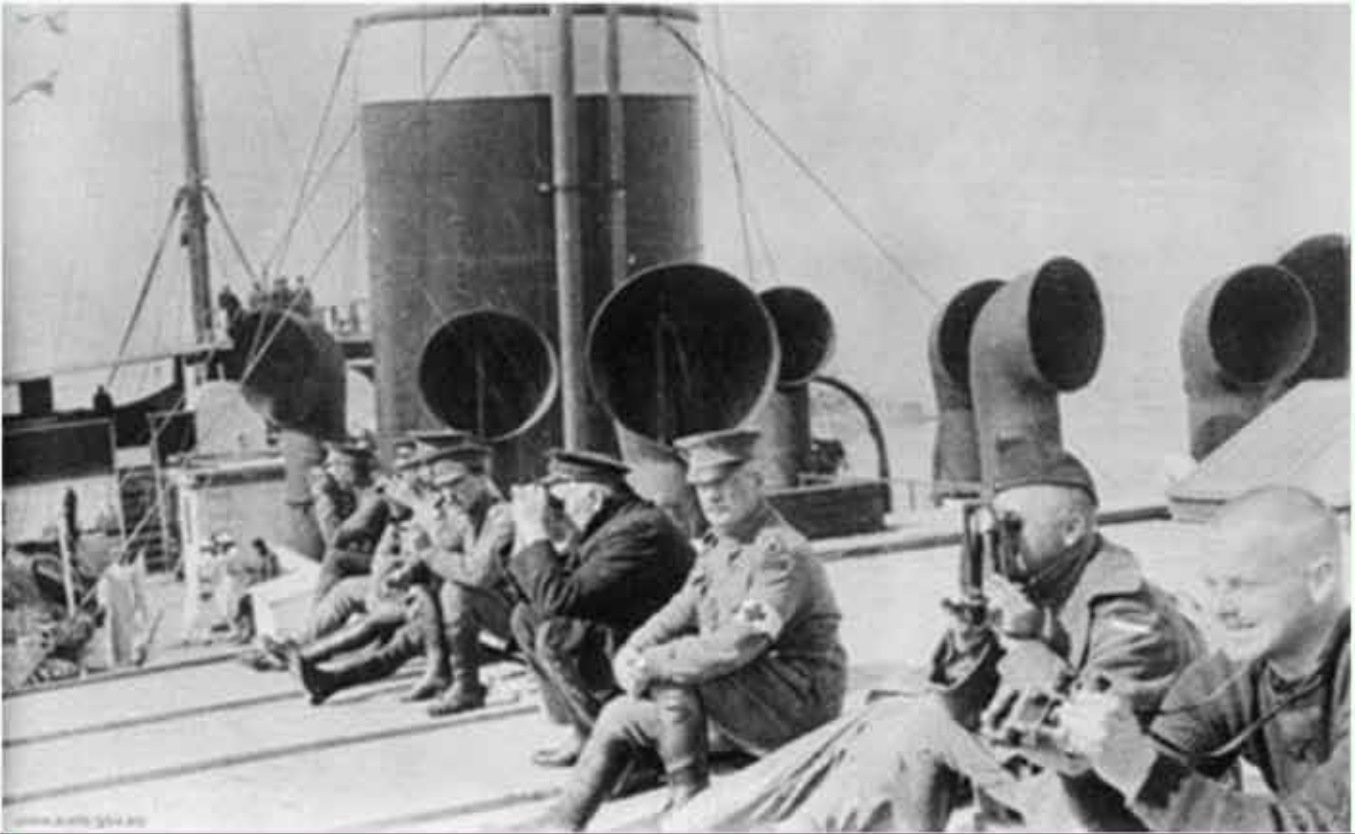


*“He put me on a donkey on which he was taking the wounded to the beach... The ship’s boat collected us. We were towed out to the Dongola, which they were using for the wounded. It wasn’t a hospital ship. It had transported some of the Australians.”*

**Pte. Henry Baker RMLI**



Many of the tens of thousands of wounded and sick of Gallipoli were transported to hospitals throughout the Mediterranean - from nearby Lemnos, to Egypt and Malta. They were transported from the shores of the Dardanelles on flat bottomed barges and then transferred to hospital ships as well as normal transport ships (known as "Black Ships". Sadly the system was hopelessly inadequate.



After being brought back to ANZAC Bay Private James Brill was transferred to the medics waiting aboard the hospital ship pictured above **HMT Mashobra**. With no antibiotics available then and with open wounds covered in flies it was no surprise that many men died of their wounds. One of the soldiers wounded with Brill, Thomas Henry Baker described conditions aboard the hospital ship he was taken



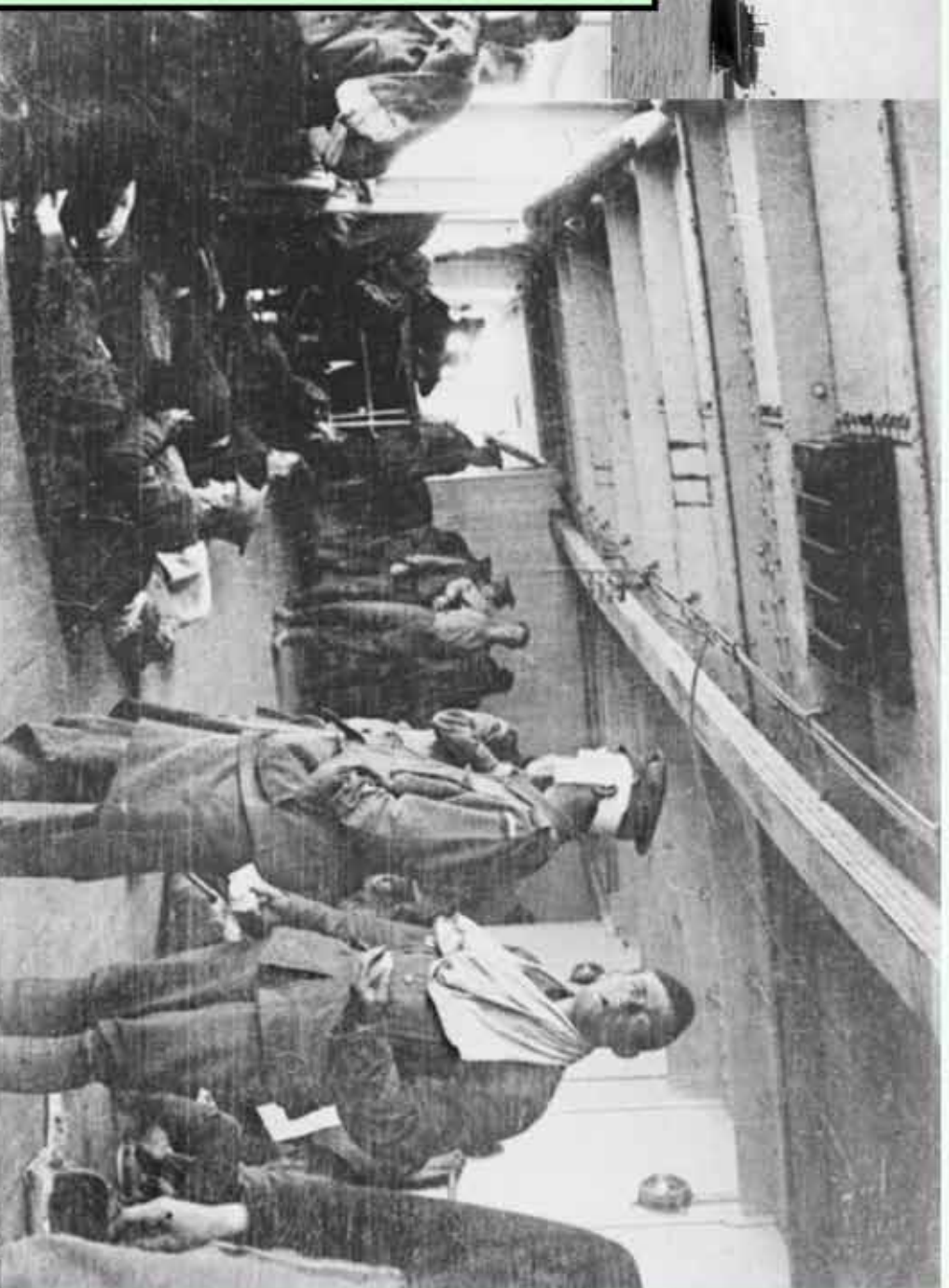
**“There were only two doctors on this ship and no medical staff of any kind. The crew had to act as orderlies. We were deposited on the bare deck—no beds, and one blanket. All the troops had been in hammocks on the way over from Egypt to Gallipoli. My officer, Grinling, a regular who went to Haileybury, came on board badly wounded but died very soon after.”** (Lt Charles Grinling was just 19)

**- Private Thomas Henry Baker RMLI**

## HMT Mashobra



**The HMT A47 Mashobra** weighed 8,174 tons with an average cruise speed of 12.5 knots. It was owned by the British India SN Co Ltd, London, and leased by the Commonwealth until 21 December 1916. The *Mashobra* was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean, 15 April 1917.



WAR MEMORIAL

C01502

**The HMT A47 Mashobra** weighed 8,174 tons with an average cruise speed of 12.5 knots or 23.15 kmph. It was owned by the British India SN Co Ltd, London, and leased by the Commonwealth until 21 December 1916. The

*Brill's*

Army Form B. 2090A.

FIELD SERVICE.

REPORT of Death of a Soldier to be forwarded to the War Office with the least possible delay after receipt of notification of death on Army Form B. 213 or Army Form A. 36 or from other official documentary sources.

REGIMENT } Royal Marines Light Infantry Squadron,  
or } F Troop, Battery  
CORPS } \_\_\_\_\_ or Company

Chatham Battalion.  
Royal Naval Division.

Regtl. No. CH./S.570. Rank Private.

Name Brill, James Albert.

Date 3rd. May. 1915.

Died { Place On board S.S. "Mashobra", (Bardanelles),  
Cause of Death\* Died from wounds in action.

\* Specially state if killed in action, or died from wounds received in action, or from illness due to field operations or to fatigue, privation, or exposure while on military duty, or from injury while on military duty.



*“For three days after we left Gallipoli we had no one to look after us properly. My foot was black with bruising and we were nearly at Alexandria before anyone looked at me. On the way south, the ship stopped at least three times to push dead over the side. Sanitary conditions were very bad. But at least we were not going to be shot at. The boy scouts could have handled the operation better.”*

**Private Thomas Henry Baker**

**RMLI Chatham Battalion**

ARMY FORM B. 103.

COPY.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps Chatham Battalion. Regimental Number Ch/376/S

Rank Pte. Surname BRILL, Christian Name James Albert.

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Age on Enlistment \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months.

Enlisted (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_

Extended { \_\_\_\_\_ } Re-engaged { \_\_\_\_\_ } Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 or Corps Trade and Rate \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Officer i/c Records.

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 30, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 30, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
4/5/15.	PMO. HMT Mashobra.	Died from wounds.	H.M.T. Mashobra.	3/5/15.	Buried at Alexandria, 4/5/15. Grave No/333.
		Embarked ... Disembarked...			
					Authy: A/6608 3/9/15. D.O. R.F. Alexandria.

Pte James Brill's Grave: **CWGC Chatby Cemetery, Alexandria Egypt**



Private James Albert Brill grave pictured left. He was buried in Alexandria, Egypt at the Chatby Military and War Memorial Cemetery.

Picture courtesy of War Graves Photographic Project



Photograph of the Chatby Military and War Memorial Cemetery

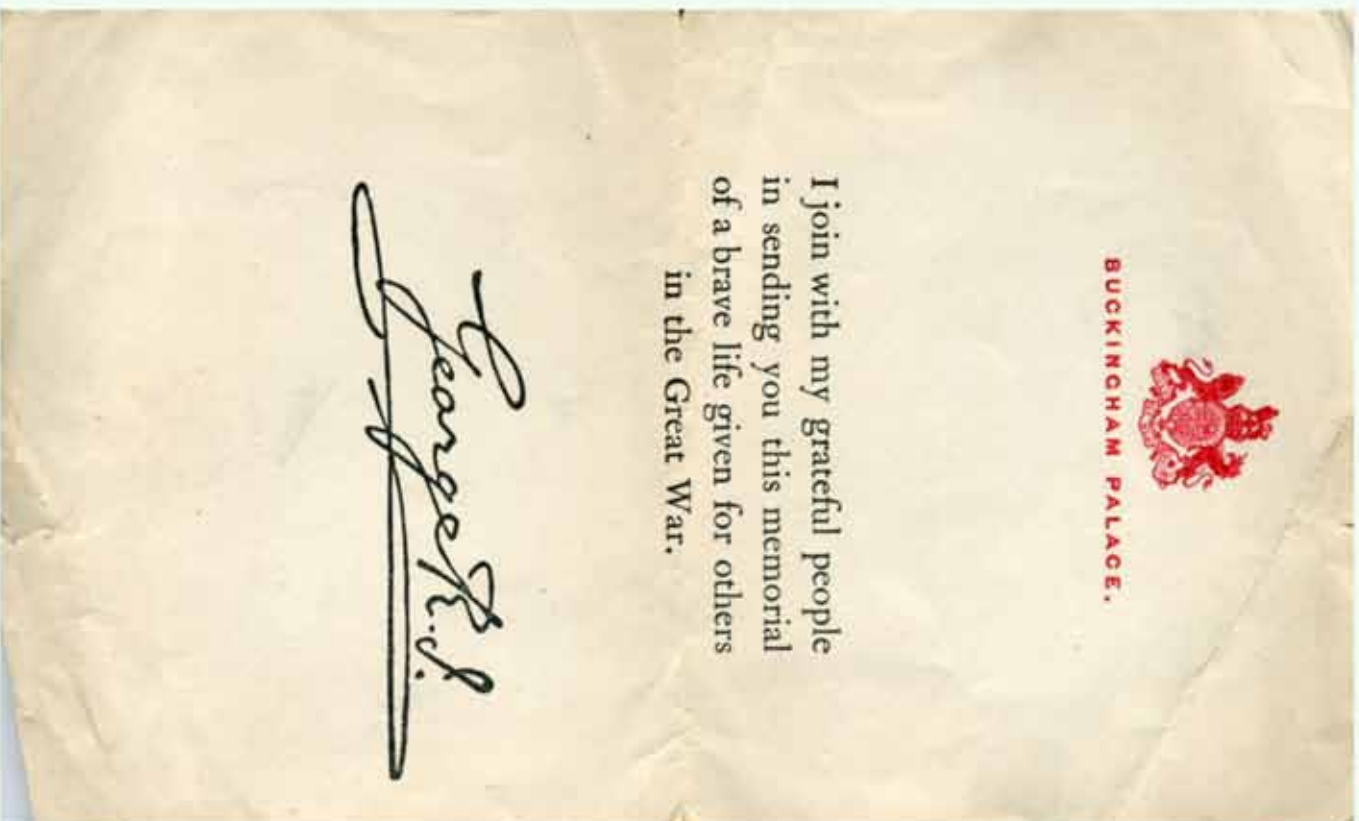


Florence Brill kept the parcel string from the parcel containing her husbands last effects for the rest of her life.



Florence Brill gave her husband Jim a lucky horseshoe to take with him. Jim wore it around his neck attached to his dog tags. The Royal Marines used aluminium discs as dog tags, whereas the army wore two tags, one an octagonal green tag the other a red circular disc made of compressed fibre (see inset). The green tag would be taken from a body as proof of death and the red one left to identify the body for burial. James Brill's dog tags were returned to Florence with his other belongings.

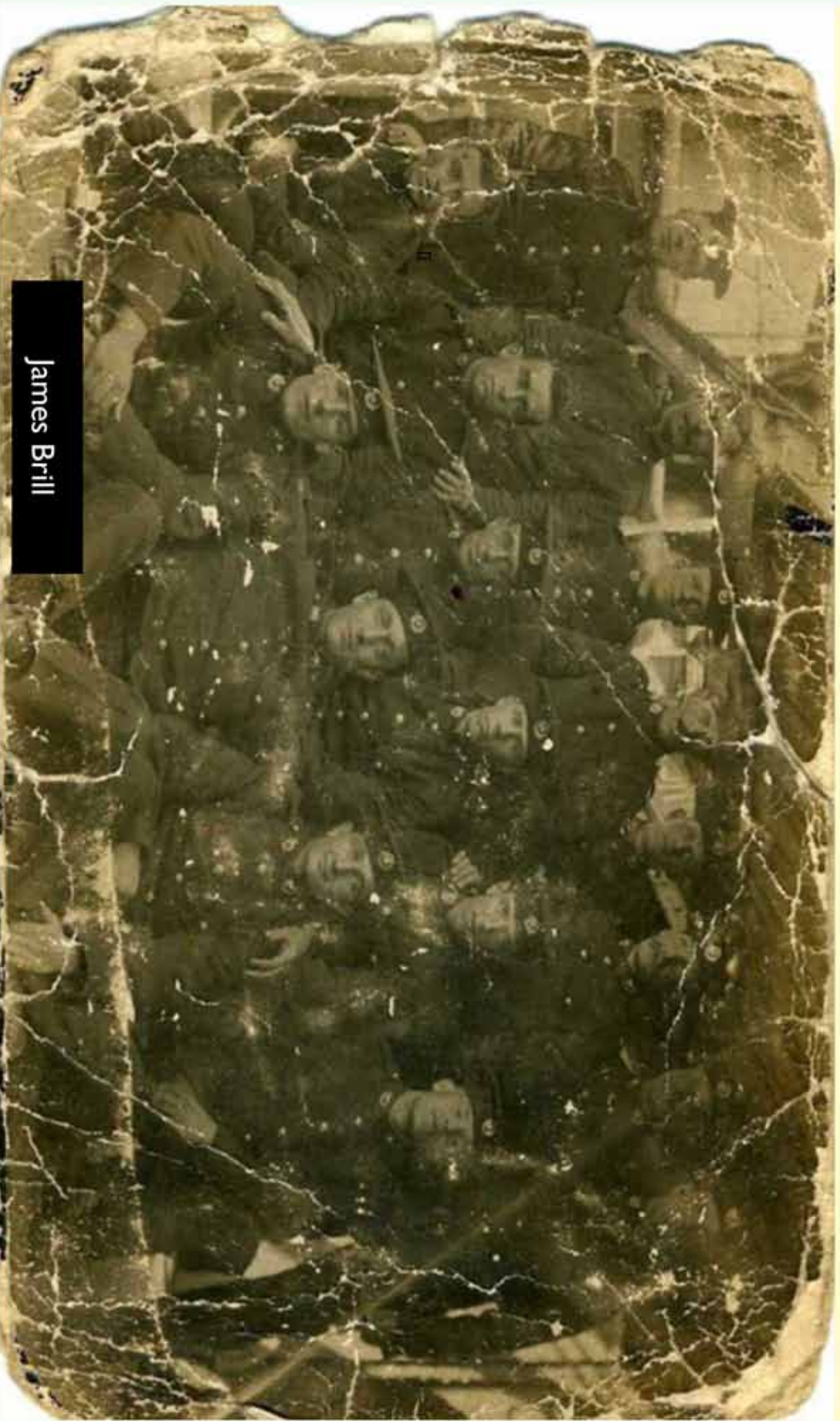
## Death Plaque and Letter from the King



DEAD MAN'S PENNY

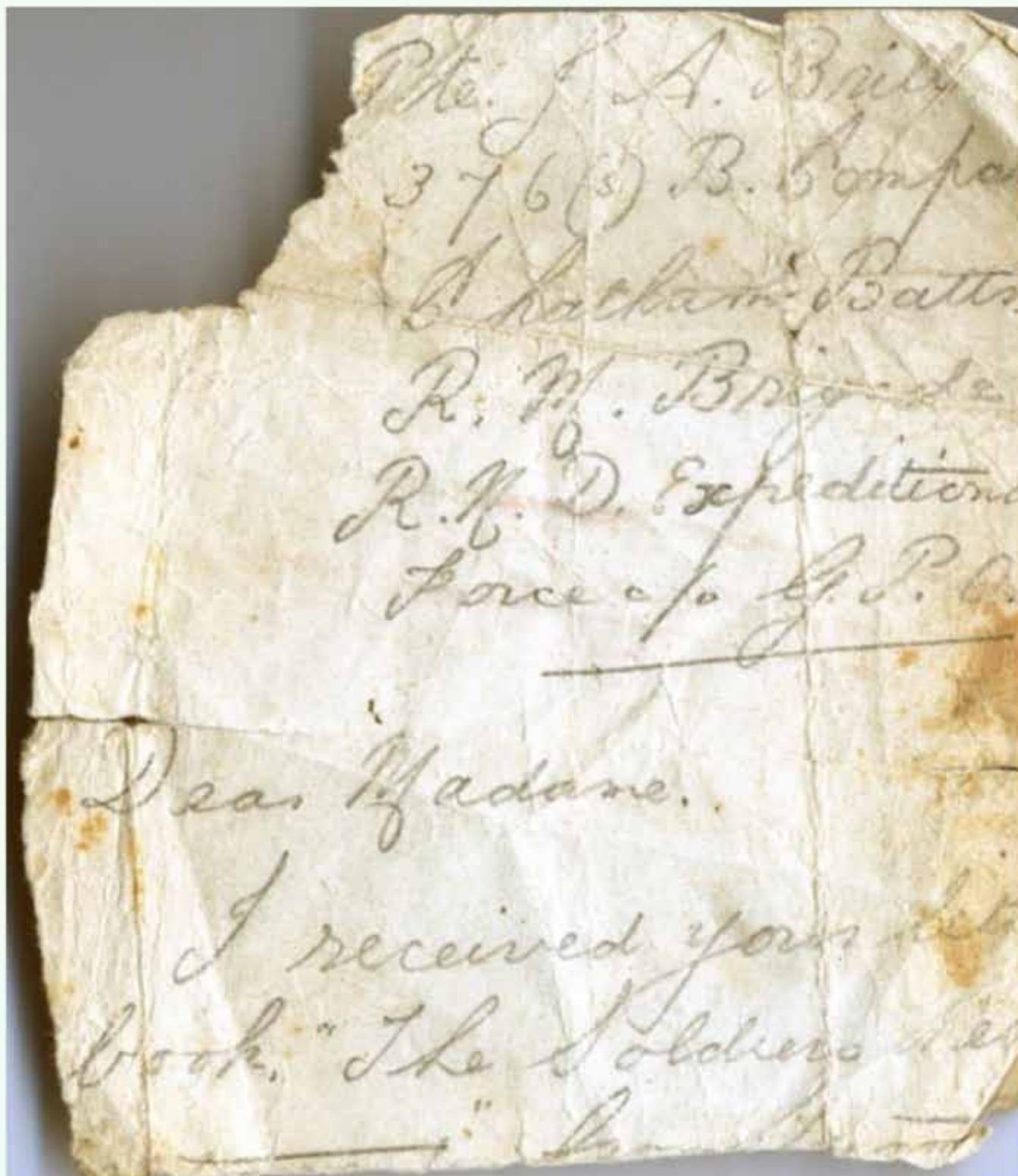


**Private James Brill 'B' Company Chatham Battalion RMLI**



**James Brill**

James' last effects were sent to Florence at their home in South Kensington. She was only 17 and about to give birth to James's son, who she would name him after her dead husband.



Dear Madam, I received your letter .....

Florence kept the letter confirming her husband's death to her dying day.  
Fifty years after Gallipoli in 1965.



32 Cheyne Row, Chelsea

Kathleen Marie Leche, formerly Donaldson-Hudson, was born on April 4, 1871 at 35 Grosvenor Place, Pimlico. Known as Kassie to her family, she was renowned for her beauty, wit and intelligence. Her father Charles Donaldson-Hudson was a Conservative M.P. and she grew up at South Audley Street, Mayfair. She married John Hurleston Leche, her father's estate agent, at St. Peters Church, Eaton Square, in 1888 when she was just 17. Her husband died in 1894 leaving her as a wealthy young widow of 23 with two sons John and Charles.

TELEPHONE.  
4715 KENSINGTON.

Let me know  
what evening  
you can come -

32, CHEYNE ROW,  
CHELSEA.

June 9th

Dear Florrie. I was very  
shocked & grieved to  
hear of your husband's  
death - I should have  
~~written to you but~~  
thought I was coming  
back to London some  
time ago & that I  
should have a chance  
of seeing you -  
I sympathise very deeply  
with you in your great  
loss - Your husband

Let me know which evening you can come

32 Cheyne Walk  
Chelsea

June 9th 1915

Dear Florrie, I was very shocked and grieved to hear of your husband's death. I should have written to you but thought I was coming back to London some time ago and that I should have a chance of seeing you. I sympathise very deeply with you in your great loss - your husband



Lower Carden Hall, Cheshire

Kathleen 'Kassie' Leche had two homes; 32 Cheyne Row in Chelsea was her London base, but she spent a lot of time in Cheshire at her country home, Lower Carden Hall (pictured left). Carden Hall was the ancestral home of the Leche family and Kassie employed a number of servants there and at her Chelsea home.

**It is most likely that Florence Brill worked at some time as a domestic servant for Kathleen at Cheyne Row and that the wealthy widow and the poor servant girl struck up an unlikely friendship.**

was a good & straight  
young man, & though I  
never knew him, I  
felt like a friend to  
him -  
I had such a nice letter  
from him just the  
week he died & I would  
like to show it you  
Can you come up some  
evening about 7 o'clock  
and see me? I should  
like to hear what you  
are doing & how baby  
is - I am your friend  
Kathleen Leche.

was a good and straight young man and though I never knew him, I felt like a friend to him.

I had such a nice letter from him just the week he died and I would like to show it you. Can you come up some evening about 7 o'clock and see me? I should like to hear what you are doing and how baby is. I am your friend,

Kathleen Leche

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 6648/2

REGISTRATION DISTRICT

Chelsea

1917 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Chelsea North in the County of London



Column-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.								
When and where born		Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered

187	Whitecourt March 1917 250 Kings Road	Florence Ann Miss S.S.		Florence Margaret Tommary a day servant 41 & 42 Swan Street			J.M. Brill mother 250 Kings Road	Whitecourt March 1917
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CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

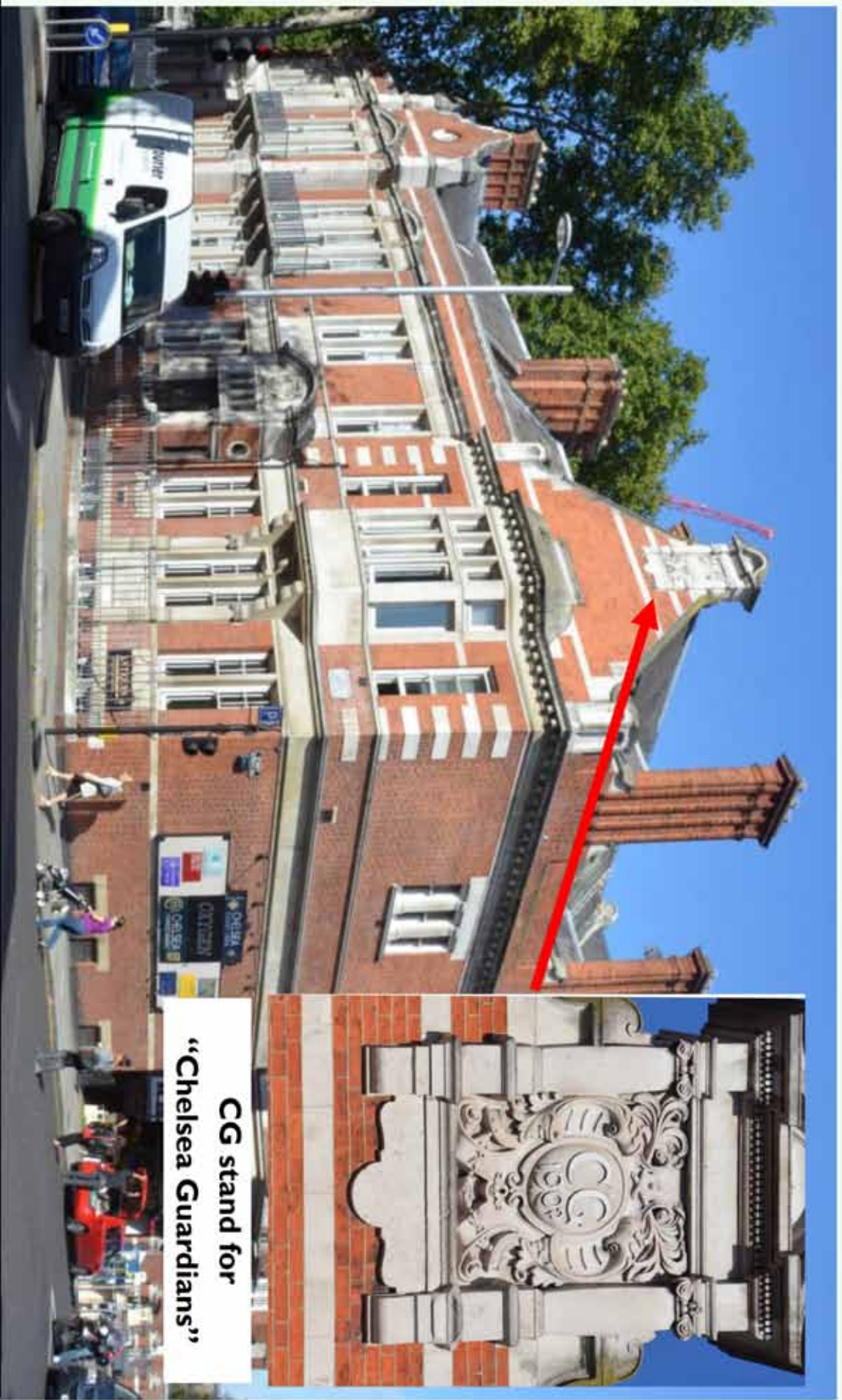
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 7th day of January 2008

BXCC930848

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WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.



**Source 30(b)** Former Poor Law Guardians' Offices, 250, King's Road, Chelsea, London SW3



**The address given for children born in the Chelsea Workhouse was 250 King's Road. This gives some idea of the terrible situation that Florence Brill found herself in after her husband was killed at Gallipoli.**

Suffer little children to come unto ME. S. Luke XVIII. 16.

Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. II. 10.

Florence Annie Trison

**B**aptized April 27. 1921  
at St. Bernabas Church, Vinland S.S.

**C**onfirmed \_\_\_\_\_

**F**irst Communion \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Robt. Crozier Magel  
Print

**DIBS**



Florence and Jim Jr. as Baby c 1915



Florence and Jim Jr. in 1920



As a single parent at 17 Florence Brill suffered greatly from James's death. Her sudden wedding had not been acknowledged by the Royal Marines so she did not receive a widow's pension. She sought financial assistance from the British Legion but was turned down and would afterwards always refuse to buy a poppy.



Jim Jr

Jim Jr. during World War II

1,000,000  
AND NOW  
THEIR SONS?  
**WE SAY 'NO'**

"I RENOUNCE WAR AND WILL NEVER  
SUPPORT OR SANCTION ANOTHER"  
THE PEACE PLEDGE UNION  
96, REGENT ST. LONDON

The Peace Pledge Union emerged from an initiative by Dick Sheppard, canon of St Paul's Cathedral, in 1934, after he had published a letter in the *Manchester Guardian* and other newspapers, inviting men (but not women) to send him postcards pledging never to support war.<sup>[2]</sup> 135,000 men responded and became members. Before WW2 broke out in 1939 many people who had suffered in WW1 campaigned against another war.

James Brill Junior as a soldier in WW2 c 1940

CG 415124

**CERTIFIED COPY of an**  
 Issued at a fee of one shilling in pursuance of  
 to the INDUSTRIAL ASSURANCE AND



**ENTRY OF DEATH**  
 and for the purposes of the First Schedule  
 FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT, 1948.

Registration District **CHELSEA**

1965 DEATH in the Sub-district of **Chelsea First** in the **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description, and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
75	Beckenham June 1965	Florence Margaret Wilson	Female	66 years	Widow of Albert Wilson a Toxicologist Driver	1a. Left Ventricle failure due to Myocardial degeneration c. Myocardial infarction	A. T. Brill Son 83 Parsonage Court D.W.C.	Seventeenth June 1965	P.R. Winton Deputy Registrar

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is a true copy of an entry of death in a Register Book in my custody.  
 Witness my hand this 18<sup>th</sup> day of June 1965 B. Maher Deputy Registrar.

Person to whom issued:  
 Name and surname (in full) Florence Ann Seaboy  
 Address 13 The Denonhills Linerston Street D.W.10

Relationship to deceased: child, adopted child, stepchild, grandchild. (Delete those inapplicable.)  
 CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to prosecution.

Florence's life was devastated by what happened at Gallipoli. As a single parent she could not return to her previous job as a domestic servant. Instead she took numerous cleaning jobs, working for Westminster Council for over 20 years as a toilet attendant. Pictures show how she was prematurely aged before dying of heart failure in 1965.



Florence just before she died in 1965. For 50 years she struggled against the poverty that James's death had placed her in. She never overcome his death.



Florence kept his last effects in her purse until the day she died in 1965, 50 years after James Bill's death at Gallipoli. Winston Churchill died in that same year. Florence never forgave him for sending her husband to the Dardanelles.



**In Memory of  
Private JAMES ALBERT BRILL**

**CH/376(S), Chatham Bn. R.N. Div., Royal Marine Light Infantry  
who died  
on 03 May 1915**

**Remembered with honour  
ALEXANDRIA (CHATBY) MILITARY AND WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY**



**Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
<http://www.cwgc.org>**



**Westminster Archives 10 St Ann's Street London SW1P 2DE**

**Peter Daniel [pdaniel@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:pdaniel@westminster.gov.uk) Tel: 0207 641 5182**

**[www.playingthegame.org.uk](http://www.playingthegame.org.uk)**