

# “HEAPS OF LOVE AND KISSES”

## Exploring a selection of World War One postcards

Schoolteacher Arthur Wallace and Winfred Rudder – my husband’s grandparents – married at Woolgoolga in northern NSW in 1910. Exactly five years later, on 2 March 1915, Arthur had enlisted. At the age of 35 he was much older than most volunteers. I imagine he discussed his decision carefully with Winnie, especially as they had two small children, Reggie born in 1911 and Gwen in 1912.

Many of the postcards Arthur regularly sent to his family, along with some which he purchased but never used, have survived. A few are small works of art created by well-known artists of the time while others were produced after a visit to a photographic studio. Topics included humorous depictions of animals, glamorous women, patriotic themes, the Middle East, French villages both intact and destroyed and tourist sites. The text Arthur wrote on the reverse was often poignant and regularly involved domestic topics.



Arthur and Winnie’s wedding day. Photograph by Angus McNeil Kempsey

Reggie, Arthur, Gwen and Winnie Wallace. Photograph by Creelman Studios Sydney

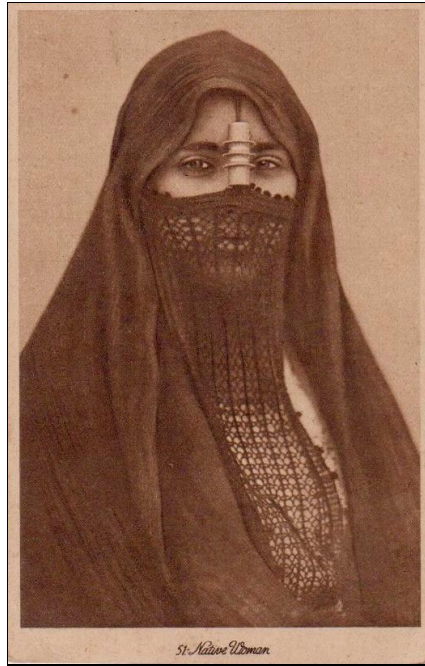


Postcard of Arthur Wallace regimental number 8990 AASC. Heliopolis near Cairo June 1915.  
Left to right Tait, Peachey and Downie, Arthur's mates in the AASC.

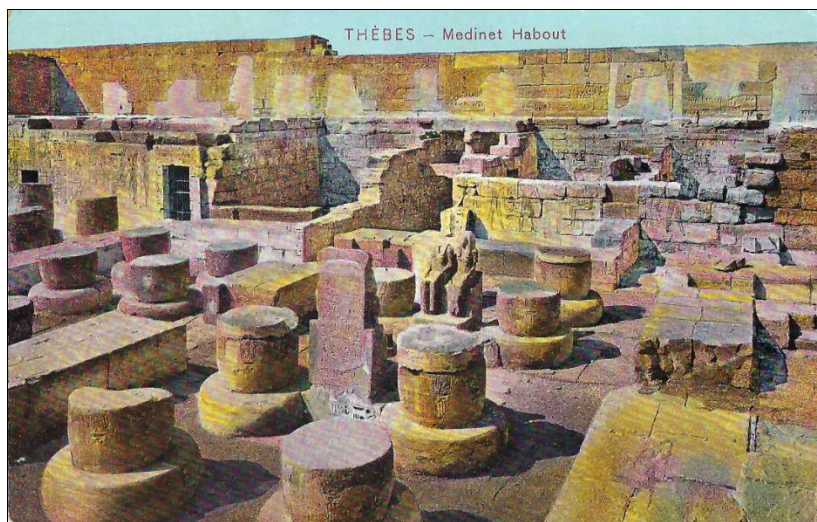


Unused postcard of soldiers from various nations. Possibly taken in France – one soldier wears a scarf and another a sheepskin vest. Arthur Wallace kneeling on cart second on left.





Photograph by Ernst Landrock. Lehnert & Landrock Cairo. The studio, active in Tunisia and Egypt, was noted for producing Orientalist images.



Thebes. Details of postcard on reverse: A logo, The 3 and the number 54307.

Fortunately Arthur had strong bushman and horsemanship skills. After only two months training, he embarked for active service abroad. Arthur initially served with the 4th Light Horse Ammunition Column before being posted to 20th Company, Australian Army Service Corps. His work involved transporting supplies, anything from war horses and loaves of bread to artillery or fodder. He served in Egypt and the Western Front with a possible short stint in Gallipoli (unrecorded in the official service record) prior to the December 1915 evacuation. Although well and truly part of the horrors of the front (two others of his company lost their lives), he made it back home to his family at the end of the war.

At different times on the Western Front Arthur grazed the horses on the Somme riverbank, went for a swim in the river himself and saw Red Cross barges pass by with wounded men. Sleeping without blankets in a barn led to influenza and an 'aeroplane dropped 3 bombs about 400 yards from camp'. At Erquinghem near Armentieres he saw several shells explode, killing children and a soldier from the 14th Battalion. He went to the battery and on 3 May 1916 he wrote '7 shells passed overhead and landed in Erquinghem not much damage'. This area was known colloquially as 'the nursery'. From mid-1916 Arthur stopped writing in his notebook and did not commence again until near the war's end.



*Frileuses de Paris* by Suzanne Meunier. R. et Cie, imp - edit.

Artist A. Simeone. Uff Rev. Stampa Milano. Posted 15/7/18

*My Fancy*. Ralph Tuck and Sons Aquaette postcard.

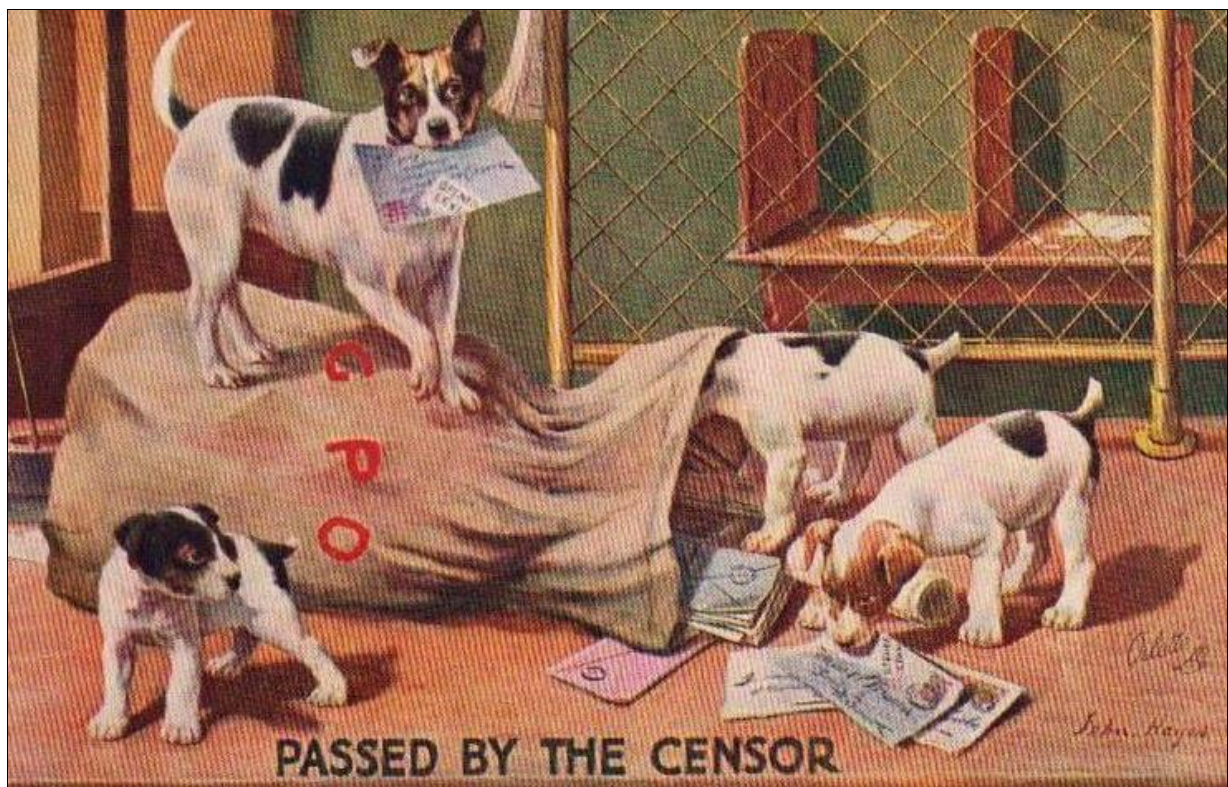


Two glamour postcards by Achille Lucien Mauzan. Uff Rev. Stampa Milano 30-7-17.



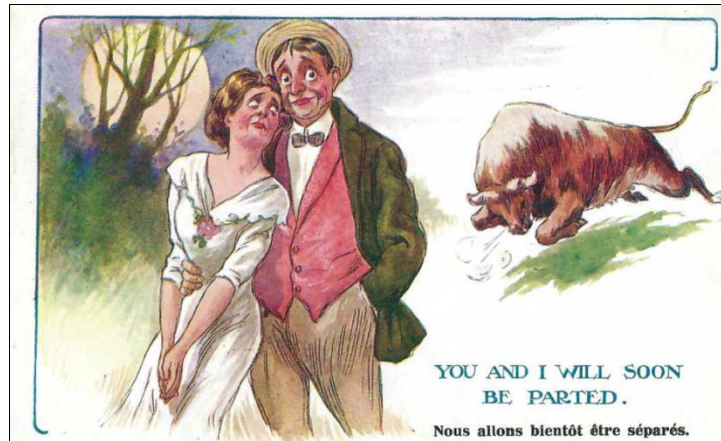
Undated but sent by Arthur Wallace from France in 1917, the two postcards above highlight the glamorous image at the front of the card contrasting with the need for a comfortable billet in the text on the reverse.

*Last week I had a good stunt. I had a splendid billet, good bed, clean sheets and no reveille. Got up about 8 or 8.30 and had breakfast prepared for me by a decent old French lady. It was quite cosy and almost like civil life again. After breakfast I had a couple of hours work and then finished for the day. This billet we are in is "tres bon", good fireplace and six of us in a room about 18ft square. Our billiard table going strong next room and not too much work to do. Big things are doing now and we all hope that this year will be the last year of war. How anxious I am to get back home to you and the dear kiddies. Give them hugs and kisses for me. Love AW.*



*Passed by the censor.* Artist John Hayes. Ralph Tuck and Sons Oilette postcard. Posted by Arthur from Belgium 18/8/17 during the Third Battle of Ypres.

*Dear Reggie, These little dogs are having a good time among the letters. Hurry up and write for I have not had a letter for weeks.*  
*Heaps of love and kisses from dad.*



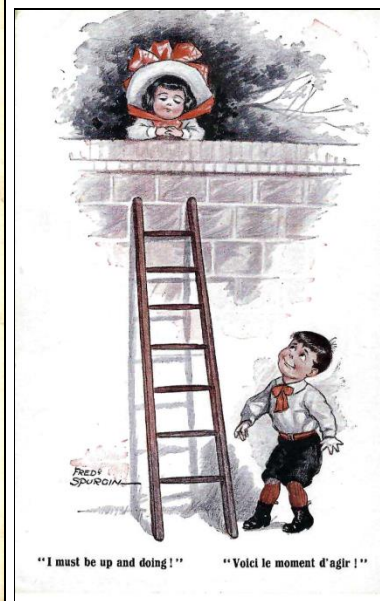
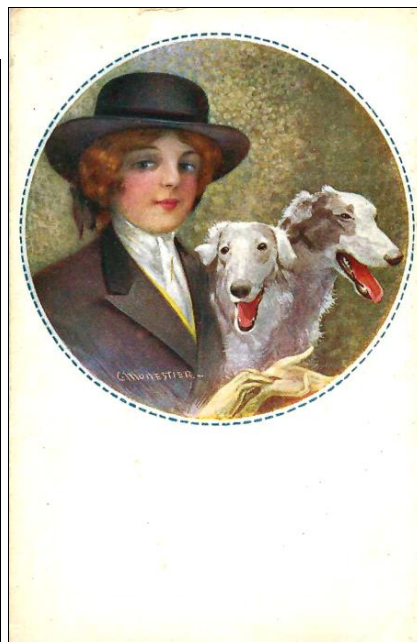
No title or artist credit. No. 225. Printed in England

Arthur naturally put aside all the horrors he was experiencing in order to relate to his children. But he did not hide his longing to be back home. By 1 April 1918 (towards the end of the Second Battle of the Somme) he had been away from his family for three long years. He wrote on the back of the postcard above:

*Dear Reggie,*

*Today I picture you, Gwen and mother down on the beaches somewhere or else out at the show. How I wish I were with you, for here we do not get holidays. Have to work all day Sunday.*

*Much love and kisses from Dad.*



*Our "Arms" are strong* by Fred Spurgin. Written the reverse 'Hurry up and learn to write to me'.

*Hunting Dogs.* Artwork by C. Monestier. Uff Rev. Stampa Milano. Sent 29.3.18

"I must be up and doing!" Artwork by Fred Spurgin. Inter-Art Co., London. Sent 22.3.18





Patriotic postcard. Artist C. Strong. JK postcard. A H Katz Rueil. Sent from France 30.10.16 during the First Battle of the Somme.

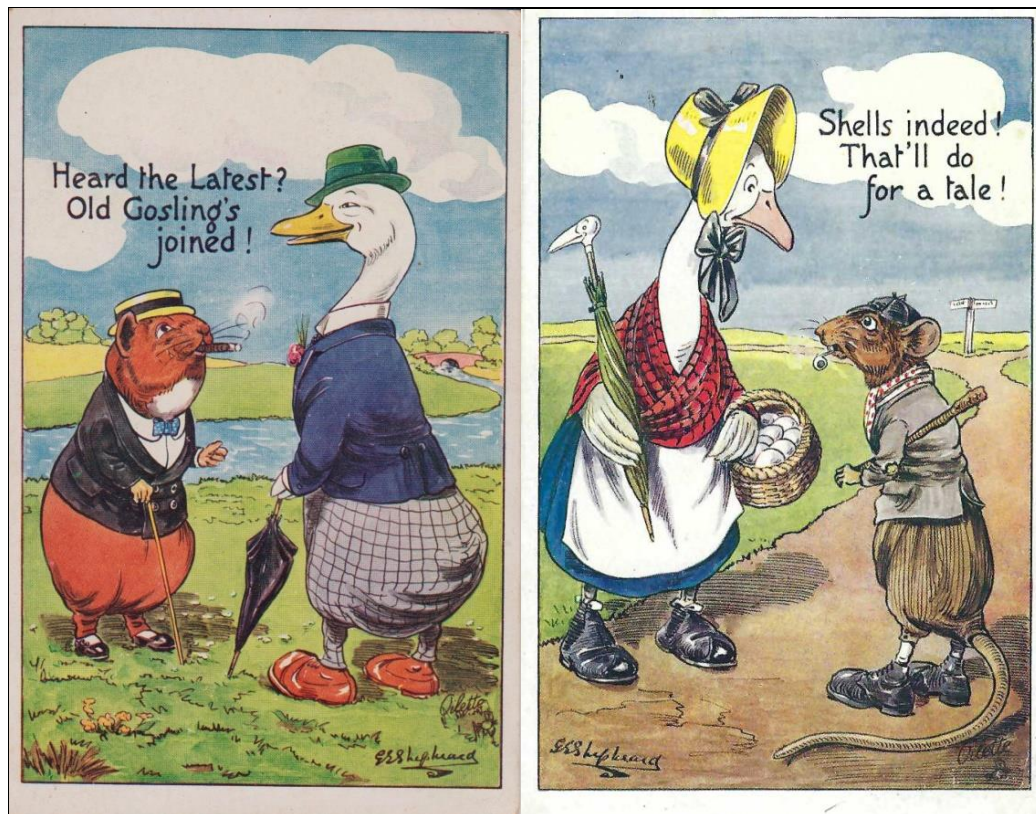
*I'm one of the new army!* Artwork by Fred Spurgin. Inter-Art Co., London.



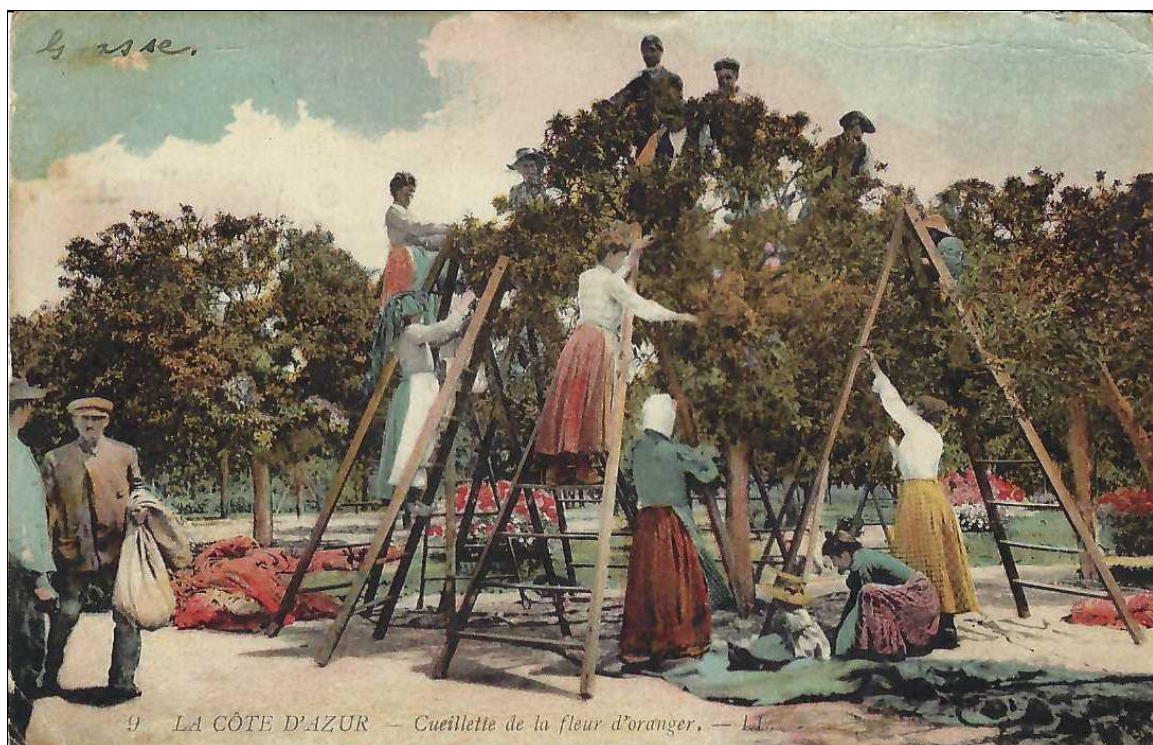
*Un jour de Victoire!* Artwork by Agnes Rigmagsoff. Ralph Tuck and Sons Oilette postcard.

*I want you to know I remember!* Artwork by Fred Spurgin. Inter-Art Co., London.





War Problems Series 2 Ralph Tuck and Sons Oilette postcards



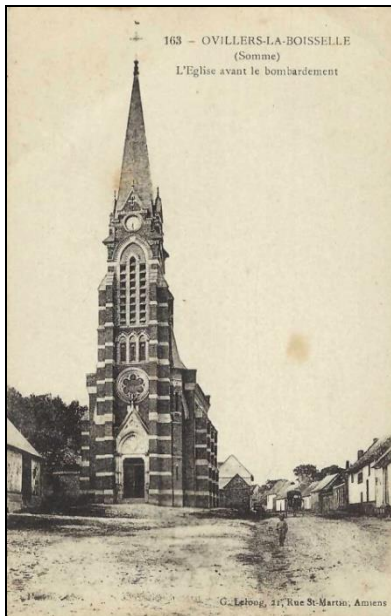
La Cote D'Azur. Levy Fils et Cie Paris. 13 November 1918

Arthur sent the postcard above of orange flowers being picked in Grasse to Reggie. The Armistice had just been declared.



*Perhaps someday we will have the pleasure of coming to this beautiful place and seeing the people at work picking the flowers for making perfumes. Just now there are no flowers on the trees but the scenery is very beautiful.*

*With love from dad.*



Ovillers-La-Boisselle (Somme). C. Lelong Amiens.

Contalmaison. *Daily Mail* official photo. Arthur commented that he often passed along this road.



Doullens (Somme) postcard. Simonnin photo Doullens

It is hard to know exactly how Arthur coped with the appalling destruction and death that was his daily experience but it was no doubt deeply stressful and life-changing. He sent Winnie postcards of lovely small French and Belgian towns in ruins with comments on the back such

as 'Before the push', 'Just a few bricks scattered about is all that remains of these villages' and 'Not even one brick on another left'. In addition Winnie's loved brother Reginald had been killed during the Battle of Second Bullecourt in April 1917 (as had a close friend) and Arthur had himself unofficially broken the news to the family via telegram.

Domestic issues back home in Sydney could also cause tensions. And as the war was nearing its end, and Arthur was safely away from the front, maybe they could more easily be aired. On 4 October 1918 Arthur sent a postcard to Winnie from Paris, when on leave, regarding daughter Gwen and some dance lessons.

*I received three letters from you a couple of days ago, also a blowing up in one re Gwen being taught dancing for the stage. You yourself informed me of the matter and no one else has ever mentioned it to me. I think that Reels, Strathspeys [a style of Scottish dance] etc. are very pretty and would love to have Gwen taught these but stage-dancing, ballet girl stunts not while I live. I hope also to get a Highlands costume for Gwen and perhaps Reg also and if she wished to compete in dancing competitions she would receive every encouragement from me.*

Arthur then went on to suggest that Winnie buy him a new suit for he wanted to get out of khaki as soon as possible when he returned home.



Boulogne-Sur-Mer. ND. Photo. Imp. Phot. Neurdein et Cie Paris

After nearly four years of Arthur's absence, when every day could bring a sad telegram from the local minister, Winnie was really feeling the strain. Arthur hoped that the doctor would be able to prescribe something to benefit her. He mentioned Winnie in this postcard on 18.8.18.

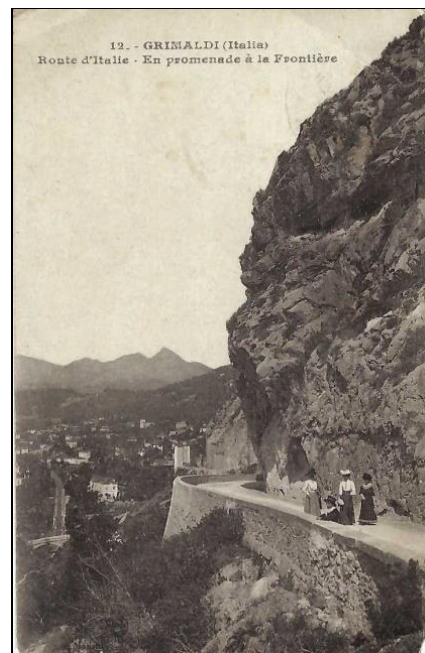


Dear Gwen,

*This is the way they bathe in this country. Not as good as our open beach style is it?  
Many happy returns on your birthday. I should be with you before it comes around again.*

*Cheer mother up and tell her if she cries too much she will not get fat and strong to meet me when I return.*

*Heaps of love and kisses to my dear little girl from daddy.*



Grasse (Alpes-Marit.) ND. Photo. Arthur wrote: *Narrow streets remind me of Cairo.*

Grimaldi (Italia). ND. Photo



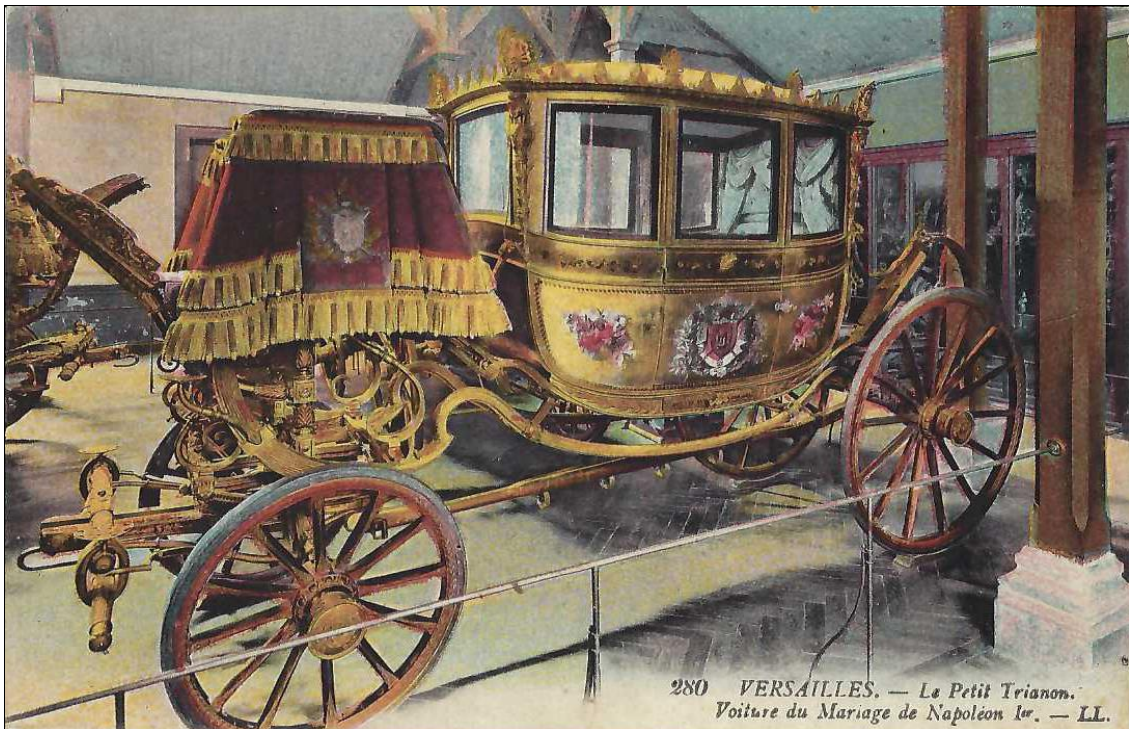
Paris La Grande Roue. Front and reverse sides. L. D. Imp. A. Fauchoux, Chelles.

Arthur happened to be in Paris on leave on 11 November 1918 and celebrated Armistice Day in the streets. Celebrating the war's end was an extraordinary experience, or as Arthur said 'joy unspeakable'. He sent Winnie a postcard of a Ferris wheel.

*Dear Wife,*

*Am in the thick of the peace rejoicings and as you may guess there is something doing. Today colonial troops (mostly Aussies) drove up and down the Boulevards in drags flag wagging, yelling, cheering etc and received a royal reception from the people who were out in the thousands. Cinema pictures were taken and if they appear in Sydney look for me on foot board of second dray. I shook hands with hundreds today.*

*Love from AW*



Versailles – La Petit Trianon. Levy Fils et Cie Paris.

*France 17.11.18*

*Dear Reggie,*

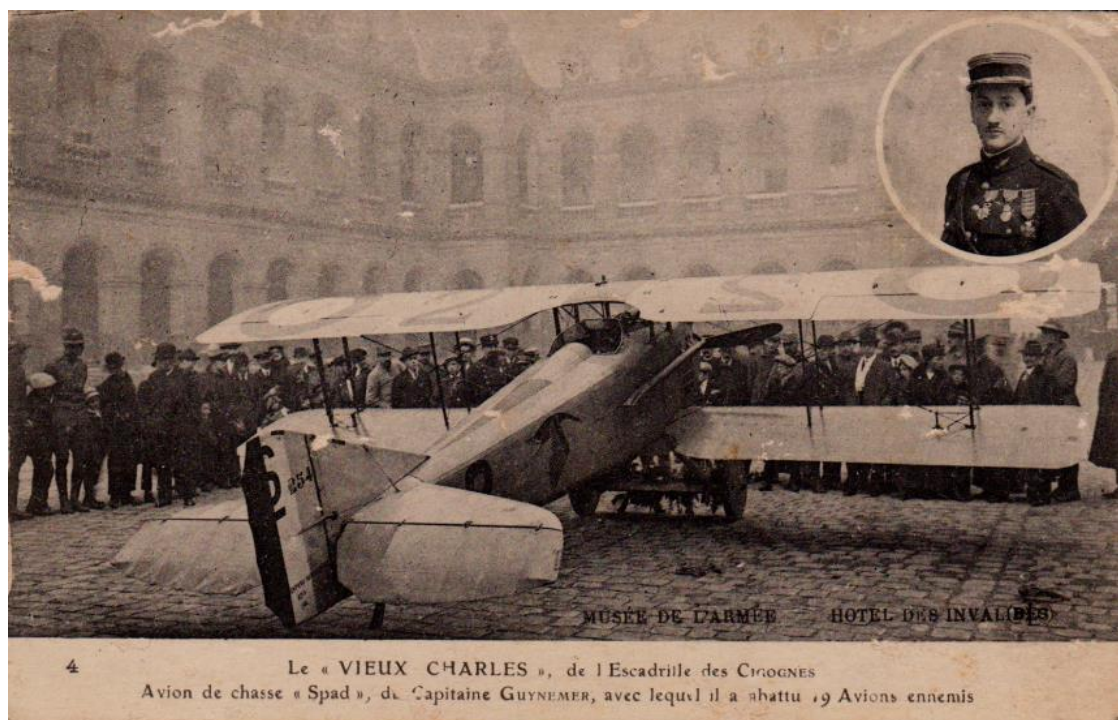
*Soon I should be back with you again and what a time we will have. Plenty of holidays for good boys then and no more waiting and wondering if the huns had got your dad. Help mother and take care of Gwen.*

*Love from dad.*





Arthur purchased this rare set of twenty postcards of Amiens Cathedral. They were intended to be sent individually to the recipient until a complete image was created but they were never posted. The postcards have now been framed rather than being put away in a box.



French flying ace Georges Guynemer and his Biplane "Vieux Charles". Musee D'Armee. Le Deley Paris





Blackpool. The Advance Series.



Unused postcard of busy Fleet St and St Paul's. London. – LL.

The war had ended in November 1918 but three months later the massive task of repatriating the Australian participants to their homes was still underway. Arthur wrote to Winnie in February 1919 from Hurdcott Camp in Wiltshire. He understandably complained about the miserable weather – plenty of snow, rain and fog and about two hours of sunshine a week.

*My dear wife,*

*Still marking time here. Our boat the "Kashmir" was to have sailed on the 19<sup>th</sup> but date of sailing has been postponed till the 27<sup>th</sup> when she will leave or if we go by her*



*time will tell. However I hope to be home in time for the winter so probably I'll come in handy. I'm well and fit and have promise of a good job (postal orderly) on the boat. I am also going to instruct in photog. So should have a good time.*

*Heaps of love and kisses from yours, A.A. Arthur*

Arthur did depart on the 27<sup>th</sup>, sailing as planned on HMAT *Kashmir*, and wrote how he looked forward to seeing her looking well. 'You said that as soon as you knew I would be on the way home you would soon cheer up and get in better spirits and health.' He disembarked in Melbourne on 23 April 1919, finally being discharged from the Army on 1 July.

What Arthur experienced at the front was unimaginable. The war had a profound effect on his life, and on his little family (he and Winnie had no more children after he returned) but being an older soldier seemed to be an advantage, as did a lasting belief that enlisting and supporting the war effort was the right thing to do. The war also gave Arthur a chance to visit exciting and exotic places but this would be the one and only time he travelled outside of Australia.



Arthur Wallace Heliopolis November 1915.

A cropped postcard from the Second World War. Arthur's son Reggie had enlisted and was now in England working on radar technology. Pictured are Reggie's wife Thelma, Arthur's daughter Gwen and Arthur himself. Taken by a street photographer in Sydney 1942.



Champion Tobacco WWI patriotic postcard.



Another rare survivor. The Australian Boomerangs, soldiers and Pierrot entertainers.

All images, and Arthur Wallace's correspondence, are from the Wallace Family Collection.