

Arthur Edward Simmonds

Isle of Wight County Press - 14 August 1915

THE ISLAND AT WAR

Carisbrooke

Much sympathy is felt for Mr. and Mrs. J. Simmonds, Castle-street, who yesterday (Friday) morning received official news that their eldest son, Gunner Arthur Edward Simmonds, aged 23, of the 76th Battery, R.F.A., had died of disease in the Persian Gulf, where he was serving with the Indian Expeditionary Force. The deceased had been in the army about three years. Yesterday (Friday) morning, just before the official notification of the death arrived, deceased's aunt, Mrs. G. Hobby, of Holyrood-street, Newport, received a letter from her gallant nephew, some of the contents which have now a specially pathetic interest. In this letter deceased says: "I am scribbling these few lines to you whilst I have the chance to let you know that I am still in the land of the living, if not of civilisation. Have received the papers all right. You bet that I devour them well out here on the desert. Am keeping in fair health. No fighting down this part lately. There has been a bit up the Euphrates, though on our old ground. Wonder how long this is going to last? Roll on when it is done. I am 'done up' in every way. It will take a little time to recuperate our health after this. . . Although we do not receive the amount of luxuries and gifts which the troops in Europe do, still I am not grumbling. We are out here roughing it in no white man's country, and if I come through it will be with the satisfaction of knowing that I have done my little bit."

Isle of Wight County Press - 1 January 1916

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

CARISBROOKE MAN'S LAST LETTER HOME,

ARRIVES NEARLY FIVE MONTHS AFTER DEATH.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Simmonds, of Carisbrooke, received on Boxing-day the last letter, written before his death in August from fever, &c., in the Persian Gulf, by their eldest son, Gunner Arthur E. Simmonds, 76th Battery R.F.A., who also wrote at the same time to his aunt, Mrs. G. Hobby, of Holyrood-street, Newport. The letters were written on August 6th, and in that he said to Mrs. Hobby: "I am writing these few lines to catch the next boat here. I don't know when she will be up from Basra, so I don't know when this letter will get posted. The battery has gone to Basra, and I am left behind at Ahivaz in hospital. I am down with fever and dysentery, and am brought to almost skin and bone and as weak as a kitten. When the fever goes off I shall be removed to the base hospital, Basra, where there is better accommodation. We are lying in a building here known as Sheik's palace. We sleep outside in the open. What makes it so bad are the hot winds all day and part of the night; it is torture. At midnight a cool breeze springs up, and one gets a few winks of sleep till the sun drives you inside at 5 o'clock. The breeze lasts till about 1 o'clock and then changes right away to burning heat. Well, I daresay I shall pull through; I hope so, but it is going to be a long job though. I am getting tired now and must stop, so good-bye for the present."

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,
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