

# *Occold Remembered*

## *No 1*

*Letters home from  
a soldier during  
WW1*



*Edited by Barry & Patricia Woods*



# Letters home from a soldier during WW1

## Introduction

These letters were written by Walter William HUNT to his wife Florence Rose nee HAMMOND. We're not sure of the exact dates as most are not dated but it would be approximately from when he joined the Royal Fusiliers, Service No 52510 around Sep 1916 until his last letter in Apr 1917.

The letters have been transcribed 'as seen' including all the spelling, grammar and punctuation errors albeit occasional *{hints}* have been included. Each page number refers to the original from which the letter has been transcribed.



*Third Battle of the Scarpe, April-May 1917*

*Bombers drawing bombs during an attack.*

*Hindenburg Line, near Heninel, 3 May 1917*

*Walter took part in this battle and was Killed in Action on this same day*

## Summary

- Frequent mention of 'mrs locke' and 'old barney'. We cannot identify either of these conclusively. The only Mrs Locke in Occold according to the 1911 census is Elizabeth LOCK nee COOK, husband of Lewis LOCK
- Aldershot first (approx Sep 16 - Dec 16) and then France (Dec 16 – Apr 17)
- Frequent references to his son in the form of 'baby boy' – occasional reference to his name – Albert. Likewise, never mentions Florence by name
- Qualified to be a sniper
- He did spend time at home with a pass – presumably by rail from Aldershot

- Mention of visiting 'someone' in Wetheringsett but we don't know who – probably some family connection
- He mentions a Philip who he is with but we don't know who that is i.e. local to Occold or just a friend he met in the Army
- He makes a couple of references to Florence and her mother not getting along

### ***LETTER 1 – pages 20 and 22 – Aldershot – 24 Oct***

Private W Hunt  
No 48478  
101 VR Battalion  
A Company  
Albuhera Barracks  
Aldershot

My dear wife just a few lines to answer your letter glad to hear that you ar better and the boy a bit better and i expect that is his teethen did the doctor say what was the miss of him for i should like to know for i hope when you rite again he will also be better for i should not like anything happen to him now i am away from home and if you whant me to have a day or tow you will have to send the money if you can spare it for i do not spect thear is a lot of that to spare and i will try and get a day or tow this time and take good care of the boy and keep him worm {warm} and for wen i cum home i should like to see him trotting about and tell mrs locke that i was very sorry to hear that he husband have got his thumb shot off but i hope he is getting on better for i hope in seeing him again and get a few more of old nunns {Nunn's?} rabites and tell her boy jack that we have to go to school now again and we have to do a lot of writing all the day learning to be a sniper for it will take sum little time to learn it all and i see in your letter that frank woods missing and how \*\*\*\* is wounded in the hands and you did not see will potter [*William POTTER, KIA 1 May 1918*] when he was home and is young palmer \*\*\*\* away yet for i should like to \*\*\*\* up here for now for i have had the best help since i have been up here thank the Lord and we get very Cold weather up here now and i expect it is the same at home and give my love to old barney and i hope he is all right and now dear i think this is al the news for this time and rite back as soon as you can and let me know how the things is at home and i am writing again in a day or so and kisses for the little boy from loving husband Walter XXXXXX

### ***LETTER 2 – page 27 (incomplete) – Aldershot – 29 Oct***

my dear wife just a few lines to answer your letter witch i received on this morning and i am glad to hear that you and the boy ar better now and i think i shall be able to see you next sunday for i have got a pass and i do not know what time i can get away for they would not let them go this week till 2 clock for it will be no good of aney body cum down to meet me and it have been a rainy wet week here this a miserable day for we have now been to church and we got wet and you need not too worry because i am a sniper for i get on with it all right at present and i glad to hear that have picked all the potatoes over for i expect it was hard work for you to see to them and i am trying to get monday this time and i hope i shall get it and i see in your letter that your brother [*George HAMMOND, KIA 16 Jan 1917*] is in malta hospital and i sorry for him for the fever out thear is very bad for thear is a lot up here what have had it and give my love to mrs locke and allso old barney and tell him i hope i shall see him.....

### ***LETTER 3 – pages 33 and 34 - Aldershot***

Private W Hunt  
101 V.R. Battalion  
No 48478  
A company  
Albuhera Barracks  
Aldershot

my dear wife just a few lines to answer your letter witch i was pleased to hear from you witch you know always like to hear from home and i was pleased to hear that the \*\*\*\* did not upsett you from your rest but you would not had much rest if you had been wear we was for thear was a old woman in the train with us and i expect you thought that i was sleeper in the train and you ar right for i was tired and i was laid down on liverpool station and had a sleep and they layed thear like a lot of pigs and i am verry sorry that i did not see poor old barney for i thought of them words wich you put in your letter that i should see the old ones as well as the young for i hope he will not take any notice of that for i am allfull sorry and tell him that i shall have to see him wen i cum home the next time and i expect the people will soon be getting thear new homes and i wish them the best of luck in them and tell them from me i shall have to visit them and i should like to go over to wetheringsett for a week for i know they would like to see you over thear for it would be company for you and now i think is all the news for this time and this will \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* and little albert \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* best of health so now i must close with fondest love to all from husband Walter and kiss the little boy for me XXXXXXXX

### ***LETTER 4 – pages 18, 19 and 24 – Aldershot***

My dearest wife just to say that i received your parcel all right and i was pleased of that and i hope you ar quite well as it leaves me the same and i rote a letter to you on monday and i could not get a stamp so i spect you will think i never tried to get one but i was on a rout march and i was jolly tired wen i got home and so i got rite into bed for i rote that letter i was about 5 miles from Aldershot and we sat in the wood so i rote that for a fancy for i thought about you and little Albert then so now i have to go in to work again so i must bring it to a close so thank you verry much for that pahsel may God be with you till we meet again and kiss the little boy for me and i hope you will sone get your money and now i think this is all the news for now and so i must close with fondest love from your loving husband to wife and baby boy and kiss for you and him xxxxxxxxx

### ***LETTER 5 – pages 14 and 21 - Aldershot***

my dear wife just a few lines to you hope you ar quite well as it leaves me the same for i just sat down to rite thes few lines to you as i had noting to do and no wear to go for thear is not no pleasure of going out for all you can see is all karke for i should like to cum home again as soon as i can get the money but i do not expect we shall get so long as i did befor but a little time would be nice and i hope you and the little boy ar in the best of health for i am all right except tired and we do not get a nuff to eat so we have to buy it at the canteen and they say their is a lot of young men of 18 cuming up hear next week and we went to all santes Church this morning and we ar going to the Chapel tonight down to the town and i hope you ar going sum wear on Sundays for i shall wen i cum home again and give my love to old barney and also mrs locke and i

shall be pleased to see you all again and i shall be glad wen this war is all over and i hear william parmer is home and jack lister for thear last leave and i hope we shall not be long so we can get away from this place for thear is not one of us like being here and hope your father has been and seen you yet for i do not expect your mother have been to see you and if she have not she may repent one day soon \*\*\*\* for God do not pay his debts in money and that is what the parson told us this morning in church and i surpoos the potatoes ar cuming out this year like they allways do four pecks to the bushel i cannot think of much more news this time so i must close with fondest love to wife and child and may God be with you till we meet again and kiss the little boy for me for i often think of him and also you and goodbye for you with fondest love from Walter

Private W Hunt  
VR Battalion no 48478  
A Company  
Albuhera Barracks  
Aldershot

### ***LETTER 6 – pages 13 and 3 - Aldershot***

My dear wife just a few lines to you just to let you know that i got home all right and i hope you got home all right and i was a bit tired when i did get home and it will not be no good of you writing to me not till you hear from me again for i keep writing and letting you know how i am going on you must not mind about that for we shall soon be going sum wear but wear i do not know but i expect it will be France and i expect we shall go about Sunday and my cold is a bit better and i hope you and the little boy ar all right and i got your letter all right when i got back and you can tell mother that i shall rite to her in a day or two and we had a letter or two from our old palls witch \*\*\* away and they ar all right and now i have got all my hair all off and i expect it will give me a nother bold and now i think this is all the news for this time so i must close with fondest love to you and also the little boy and pray to the Lord to take care of you and the little boy till i return home again and also me to cum home to you again to wife and child from husband Walter

### ***LETTER 7 – pages 16, 17 and 23 - Aldershot***

my dear wife just a line a tow to answer your letter i received this moring and i sorry to hear that you have not got your money and i hope you will soon get your money for i expect you will soon do with that and i hope you ar all right and allso the little boy and give my love to mrs locke and allso old barney and tell him that this is not worth having on at all and our officer is a bad one for he is after getting us up to the other others and so we have to go frew it very hard and i am know came home on a rout march and i my shirt was like a dish cloth and we have to go in to it again after tea for these is so many soldiers about here and we have to wash our feet every day or night time and tell her to send a few lines to her husband for me and all my old pals ar gone on thear final brief and i should have been home on mine if i had not taken on for sniping and it have put my back for several weeks and you can send the money in the letter and mine and take the number of it and it will be all right and now i think this is all this time with fondest love to you and the boy and kiss him for me from loving husband Walter and may the Lord take care of you and the boy until we meet again  
xxxxxx

### **LETTER 8 – page 9 (incomplete) - Aldershot**

My dear wife just a few lines to you hope you ar quite well as it leaves me the same at present and i hope the little boy is all right and i went to youshot (?) on sunday afternoon and the \*\*\*\* and philip and will potter went down to fleet and so that was a nice work {walk} it was about 12 miles and will potter is cuming home this week and he would like us to go with him but we cannot get away this week and i often think about you and the little boy wen i get in to bed at night now the nights ar dark and you do not whant to send me aney money not till i can get home for it will do moor good then and how do you get on with your new nabyour and tell mrs locke i should like to see her on the straw stack and have you taken up all the potatoes up and you have not been over weatheringsett to stay not yet for i thought you was a going to stay over to stay for a week i should go over if i was you.....

### **LETTER 9 – pages 11 and 26 – France – 1 Jan**

to my dearest wife just a few lines to you hoping you and the baby boy ar quite well as it leaves me the same and i am wishing you a happy new year and a propres new year and may it be better and the old year to you and the all at home and it seems a long time to me now because i have not had a letter from you yet but i suppose i shall get one sooner and i and philip had not got no wear to go so we both sat down in our billit together and rote a letter for every spear time i get i shall rite home to sum of you but i can tell you we do not get much time and i get dark so soon and we ar in a old barn and it is not like being in a house \*\*\*\* sat and now i wish you all a happy christmas and a bright new year and now i must close with fondest love to you all from your loving husband Walter and kisses for the baby boy XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

### **LETTER 10 – pages 7 and 8 – France – 18 Jan**

to my dearest wife just a few lines to you hoping it will find you and the little boy well as it leaves me the same and i receved your parcel all right and i was very pleased of that for a slice of home cake and pudding was all right and also the fags came in very handy for i had not got aney and i and philip went in half of them and i had \*\*\*\* fags sent me the week before then \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* they came from \*\*\*\* for the post mark was not very plain but also thank them for them who ever they came from if you know and rite and tell me \*\*\*\* for took it ten days to get to me and i had not got a chance to rite to you fro them for we do not always get time to rite but i shall always rite when i do get a chance so you need not worry for take care of yourself and also the little boy for i am always thinking about you and little \*\*\*\* for we ar getting a lot of snow out here now so it looks like winter

Private W Hunt  
No 52510  
4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers  
Y Company  
12 Platoon  
BEF France

And if you send another parcel you can send sum more of them sweets for they cum in very handy out here for colds and now i think that is all the news for this time so i must close with fondest love to you all from your loving husband Walter and kiss the little boy for me XXXXXXXXXXXX



### **LETTER 11 – page 30 (incomplete) – France – 13 Feb**

to my dear wife just a few lines to you hoping it will find you all quite well as it leaves me the same and i got your letter quite safely and also the little bit of money and of course that came in very handy but the parcel would be better for you can not get things out here like you can at home for they are not allowed to sell us any bread now and i hear that they are going to give the wives more money but whether it be right i do not know but i expect you can do with it here for i do not expect the money go far now and we have had some very big marches since we have been out here and the sound of the old guns are dreadful out here for they are always roaring like thunder all day and night and we are getting used to them now but there is hope this will be over this spring for it will soon be 3 years now and i am still with philip but he is not in the same platoon but he has got a very bad cold and we are getting little warmer weather out here now and i shall be glad when the warmer days.....

### **LETTER 12 – pages 35 and 36 - France**

my dearest wife just a few lines to you hoping it will find you quite *{quite}* well as it leaves me the same except my finger for i cut it and so i had to have it *dun {done}* up but it is getting on better now and thank you very much for that bit of paper with *{which}* you sent me and them razor blades with you sent and they fitted it all right and it was the first letter i had from home since *{since}* i have been out here so i can tell you that i was very pleased of that to hear from home and i am glad to hear that you have got that door *dun* up and i also got some *{some}* fags with some one sent *{sent}* me but i did not know where *{where}* they came from for the post mark was not very plain and how is your brother George getting on for you never say and told me but shall also be glad to hear that he is better and also \*\*\*\* mrs locke husband give my love to old barney and i have also seen two chaps from debham *{Debenham}* with i also know and i am with them now and i hear that old Frank plarmer *{Palmer}* is dead and buried and philip is all right for he is still with me and so we are very often go out to gether when we get a chance so we are still all right and pray to the One above to take care of you and the little \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* think about you and him sitting \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* the old house fire last year i see the the old house fire but i do not see the one now but \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* the one above \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* with safe \*\*\*\* for the old home again

Private W Hunt  
4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers  
Y Company  
12 Platoon  
BEF  
France

and now buy my address you will see it a bit different and if you put that it will be sure to find me and now i think this is all the news for this time with fondest love to you and to all and kisses for the little boy from your loving husband Walter XXXXXXXX

### **LETTER 13 – pages 31 and 32 - France**

My Dearest loving wief just a few lines to you hope you are quite well as it leaves me the same except my arm and i think it will get better in a day or so and i hope the baby boy is all right and often with i could see him and i hope he is getting on with his teethe and give my love to mrs locke and old barney and rite and tell how the things

ar looking about home for i wich i was to see myself for i rote to leonard breese about the harvest but i have not heard from him but i wish i could get away for harvest for it would not be so hard work thear as it is hear and we had 40 moor recruits cum in today and so we have to lay very thick thear is 30 of us lay in one rome wear i lay and all the soldiers thear is up here thear is not one i know and they ar a lot of them londoners and cambreg and thear is a ½ a million of them and when i sat down to rite this i was in a great big wood and the airplanes was as numess as birds and they had a big feild day on and you can not hear nothing else but big guns and i hope you will soon get your money for i expect you can do with it now and i think this is all for this time and i sall not be able to cum home yet for thear is no leaf home in 3 to 9 august for i expect we shall be on the moove and sooner the better and rite to me as soon you can and kiss the boy for me until i cum home XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

### **LETTER 14 – pages 28 and 29 - France**

my dear wife just a few lines to you to answer your letter although it was a \*oo\*full letter but that is all thear is in this world now for we must look on the bright side and also to the one above for \*\*\*\* thear is \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\* look for \*\*\*\* for if it to hard to part in ones you love so dear so \*\*\*\* let the land and sea divide you and me let us pray to the one above to take care of you and me till we get home again for i see in your letter that frank woods [*Frank Carter WOODS, KIA 18 Nov 1916*] is killed and i hope the little boy albert will soon be better and you can rite a letter to me and on the back pleas forward on and then it will be sent on to me and i wish you would have your poto take as soon you can and send it to me for i often think i should like to have you in pocket so i can have a look at you when i wishes for you have got my poto to look at and philip has got his wifes in his pocket and now i think this is all the news for this time with fondest love to you dear wife and child and kiss the little for me and now i must bring my letter to a close from your loving husband Walter XXXXXX

### **LETTER 15 – pages 1 and 15 - France**

Royal Fusiliers

Pte W Hunt

52510

39 JBO Sec 17 APO BEF France

My dear wife just a few lines to you hoping to find you quit well as it leaves me the same and i had a splendid journey from the village was all right for the sea nice and carm for i quite enjoyed the ride and philip is all right and he is still with me and you can rite back to me as soon you can and tell mother that i am all right and rite an let me know how all ar all at home and how your brother is getting on and give my love to old barney and to mrs locke and tell them that i have seen moor than ever i did before in my life and i am quite comfortable here but not like i should be if i was at home with you and the little boy for i expect you \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\* loonley now this winter but we must look forward for a brighter one next year and have they dun aney of the repairs.....

### **LETTER 16 – page 2 (incomplete) - France**

my dear wife just a few lines to you hope it will find you and the little boy well as it leaves me the same and it is a dull Christmas for me here and i hope you will enjoy yourself at home and how is your mother now and have she heard aney moor about brother george and tell me next time you rite for i like to know how they ar all getting



on and give my love to old barney and tell i am sum wear in France without money and without fags for we have not had onley 2 shillings since i left home so you know that.....

### **LETTER 17 – page 25 (incomplete) - France**

..... a few miles further back and how is the little boys cold getting on and how is fathers face getting on for you can get my best respects to mrs locke and tell her to let me know how her husband is getting on and how your brother george is getting on we hope he is still alive and getting on well and also send me some more soap for we shall have to do our washing and send me \*\*\*\* a wooden box and that it will not get broken up .....

Private W Hunt  
52510  
4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers  
3<sup>rd</sup> Division Training Centre  
British Expeditionary Force  
France

### **LETTER 18 – pages 10, 5 and 6 – France – 23 Apr**

to my dearest wife just a few lines to you hoping it will find you quite well as it leaves me the same at present and i hope you ar able to get out with the baby and the little boy and i wish i was at home so i could go out with you for i \*\*\*\* often think about the \*\*\*\* walks we had last spring But this year we ar far apart from one another but chear up my dear and look on the bright side for a nother year to cum and then i think i shall have the pleasure of going out with you again and i think this year will see the end of his dreadful war for we ar going on like a house a fire now for we ar doing the same to them as they dun to us in the begin of the war and give my love to mrs locke and thank her for me what she dun for you and tell her to remember me to her husband when she rite again to him and also so give my love to all at home and now i think this is all the news for this time so now i must close with the fondest love to you dear and may God be with you and keep you from all fate and harm till we meet again and kiss the little boy and girl [*Gladys Ruby HUNT, born 4 weeks earlier on 23 Mar 17*] for me and hope i see them again once more from your loving husband Walter

*This is the last letter sent by Walter  
10 days later on 3 May 1917, Walter was KILLED IN ACTION*

**WE WILL REMEMBER HIM**





Example 'original' letter (page 10)

April 23

To my dearest wife just a few  
lines to you hoping it will  
find you quit well as it leaves  
me the same at present and i  
hope you ar able to get out  
with the baby and the little  
boy and i wish i was at home  
so i could go out with  
you for i often think  
about the wa walks  
we had last spring but  
this year we ar for apart  
from one a nother but cheer  
up my dear and look on  
the bright side for a nother  
year to come and then i  
think i shall hope the  
pleasure of going out  
with you again and i