

MS 336

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Papers of Frederick Dudley Samuel, CBE, DSO (1877-1951): mainly correspondence written on an almost daily basis to his fiancée and, subsequently, wife, Dorothy: from 1915-18, when he is part of the British Expeditionary Force in France, these letters depict in grim detail life at the front line

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|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Correspondence from Fred Samuel to his fiancée and, subsequently, wife Dorothy, including:<br/> a letter of 30 Jul 1910 with a small pen and ink sketch of a steamer on a rough sea;<br/> a letter of 5 Aug 1910 with pen and ink sketches of [Samuel] mounted on a horse in ceremonial uniform and wearing a bearskin and standing dressed in a great coat in a shower of rain;<br/> photographs of Fred Samuel next to a bell tent at army camp, 1909, and of territorial army camp, Perham Down, Aug 1914: including Fred Samuel on horse back; rifle inspection and foot inspection</p>  | <p>1909-11, 1913-<br/>Aug 1914</p> |
| 2 | <p>Correspondence to Dorothy from the vessel conveying him to Malta and from Malta</p>  | <p>Sep-Dec 1914</p>                |
| 3 | <p>Letter from Major A Yeldham, Connaught Rangers, to Fred Samuel, formerly adjutant of the Third Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers giving news on the losses suffered by the regiment at the front line, his opinions on the British and German armies and offering advice on the best way to prepare troops under Samuel's command for service at the front:</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">“Here I am staying for a few days till I get shunted off to some home where I have to be pulled about and go through a cure for some weird trouble I have with my back. I stuck it out till sent down by our medical officer at the front. There I had 2½ months of the best of it and hope to get back [f.2v] again before long. More especially so as there are only 2 off[icer]s remaining of those who originally went out with the B[attalion]. The others are killed and wounded except 2 sick. Not bad for one b[attalion]. Our other b[attalion] from India is also at the front now. In my C[ompany] there are only 8 men remaining out of 230 odd. We have been made up now by drafts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> B[attalion]. [f.1v] Both in off[icer]s and men. You know what that means.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">I always had a good opinion of the British soldier but now my opinion of him is that there is no one that comes within a mile of him as a man and a soldier. During the long retreat from Mons, the moral of the men was never for a moment impaired [f.2r] no matter how long the march or how severe the losses our men were always cheery and bright, with not a word of complaint. The average sleep we got was about 2 hours a day, in broken periods. My horse was shot and the saddle that Col[onel] Howell gave me fell into the hands of the Germans. I felt the loss of that</p> | <p>3 Nov 1914</p>                  |

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3 [contd.]

saddle very much.

[f.3r] The Germans are good soldiers, very brave in battle and under a rigid discipline. The cavalry are indifferent, and ours fairly walk round them. Their artillery are excellent and they seem to have no end of it. Ours manage to hold their own, but cannot get the better of them. Their big guns are [f.4v] very persistent in their efforts to blow us to pieces, the big shells (percussion) have only a very weak effort. I have seen them explode within a few yards of us and do no harm. The infantry are very poor riflemen, but their machine guns are effectual. They come on in heave masses and this gives our fellows the time of their lives. [f.3r] They don't surrender without cause, but are very glad when they have surrendered. They are filled up with lies by their staff. One Prussian officer I took prisoner told me that they had possession of Paris and London. Not bad, was it? This place is full of Kitchener's army, but alas it is an army in many cases without arms.

Well [f.4r] how are the old 3<sup>rd</sup> getting on. Give them plenty of musketry, rapid firing at short ranges. Don't bother about 9 o'clock, 2 fingers and all that sort of thing. It is never used in action. Keep them at fire control. Extensions never less than 5 paces. What one wants more than anything else is a rigid discipline, so that [f.5r] a man will do instinctively what his commander tells him. Teach the men to entrench themselves rapidly in the dark. Go in a lot for bayonet fighting. There has been no end of it, and the Germans hate the sight of a bayonet. Detail your best shots to pick off the officers, about 5 in each co[mpany]. Instruct them men how to use the first field [f.6v] dressing. Work hard at your NCOs and teach them to take responsibilities. Let the off[ice]rs fall out as casualties and tell the NCOs to carry on. Trenches must be deep and narrow. Well old man, this is a long yarn. Send me one address to Co[mpany]."

4

Correspondence to Dorothy from the vessel RMSP Avon, 4 Jan 1915, and from 9 Jan 1915, from the British Expeditionary Forces in France, including:

a letter of 12 Feb with pressed flowers;

two letters to Mrs Samuel, 11 May 1915, from

colleagues of Fred Samuel, the one from A.Howell notes

"We had an anxious day on Sunday and lost I think 4 killed, 30 wounded. The Indian army corps lost very heavily indeed, but we, the Gashwal Brigade were in reserve until the end of the day and then the fighting had stopped just as our turn came. Sammy was splendid on Sunday and gave me the most splendid assistance and was so plucky. He has taken on the role of looking after me and does it like a hen with one chick.";

a copy of a letter from Samuel to a friend Sligs [Charles Gabriel Seligman], enclosed in his letter of 22 Jun:

"The rifle arrived last week and will I hope render the country good service. The Batt[alion] is now in the trenches. I've been seeking a spot where it can be used, but to begin with I won't allow any of our men to take any risks, especially as we

are in

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Jan-Jun  
1915

4 [contd.]

new trenches. So far I've not been able to find anything as we are on a slope with the Bosches slightly above us. We are in the trenches taken from the Bosches near 'Quinque Rue' or rather in new trenches we have made, it is all pretty unpleasant as the Bosches make use even of their dead, they build them into the parapets and travases, the flies are horrible but we spray the trenches with a mixture of cresol and kerosene, tho it does not do so much good. Part of our [f.2r] trench is the old German communication trench and it is what is called double stopped, that is to say, it is blocked in two places between us and them so that they shall not be able to bomb us. Towards their end there is a solid mass of their dead, pretty beastly. They are awful swine we have got thousands of clips of cartridges with the bullets reversed, obviously manufactured like that, not done by the men. I hope to get some sniping in soon as I have heard of a place lower down a ruined house. We lost two men by snipers yesterday. The Bosches have most elaborate arrangements for sniping, iron plates are covered in by sandbags with small loopholes which can be shifted and all sorts of rests and clamps. We shall use those found in their trenches. [f.3r] There is a new form of sickness, trench fever, it is supposed to be communicated by lice. It does not seem to be serious but is unpleasant, high temperatures at night and better in the morning and bad heads and pains in the back. The men all keep very fit and I hope as we are in new trenches that we shan't get many cases of this fever. I'm in and out of the trenches a good deal but am in a billet about 800 y[ar]ds behind, we get shelled a good deal. Yesterday morning, the Bosches put in 150 big shells into our trenches which they breached in 3 places and we had no casualties, but its rather nerve wracking. Two came near our billet and within 5 y[ar]ds of where I was sitting and I was only severely frightened. Their effect is very local [f.4r]but the brutes have evidently plenty of shells. I wish we could get some of the confident gentlemen at home, Under Secretaries of State, 'monds', 'Henry', and such vermin to spend a week in trenches taken only recently from the Bosches, also people who think we ought not to use gas, etc. I could arrange a very nice programme for them. I expect we shall be here till the end of the month. I don't think I have thanked you for all the books you have sent me, they have been greatly appreciated by us all. It is so jolly kind of you to think of me.

About sniping, it is no good unless one makes proper arrangements. One can't go out and shoot Bosche like Duke does partridges. You need one or more observers as well as the man with a rifle and if they [f.5r] spot you, it's liable to be unhealthy. Now that your rifle has arrived, the gov[ernmen]t have also sent one, so we shall be able to organize things properly. The new one has a sight like yours on a gov[ernmen]t rifle.

I started this letter in the evening before going up to the

trenches to lay out a new communication trench. This is exactly what happened. We left, my Colonel and I, at 9.30pm.

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4 [contd.]

Whilst we were tapping out the trench, the Bosches sent three salvos of shrapnel over us. We finished our job and inspected a new front line trench. We left the trenches at about 11pm and got back to billets. As soon as we got back, we heard that the Bosches had been shelling hard again, and the senior officer was hit and [f.6r] several men. So I had to toddle back and take charge and we were shelled lots more, fortunately no more casualties but here I am at 3am this lovely summer morning, damn cold, with the air full of the smell of dead Bosches, and wondering when the Bosches are going to begin again. Any one who lifts his head above the parapet gets shot at once, and we all have periscopes. You can imagine in what a good humour I am and how I love the Bosches and the Probosches this lovely summer morning. This blot was caused by a sudden explosion which I thought was a bomb but some idiot had left some flares on top of our parapet and a bullet struck one and it exploded with a loud bang. I wish you [f.7r] could picture the scene to yourself. The men all wrapped up in great coats the utter desolation of the scene nothing else but dead trees and the ground ploughed up by shells, the stink. Every one is dog tired as the Batt[alion] works all night. I am sending this letter to Dorothy who will pass it to you as I cannot write much having to send the letter in to catch the post.”;

Letter from A.Howell to Dorothy Samuel, 28 Jun 1915;  
photographic negative

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|---|--|-------------------|
| 5 | Correspondence to Dorothy, including a letter from A.Howell [?] to Mrs Samuel, Dec 1915  | Jul-Dec 1915      |
| 6 | Correspondence to Dorothy, including a note from the Brigadier General, General Staff, IVth Corps, to the Forty Seventh Division asking that “you will convey to Major Samuel, 1/3rd London Regiment, the Corps Commander’s appreciation of the excellent report and sketches sent in by him showing the situation at the Hairpin”, 2 Jan [1916], a letter from A.Howell [?] to Mrs Samuel, 9 Jan 1916 | Jan-Jun 1916      |
| 7 | Correspondence to Dorothy, including telegrams informing her that Fred Samuel had been taken to hospital after being hit in the knee by shrapnel, Sep 1916   | Jul-Sep, Dec 1916 |
| 8 | Correspondence to Dorothy including:<br>a letter for 21 Feb enclosing a pressed flower,<br>a letter 23 Feb enclosing “the menu and the public effusion of one of the men, the partridges were taken by their very own poacher”. The enclosed address was entitled “The Company’s Welcome”:<br>“We are pleased to welcome.<br>Two of the Fighting and Thirds<br>Who have fought so bravely              | Jan-Jun 1917      |

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8 [contd.]

Against the German herds  
 Before the war they called you  
 Sat'day night Fusiliers  
 But you proved your worth  
 Despite people's sneers  
 As early as Neuve Chapelle  
 You showed you were brave  
 And in May at Festubert  
 Our line you helped to save  
 And though your casualties  
 They were very many  
 Yet again at Loos  
 You were as good as any  
 Some time with the Ghurkus  
 You fought side by side  
 Until the Meerut left France and,  
 With France, London's Pride  
 1916 did begin  
 To 56 you came  
 And with them also  
 You have made your name  
 Gommecourt and the Somme  
 Leuze Wood and Les boeufs  
 At all these places  
 You have proved your worth  
 While the've Battalions like yours  
 England need not fear  
 And we're proud to name as friends  
 Third London Fusiliers";  
 and a letter for 5 Apr in which Fred Samuel laments the  
 "frightful waste of men, material and time it all is, all  
 devoted to distruction when it should all be devoted to  
 production" enclosing a brightly coloured paper badge  
 and pin with a picture of an oasis

9

Correspondence to Dorothy, including:  
 a letter of 11 Jul enclosing a programme from the Bow  
 Bells, the 56<sup>th</sup> London Divisional Concert Party;  
 a letter of 22 Jul with a four-leafed clover;  
 carbon copy of a letter from [Dorothy] to Redcliffe, 1  
 Aug 1917:

Jul-Dec 1917

"Will you please find out all you can about the  
 Jewish Regiment which is to be formed. I know nothing and  
 am afraid of it, as the best Jews are already dead or in the  
 Army. As soon as I saw the notice in The Times I knew Fred  
 would be keen and he has written:

'I suppose it is a political necessity, in any case, if  
 there has to be one I think I should like to get it though it  
 would be a far harder job than my present one.'  
 He has written to his uncles about it and Sir Marcus Samuel  
 rang me up this morning and says he knows nothing but thinks  
 it a mistake. Personally I feel it means a huge sacrifice, and if  
 one is only to be in command of riff raff, is it worth it?

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9 [contd.]

If there had been a Jewish Regiment before, it would have been a different think, it looks as if these men could only be fit for a Labour Battalion at the best.

Will you write to me as soon as you can, in case you write direct to Fred, his address is 1/3rd Battalion, London Regiment, BEF.

In making any enquiries you will not of course mention his name, it is very probable that even if he should volunteer for it, he would not be allowed to transfer.

I feel very worried about it, as am regarding it from a purely selfish point of view, what a soul torment dual nationality is."

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| 10 | Correspondence to Dorothy, including a letter of 25 Jan containing a pressed flower  | Jan 1918              |
| 11 | Correspondence to Dorothy from Egg Buckland, Devon, Southampton and France and then with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Tel el Kebir, with pressed flowers and ferns in a letter of Dec 1918  | May-Dec 1918          |
| 12 | <p>Correspondence to Dorothy from Palestine and Egypt, including:</p> <p>two black and white photographs, one of the camp at Tel el Kabir and the other a group photograph of officers;</p> <p>carbon copy of a letter, with manuscript annotations by Fred Samuel, to General [blank], 7 Feb 1919:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"I have been thinking over your very kind offer. The position is that I feel I must get home as soon as possible: both my own health and family affairs necessitate this, but I should very much like to join the OETA as I think my knowledge of the Men of the Country and the experience I have had in dealing with large numbers, may be of use in administration. If in two months time I could write out and there was anything open, I think I would be glad to try and help.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">As far as I am concerned myself, the question of seniority does not trouble me, but I have to consider the amour-propre of my people who perhaps would feel offended if a person of my standing were in a very subordinate job. This might be got over by going as a learner.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I have put in an application to go home as soon as possible. I hope when you come here on Tuesday that you will be able to spare me a few minutes, or I should be glad to come to Jerusalem for a few days to look at the work."</p> | Feb-Apr, Oct-Dec 1919 |
| 13 | <p>Army Pay Office transmitting a cheque to Lieutenant Fred Samuel for service, 1 Sep 1902;</p> <p>Correspondence from Fred Samuel to Dorothy, 1937, 1939-40, 1946: the correspondence in 1939 is from Alexandria, Haifa and Jerusalem;</p> <p>Envelope containing medal ribbons and clothes fasteners;</p>  | 1902-80               |

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- 13 [*contd.*] Telegram of condolence to Dorothy Samuel on the death of Fred Samuel, 1951;  
Correspondence, list of archives and an article relating to the Anglo-Jewish archives, 1980;  
Biographical details of Fred Samuel;  
Transcripts of some correspondence for 1918-19
- 14 Ketubah for the marriage of Fred Samuel and Dorothy Salaman, 27 Oct 1909 and copy of marriage announcement in *The Times*;  
National Registration Act card for Dorothy Samuel;  
Two letters from Dennis Cohen to Dorothy Samuel, 7 Aug and May 1916;  
Letter Corporal E. Railes, L2 Ward, Military Hospital, Manchester, to Dorothy Samuel, 13 Jun 1917;  
Two letters from Daniel de Pass to Dorothy Samuel, 28 Jul and 9 Nov 1914;  
Correspondence from Euston Salaman to Dorothy Samuel, including a copy of a letter of 29 Sep 1915 concerning Fred Samuel:  

“I have been seeing a good deal of Fred the last day or two and though at first he looked a bit war worn and weary, now he looks fit and free from care and bullet proof. Howell told me to let everyone know that he has twice mentioned him in dispatches and has recommended him for the DSO. I understand he made a successful reconnaissances under peculiarly difficult and dangerous circumstances and all alone also that he dressed and brought in two badly wounded new under severe fire as they are particularly stingy with orders Howell wants all of you to know what he thinks of him and all which I heartily endorse.”;

 Letter from Fred Samuel to Euston and Betty Salaman, 16 Aug 1914;  
Letter in French
- 1909-17