

Box 7. Silence of Waiting



List of contents:

1. Envelope 1, diary entry by Alan Morgan – explaining his lucky charm from his girlfriend, Nan, has broken
2. Envelope 2, a letter informing Mrs Morgan that her son was missing in action
3. Envelope 3, a letter informing Mrs Morgan seven years later that they have found his body (Letters 1 – 3: *Tŷ Weindio / Winding House Museum*)
4. Envelope 4: letter from Mr Southey (*Amgueddfa ac Oriol Gelf Castell Cyfarthfa/ Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery*)
5. Photograph of Alan Morgan (*Tŷ Weindio / Winding House Museum*)
6. 2 trench whistles
7. 2 post cards, one with a Zappar Daddy Dearest

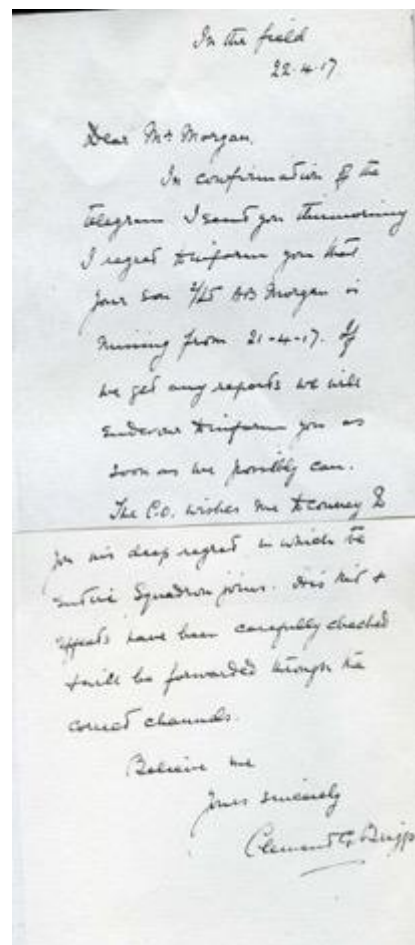
Documents included:

1. Diary entry by Alan Morgan about the charm:

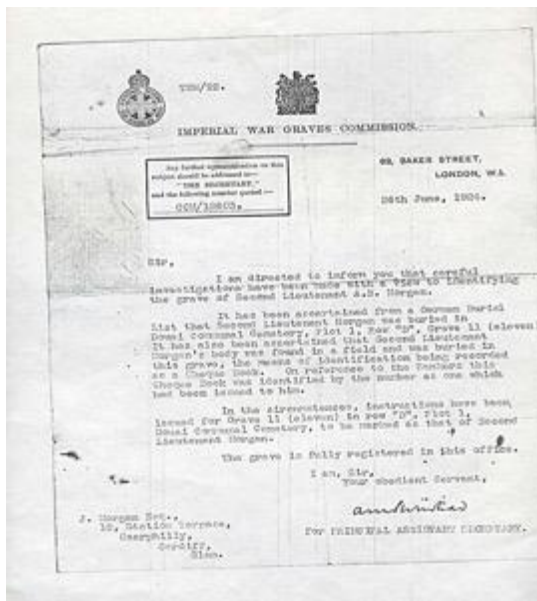
April 20th 1917 (Friday)

....."After my bath I had a slight mishap with my mascot – the charm broke. This was one of the things I least desired to happen because my intention was to allow it to remain around my neck until it could be removed by the dear hand that put it there – Nan's. I mustn't forget to get it repaired tomorrow and replaced as soon as possible. I mustn't forget, either, that tomorrow is not to pass by without my writing to Nan.".....

2. Letter 2 informing Mrs Morgan her son was missing in action:



3. Letter informing Mrs Morgan they have found her son's body.



4. Letter from Mr Southey (who founded the Merthyr Express) requesting information on his son, Major Harry Hartley Waite Southey



5. Photograph of Alan Morgan:



Key information:

The silence of waiting during WW1 was felt by everyone. Families waited for their loved ones to return, waited to see if they had survived, waited to see if they were the same person who left home.

In this box we have:

- **Trench whistles:** These represent the moment before the men went over the top of the trenches. They would have to wait, listening for the whistle to be blown, as the signal to climb up the trench ladders and into combat, not knowing if they would survive.
- **Lighter and box:** The box previously contained cigars. The lighter, is made from a bullet casing. People often smoked when waiting. Soldiers were given cigarettes, sometimes donated by members of the public, as a morale-boost. During down time, waiting for orders, soldiers filled their time making objects from things such as shell and bullet casings.
- **Letters:** Today we are fortunate to have instant communication across the globe with people via technological advancement of computers and mobile phones, but during WW1 people had to wait to hear from loved ones via letters.
Envelope 1 - In this diary entry, dated 20th April 1917, Alan Morgan writes about a charm which has broken. It was given to him by his girlfriend called Nan. Sometimes families were unaware that their son had a girlfriend, so if they were declared missing in action, or killed, the families would not know to inform the girlfriend. The letters just stopped, and as in this case, the girlfriend would never know what happened.
Envelope 2 - The letter is addressed to Mrs Morgan, Alan's mother. Alan Morgan went 'missing in action' just a day after his diary entry. His mother had to just wait for further news to find out if her son was alive or dead.
Envelope 3 – The letter is addressed to Alan's mother, dated 24th June 1924. 7 years after she was first informed that he was missing, she is finally told they have located her son's body. Mrs Morgan had to wait all that time for news of her son. She was not alone with this agony of waiting; many thousands of people were in the same position, some never finding out what happened to their loved ones.
Envelope 4 – A letter from Mr Southey, to another soldier, requesting information about his son Major Harry Hartley Waite Southey. He is desperately trying to find out about his son's last moments before he died: waiting for information.
- **Postcard** – Written by a little girl, waiting for her father to return. Sometimes they had to wait years. Children were born whilst fathers were at war.

Zappar code:

Download the Zappar app on a smart phone or tablet. Hover over the code below to watch a 2 minute animation about Gallipoli



Box 7. Silence of Waiting: questions



1. What do you think box was used for?
2. What do you think is inside the box now?
3. Carefully take the contents out of the box and lay the envelopes out in order 1-4.

3. What are objects are in this box?
4. What is the lighter made of?
5. Who made it and when do you think they would have made it?
6. When would the whistle have been blown?
7. How do think it felt waiting for it to be blown?



8. In envelope 1, Alan Morgan is concerned about his mascot/ lucky charm breaking - given to him by his girlfriend Nan. Why?
9. Envelope 2: How do you think Mrs Morgan felt to receive this letter? Do you think Nan would be told?
10. In envelope 3: How many years have passed since letter 2 was written?
11. How do you think Mrs Morgan felt waiting so long for news? How do you think Mrs Morgan felt, finally finding out?
12. In envelope 4: Why is Mr Southey trying to find information about his son?
13. Who are the post cards from?

Suggested box combinations

- Box 2 Silence of Mourning
- Box 6 Silence of the Aftermath of War
- Box 11 Silence of Surveillance
- Box 13 Silence of Religion – tea and sympathy
- Box 14 Silence of Surplus Women

Suggested Activities

- **Start Stop Game:** To experience the feeling of waiting for a command – give the group the task of having to run or move from one point to another at the sound of the whistle. They have to wait in silence and when it is blown, they can move. When they hear it again they must stop. Sustain this for 5 minutes. Discuss with the group how it felt waiting for the whistle.
- **No technology for 1 week:** Give the group the task of not using mobile phones for a week. To communicate with each other, they have to write letters, which they post in a school post box but have to wait for a week to receive them. Write a diary for the week and share the experience of the experiment in class at the end.
- **Create a poem based on the experience of waiting.**

Caring for the box after use

- Please place the letters back in the correctly numbered envelopes
- Carefully place objects back in the box
- If there is a problem with the Zappar code, please let H4A know