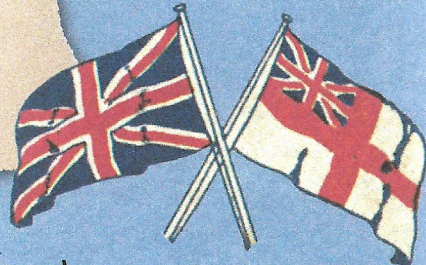




# An Officer!

## Boxing Day 1916



**T**he most amazing thing. Another Christmas miracle. I am being sent on leave (my first official leave since joining the Army) and I am to be trained as an officer. **Me - a real officer and a gentleman!**

My commanders have been very impressed by me. They say I keep a cool head and a strong heart. I have one big worry. I've heard that black men cannot be officers in the British Army. I've looked it up - this is what I found:

14. These officers are subject to recall to Army Service in a time of national emergency, and become subject to military law in the circumstances mentioned in s. 175 (10) of the Army Act.

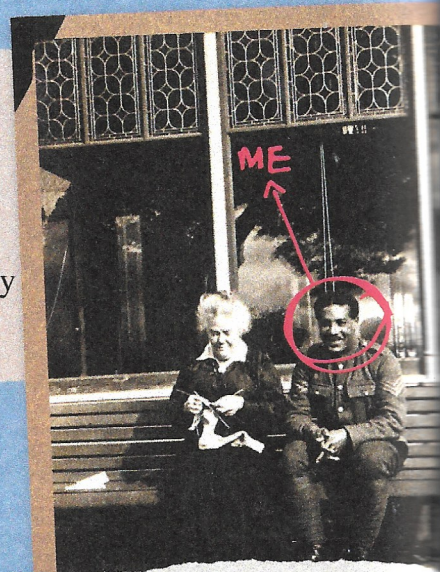
15. The Special Reserve of Officers is a branch of the Reserve of Officers established by Royal Warrant (a). This Reserve of Officers is designed to ensure that all units, services and departments of the regular forces shall be complete in officers on mobilization; to make good the wastage which will occur in the regular forces in war, and to provide officers for special reserve units. Militia officers received commissions in this reserve when the militia was transferred to the Special Reserve in 1908 (b).

Commissions in the Special Reserve of Officers are given to qualified candidates who are natural born or naturalised British subjects of pure European descent.

16. In the Cavalry, Royal Field and Garrison Artillery, Royal Engineers, Postal Section, Motor Cyclist Section, Foot Guards, Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps and Army Veterinary Corps such officers are borne supplementary to those corps; in the North or South Irish Horse, King Edward's Horse (The King's Oversea Dominions Regiment), the Antrim or Cork R.G.A., the Royal Anglesey or Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers they are borne on the strength of those units, and in the infantry they are borne on the strength of the Special Reserve battalion, or supplementary to a regiment.

17. Except in the case of candidates who have previously served in the regular army all appointments are made on probation in the rank of subaltern. During the period of probation an officer is usually attached to a regular unit, and if he is reported upon favourably and passes the required examination he is confirmed

*A Commission in the Special Reserve of Officers published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1912.*



Visiting my brother



In my case, it seems they have thrown away the rule book. This could make me the first black officer in the British Army. Something for the record books! I'm off to officer training school in Scotland to train for my commission - and I will have a chance to see Edward. At last.





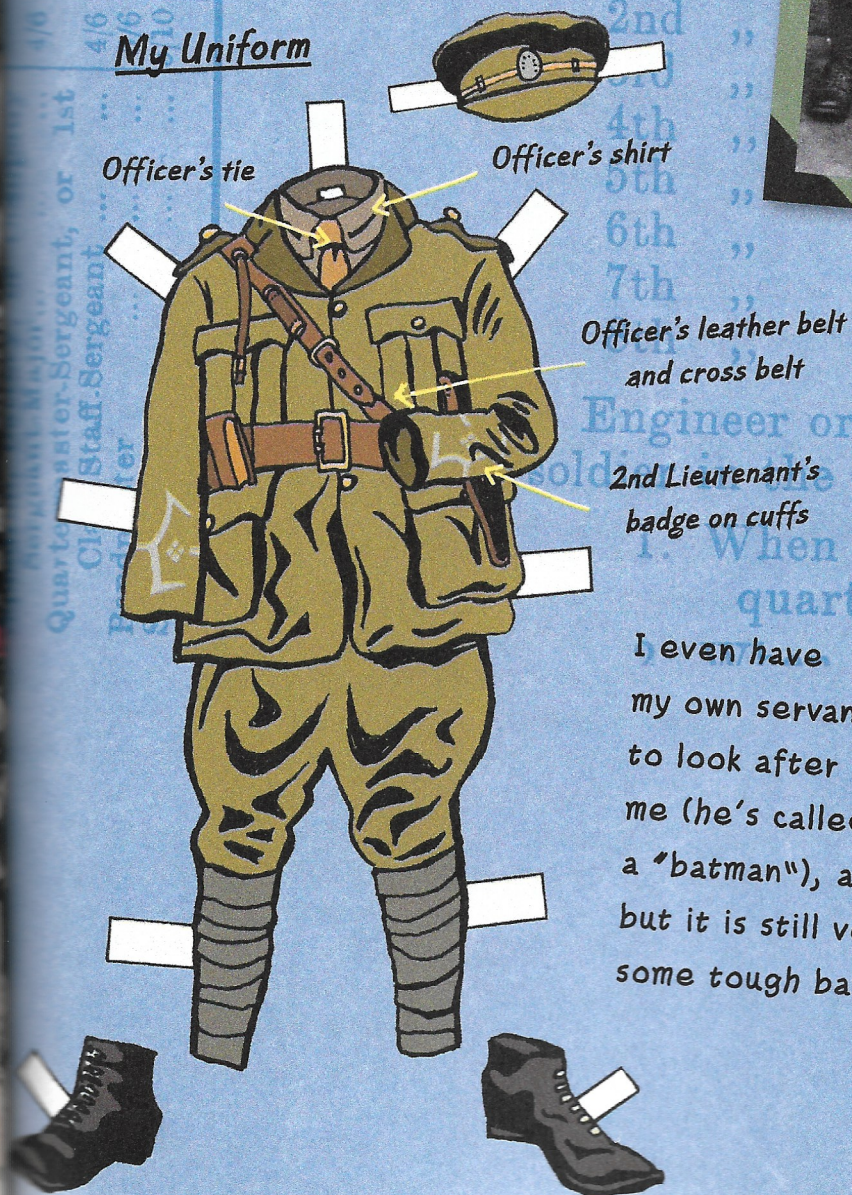
Despite military regulations forbidding "any negro or person of colour" being commissioned as an officer, I am now 2nd Lieutenant Walter Tull - and here I am in my new uniform.

## An officer at war

Imagine - me an officer with my old battalion! It is a very responsible job. I now have my men to look after and I work hard to keep their spirits up.

They seem to like me and I have a very good sergeant to help me.

## My Uniform



I even have my own servant to look after me (he's called a "batman"), and I have a bit more to eat, but it is still very, very hard work. There are some tough battles ahead. I pray I do well.