

Jonny Winkler was one of the first German soldiers to come to Obrestad in 1941. He came from Dorfmerkingen, a small town east of Stuttgart in Southern Germany, where the Winkler family was dominant in business and society. Jonny was resourceful, sociable and well liked, including by his fellow soldiers of the 978 Regiment.

A special friendship developed between Jonny, who was the regiment's cook and the telegraphist Herbert Tiller, who was also in the first group to be stationed at Obrestad. Although Herbert came from an ordinary working-class background, he was interested in both science and culture. Jonny and Herbert, among others in the group, shared a great admiration for the German illustrator and sculptor Wilhelm Lehmbruck (1881-1919), who is perhaps best known for his extreme melancholia.

Many long summer nights were spent in the basement of the lighthouse, where there was a radio and an opportunity to take a little break from the officers' otherwise strict regime. Once during the early summer of 1942, the soldiers found a wooden case washed up on the shore of the nearby beach, a few hundred yards from the lighthouse. In it lay some bottles of good Scotch whiskey, which had miraculously survived the journey across the North Sea. That evening there was a secret party in basement. It was an evening that neither Jonny nor Herbert would ever forget.

The following autumn, for undisclosed reasons, Herbert was reassigned to the East Front, where he died just before Christmas 1942.