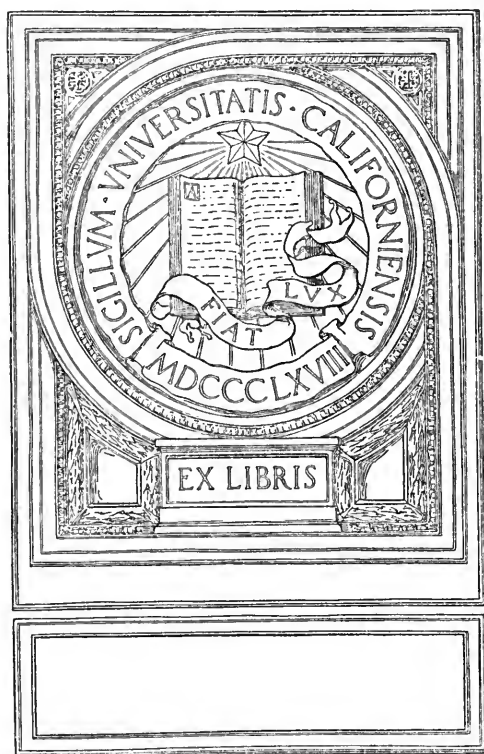


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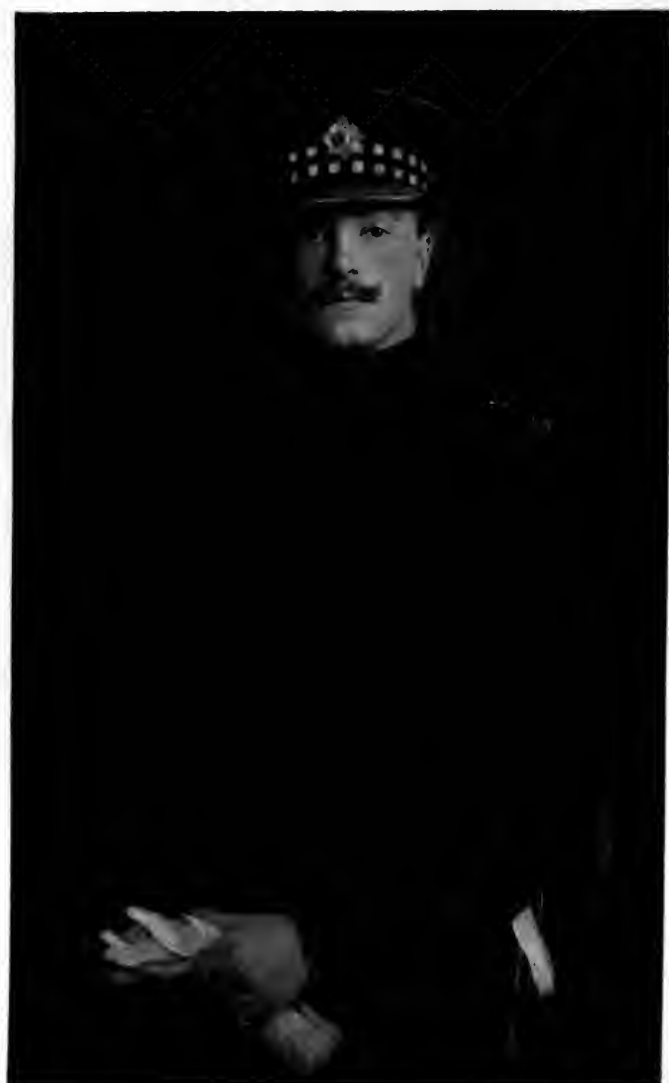












# LETTERS

WRITTEN FROM THE ENGLISH FRONT IN FRANCE  
BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1914 AND MARCH 1915

BY

CAPTAIN SIR EDWARD HAMILTON WESTROW HULSE, BT.  
2ND BATTN. SCOTS GUARDS



*Privately printed*

1916

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THE nature of these letters is clear at the first glance. They are simply a record of the earlier months of the war from the point of view of a young officer of the English Expeditionary Force. But they possess both interest and importance apart from the fact that in these months the first swift onrush of the Germans towards Paris was repulsed, and, perhaps, the issue of the whole war decided. They are written with accuracy because Edward Hulse, who was in the heart of the retreat from Mons, the turn and triumph of the Marne, and the beginning of the long station at the Aisne, rarely turns aside from the story of his own experiences; they are written with ease because, without exception, they were written to his mother without a thought of publication. The life of an officer at one or other of our varied fronts from the first disembarkation to the struggle at Neuve Chapelle, whether in billets, in hospital, at the base, or in the trenches, is here touched in with a convincing because unconscious hand, and with a fullness of detail that is invaluable.

The writer of these letters had a sense both of perspective and of humour,—without which all records are but as the dry bones of the events they chronicle. For example, the rapid and careless pen-sketches that describe the work of a night raid, the reception of a prisoner, the excitement of a sniping party, the confusion at Havre, and a dozen other incidents of that crowded half-year are every one of them admirable. But there is something else in these letters which is of even greater interest. Without hesitation it may be said that in the fourteen pages under the date December 28th we have the most keenly noted, vigorous and dramatic description that ever has or ever will be written of what from a psychological point of view has been the most extraordinary event

of the war,—the Christmas Truce of 1914. In its mere literary aspect it is as perfect as anything written from the front: and as a human document it is of even greater value.

No reader of this short autobiography,—for it is nothing less,—will fail to recognise the difference that distinguishes these Christmas letters from that first keen report of current gossip and opinion in London written from the Bachelors' Club on the eve of the war. The development that has taken place in the writer under the stress of a new and hard life of direct responsibility is clear in every line of them, and though, no doubt, it is typical of a similar growth in most of the junior officers at the front, there are probably few other cases in which this self-development has been recorded as continuously and as fully, and fewer still in which such a story has been unfolded in a series of letters to one recipient, almost every word of which could be and is here reproduced. Essentially, the man remains the same throughout. The letters begin with the free criticisms and soldier-like impatience of a young officer: they end on the same note with as clearly expressed an opinion of the unpatriotic influences at work in England. But the tale of work done between the writing of the two has not only given him the better right to speak, but has added weight to the form in which his protest is moulded. He writes the first letter as any Guardsman full of the spirit of his corps might have written it. In his last long letter his estimate of the fighting value of the as yet untried and roughly disciplined Canadians shows how far he had gone in the power of summing up a man's essentials at a glance.

But there will be many who will read these pages with an eye to the development neither of the soldier nor of the writer; many to whom the value of truthful observation and an unfailing record of it will be of less interest and account than the self-revelation of the personal character of Edward Hulse himself. Of this it is almost unnecessary to write here. Those who in the first instance will read this small volume will have known him personally. Those into whose hands it will come in later years will be dull if they need more to be told them of Edward

Hulse than is suggested in the letters in this book. He was a man of much charm and of many friends. In the hour of trial he developed into a resourceful and capable officer to whom his men were devoted. Having done his work steadily up to the last minute, he was killed at Neuve Chapelle. His commanding officer fell severely wounded, and Edward Hulse, after making his way across to him in the open and doing what he could to help him, was killed in rejoining his men.

These letters, though they contain not a line of the introspection which so often characterises messages from the front, are his real memorial. Perhaps, in years to come, after the dust and turmoil of the war has died down, of those who lay this little volume down there will be the greater number who will do it with the thought in their minds that a man who is indeed a judge of men once expressed. He read but one of these letters, packed with incident and picturesque detail, redolent of the very clay and tense life of the trenches, and full of exact and valuable information : but his only comment was, "I should like to have known that man."

PERCEVAL LONDON.





*SIR EDWARD HAMILTON WESTROW HULSE, Bt., was the only child of Sir Edward Henry Hulse, Bt., of Breamore House, Hants, and the Hon. Lady Hulse, only daughter of the first Lord Burnham. He was born at 26 Upper Brook St., Westminster, on August 31st, 1889, and was christened at Breamore. He succeeded his father in 1903. As a child he attended Mr. Marcon's school at Beaconsfield, and afterwards went to Mr. A. Max-Wilkinson's at Warren Hill, Eastbourne, Sussex. In 1903 he entered Mr. R. S. Kindersley's house at Eton, and afterwards matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1907, taking his degree in 1912.*

*After a period of training with the Coldstream Guards, he was given a commission in the 1st Battn. Scots Guards on March 8th, 1913, and went to the front at Mons with it in August 1914. In November he was transferred to the 2nd Battn., and remained in it until his death.*

*Captain Sir Edward Hulse was killed at Neuve Chapelle on March 12th, 1915, and a tablet recording the manner of his death was put up to his memory in the Cathedral by the citizens of Salisbury. This tablet was dedicated by the Bishop of Salisbury on March 11th, 1916.*



BACHELORS' CLUB, PICCADILLY,  
*Sunday, (Aug. 2 : 1914).*

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just got up for few hours. Lunched and went to Tower afterwards, where I found them all very busy, and mobilization machinery complete and ready to be set in motion at moment's notice.

Find general opinion is as follows:—Asquith, George and Churchill are in favour of intervention and whole-hearted support of France. Haldane and all the rest are against it, and are ready to work hard (with the power of Labour and Syndicalism and threat of national strikes, etc.) to get Asquith to climb down. Overwhelming opinion amongst the “man in the street,” that we must help France. It is not a question of national honour any longer, but of national welfare and actual life in the future. If we climb down (which is thought almost impossible, as it is completely unthinkable) then we must be done. Canada might join U.S.A., Australia set up on its own, anything, in short, might be the outcome of such a degrading performance. As you will see, abroad all socialists and syndicalists have regretted mobilization, but state that, as it is an accomplished fact, it is the duty of every man, etc.—in fact, patriotism. If we can't do the same, we had better go to bed!

Italy is a very big thing for France and for us, if only we get a move on. France can move the large number of troops held in S.E. on the Italian frontier to her Eastern German frontier, and thereby strengthen her lines. Mediterranean becomes virtually a British Sea, and Adriatic is easily bottled up. We are left free, as far as fleet is concerned, to look

after our own and France's interests in home waters. I believe that we now extend from Cromarty in the North to Dover, and are only waiting for the German ships to show their noses. If they do, we then ask them their business and where they are going, to which they probably would not reply, and then comes the fight. I doubt their leaving their harbours for some time, as they say they are not ready yet. If only we let our fleet carry on, we are all right, though the man-in-the-street in France, of course expects us to go the whole hog ! As far as the French authorities are concerned, they want our fleet, and would like a force also ; they don't want numbers ; ten boy Scouts and British flag is all that is wanted. The whole thing lies in the moral support and the fact of the British flag assisting on French soil. As a matter of fact, 120,000 or 160,000 troops from us at Maubeuge would mean a very real help to France, although people talk about our army as a drop in the ocean. At present, granted that Germany will violate the neutrality of Belgium, France must prolong and therefore weaken her lines to a certain extent.

There are only two ways of a flanking movement for Germany :—

I. By Sea ;

II. By Belgium.

The first we ought to be able to settle, the second we should be able to assist France very materially in preventing by the above mentioned force. For every man we send over there (apart from the moral support which it means) Germany must tell off so many more to face us. France would be able to contract her lines by that amount, and therefore strengthen them. That, taken into consideration with the large forces set free in the south of France by Italy, means a big thing for France and a very heavy blow for Germany.

Churchill has leaped up by bounds in popularity, and as his action and the war-like spirit is compatible with his popularity and personal advancement, I imagine he is to be trusted to do the right thing absolutely. There are fears of his resigning to-morrow, if things go wrong in the Cabinet and in the House.

As you know, they say that Grey has been playing the double game, threatening Germany with all our forces thrown against her, and holding out to France, at the same time no hopes of help. He must decide soon, and is at present for climbing down. Prevalent opinion is that the Stock Exchange closed three days too late, and that we have done everything three days too late. Why the devil we can't get our mobilization orders out, instead of talk, talk, talk and nothing done, goodness only knows. No one can any longer say that it is an aggressive action as everyone else has done it, and it would merely be precautionary ; we have not got the practice in handling big things that France and Germany have, and the sooner we get a move on, the better prepared we shall be for being in the right place at the right time, if events demand it, instead of putting in an appearance a fortnight late, as we probably should do.

Woolwich mobilized to-day, but we still remain on the old marshes. The mosquitoes have assembled in myriads, and are peculiarly poisonous, and very painful. Everything going well and in shipshape order there, and the Adjutant rather pleased with himself !

Carson and Bonar Law just dined here, next to me. The former determined and very serious, the latter rather flustered to look at. They say there will be a big scene in the House to-morrow, as war and peace-parties about equal. It makes one hot all over to think of the peace-at-any-price party being so strong at this juncture.

Probably things will have happened to modify or alter the gist of this letter by to-morrow.

Very best love, no time for more.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Large crowd just passed down Piccadilly cheering a French Tricolour !

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## RAMILLIES BARRACKS, ALDERSHOT,

12.8.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

We start to-night, about midnight, but do not know destination or anything yet.

The whole of the 2nd Division has gone, and the 4th Guards' Brigade went from London this morning. We only heard yesterday that ten or fifteen thousand troops are already over the Channel. Troops have been leaving here throughout the last two nights.

I have delivered myself of three 'eavy lectures to my platoon, on everything from the general situation, no quarter and discipline down to French money, etc. The Colonel's instructions as to behaviour for the battalion are "Towards all inhabitants kindness and a helping hand, towards all womankind, courtesy, but no intimacy."

Any message which you see fit to convey to Breamore, as a whole, please construct yourself, and tell them that I look to them to set an example in the matter of duty to their King and Country, whether at home or abroad.

Very best love and same to O. M. Tell her that the General is grand. Don't expect too frequent letters.

Ever your loving

TED.

*Left Aldershot, 4 a.m., August 12th, 1914.<sup>1</sup>*

*Farnborough,*

*Southampton,*

*Havre,*

*} 10 hours. Arrived midnight.*

*Rest Camp on heights above Harfleur. Aug. 13th. Left at 9 p.m.*

<sup>1</sup> *The notes here printed in italics are taken from a rough diary made by Capt. Sir Edward Hulse during his convalescence at Havre, to replace a diary lost by him during the retreat from Mons. They are printed, obvious slips excepted, as he wrote them.*

*Aug. 14th. Marched down to station and entrained at 3 a.m.; arrived at Rouen, 8 a.m. Then Amiens.*

*Aug. 15th. Albert, Arras, Cambrai. Tremendous reception. Embrace particularly good-looking girls, who load us with sweets, smokes, coffee, and souvenirs. Army arrives at detraining point without any badges, all given as souvenirs.*

*Aug. 15th. Detrain at Le Nouvion (through Le Cateau). 48 trains up to time, only one late. Marched to Boué. Billeting and practised route marches in great heat for four days. Lived in extreme luxury, and people did everything in their power for us.*

*Aug. 20th? Marched by Bergues, Barzy to Cartignies. Billeted and moved on by Dompierre, Dourlers to Eclaibes. From Eclaibes struck big Paris-Maubeuge road, and marching through Maubeuge at 10.30 p.m., struck half-right (N.E.) to Grand Reng (Belgium), and billeted after very long and tiring 22 mile march.*

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O.A. SERVICE,  
20.8.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

All well and flourishing, pretty hot and grand sweat every day. Nothing definite allowed in this letter at all, but will write as soon as we are allowed to send news.

We can do with all the news you can give us and have received a post already.

We are going to celebrate Bill's coming of age to the best of our ability, especially as it coincides with another officer's birthday as well.

Very best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

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*Aug. 24th. First heard sound of guns this morning and were hurried out at 4 a.m. to position between, and just south of line, Mons-Binche. Dug good trenches and heard second Division being hammered on left near Mons, and the French being hammered on our right; these were the two French Territorial Divisions which fell back in disorder and completely uncovered our right flank. (The Generals were cashiered subsequently by Joffre, I believe.) Orders arrived to retire and we only realised afterwards that we had been in a tight place, and if the Germans had known our small numbers, they could have got at us. This was the Northernmost point which we reached.*

*Aug. 25th. We retired (yesterday) round Maubeuge by N. and W. sides, and billeted in La Longueville. Marched to Dompierre to billet, through St. Remy. No room for S.G. so we went to Taisnières. Billeted in dark with my 4 C.Q.M.S. when two Frenchmen reported 50 German cavalry in village of Noyelles and nothing between us. Part of our transport came in at that moment; luckily had field ready for them; got them in, and together with drivers, etc., got together 15 men; had all cigarettes, etc., put out, and took up position on either side of road with 200 yds. field of fire and awaited battalion; Germans never came on, as we found out from refugees that they were far too busy with the liquor in Noyelles.*

*Aug. 26th. On to Grand Fayt, Grand Debout and Erruart, billeting in Fesmy.*

*Aug. 27th. Went out and took up rearguard position along Wassigny-Oisy road; no fighting, and fell back on Etreux, where my Coy. was rearguard of whole Division. We had to block all roads till 42nd had fallen back through us, and information came to us that a German cavalry Bde. had got round and were in Forest of Nouvion on our flank. As soon as our retiring column got on to heights above Etreux, after leaving latter and blowing up bridge, the enemy shelled the road Etreux-Jérusalem from about Dorengt, and their dismounted cavalry came up through corn and maize to within 600 yds. and fired on us. Only two men of 42nd and two of ours wounded. (My rearguard, first blood, Munsters, 170 turned up only.) Line of retirement then followed.*



*Aug. 28th. By Guise cross-country to Nouvion le Comte, Danizy.*

*Aug. 29th. La Fère, Fressancourt, Missancourt, St. Gobain.*

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(ST. GOBAIN) 29.8.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

In very best of health and great form, as also is Bill. Have had our baptism of shrapnel and rifle fire. Unfortunately we are allowed to say no more.

Please ask F. L. Smith, 12 Burlington Gardens (Albany Cigarette people) to send me twice a week a box of 25 of the cigarettes which they supply me with generally. The address you know :—

On Active Service,

c/o G.P.O.

Have had no letter from anyone yet, have you received three from me ?

Very best love to all at Breamore.

Ever your loving

TED.

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*Aug. 30th. St. Gobain, Septvaux, Coucy, (Allemand. Aug. 31st.) Soissons, Vauxbuin.*

*(Sep. 1.) Left for Villers-Cotterets, La Ferté Milon and dug ourselves in just south of latter for night, but moved on at 1.30 a.m. (Sep. 2) to Neufchelles and Chambry. Heard we were going on to Meaux and Fontainebleau, but (Sep. 3) struck off S.E. by forest of Meaux to La Ferté and Jouarre. Peckham bought jug for company. Billeted whole battalion in Benedictine Monastery which had been dismantled completely two months before owing to threat of State taking over. Room for 2,500 men in building. (Sep. 4.)*

*Marched to Coulommiers, where we did ourselves proud for 12 hours, but had alarm at midnight, when Uhlands rode full pelt into — outposts. They lost their heads and fired all over the place, and therefore only took few prisoners (4 and killed 3) when by lying quiet and letting them come on they might have bagged a lot.*

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(COULOMMIERS) 4.9.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just arrived for 24 hours' rest. We have fairly been moving, and great heat and tired feet are the chief inconveniences. However, have never been fitter and feel first rate. All the officers of the Battalion are in the best of health. Our men have fought d—d well under trying circumstances and the discipline in the battalion has been outstanding.

The general opinion is that we have done a difficult and very big thing and the French are (rightly) grateful beyond all power of expression. More I may not say.

Very best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

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*(Sep. 5.) By Pezarches and Ormeaux to Nesles ; (outposts). (Sep. 6.) At Nesles the turning point was reached and we took the offensive. Went by Voinsles. At Plessis (Sep. 7) the Coldstream got hammered a bit, as they went forward before our guns were in position. We were well shelled, and one burst on road close to B. Coy. officers lunching. Peck was hard at it with vin rouge, and did not even remove bottle from his mouth. First saw German infantry in motor lorries at distance of about three miles. We shelled them, also shelled farm with howitzers ; first shell landed in farm and*

about 50 German cyclists came rushing out and started pedalling down road for all they were worth. Saw this through my glasses plainly. Meantime we had left trenches which we had dug under shell-fire, when Coldstream had to fall back, and continued our advance, by Pressbucy, point 135, Chevru, Choisy, (Sep. 8th, La Frenois) and La Ferté Gaucher to Bellot. (Sep. 9th, Basseville) In the advance we started with the French 5th Army on our right, then our 1st Army, 2nd, then French 6th and 7th Armies on our left, near Compiègne and Amiens.

About this time, owing to defective French cavalry scouting, we got shelled descending through a village in column of route. Coldstream had a man badly hit, and he was taken back 400 yds. and attended to on stretcher in middle of road. (D—d silly thing to do.) After a minute or two, another shell came and landed plumb on this unfortunate devil; killed him, blew stretcher to bits, killed two stretcher-bearers and wounded two more and the Coldstream M.O. badly. This happened within 15 yds. of seven of us officers sitting by the road; luckily it was faulty burst.

We now began to see real signs of retreat. Dead horses and men (German, French and English) and abandoned limbers. All villages looted, and most noticeable thing was enormous quantity of broken bottles. Went by Sablonnières to Hondevilliers. Saw composite regiment (Household cavalry, etc.) for first time. They retired in evening through my platoon on outpost.

(Sep. 10.) From Hondevilliers across Marne at Nogent l'Artaud and by Charly to Bouresches, Belleau and Latilly. (Sep. 11.) When we got to Latilly the French 5th Army passed across our front from right to left, and our complete Army moved right-handed (eastwards) to tap the right of a German Army which had been heavily hammered by the French at Chalons. But they fell back too quickly for us, and their line being reconstructed and no flank open to attack, we turned North again to the Aisne and pursued their forces retiring on to the Aisne.

Heard of big German reverse at Chalons and whole Army moved hurriedly eastwards. French 5th Army crossed our front by night. Moved by La Croix, Nanteuil, Bruyères (Sep. 12) to Fère en Tardenois, eastwards, when movement northwards was resumed.

*From here we found ground foul, doorsteps and even inside of houses fouled on purpose by Germans. By Mareuil, Chéry, Mont Notre Dame and Bazoches skirting Fismes to Courcelles. All this time battle of Aisne was preparing, but we did not know whether Germans were only preparing rearguard action, in order to save their supplies at Soissons (it had been their advanced base and contained heavy siege-guns for Paris), or whether it was a big position.*

*Sept. 13th. Turned N.E. to Villers-en-Prayères and crossed the Aisne at Bourg to Œuilly, over an aqueduct, with two shell holes in it (the bridge had been very effectually destroyed by French in their original retreat). So little did our senior officers suspect what was in front that we had orders to march to a place behind the present German position, which we have not yet got to! (Oct. 5th.)*

*We advanced over the high ground among Turcos and Spahis above Œuilly in artillery formation about 6 p.m. under shrapnel fire.*

*Houldsworth killed, and Jack Corbett had his pack torn clean from his back. Later in the evening Jamie Balfour and several machine gunners wounded. Billeted after retiring  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, in Paissy (just to north of Œuilly).*

*Sept. 14th. Advanced with same orders, namely to march to place several miles ahead, in heavy mist. Had only gone  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles when we found we were in a big fight. Deployed and the big fight of the Aisne began. In the mist the Germans allowed us to take the apparently strong line of hills above Vendresse. We advanced over them into the valley beyond, and found ourselves up against the position from which they have not moved since. As the mist cleared off, we retired on to the line of heights above Vendresse, from 2 m. E. of Beaulne to 2 m. E. of Vendresse, where we hung on till the 19th, when relieved by 6th Division.*

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18.9.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Have not been able to send a letter for 9 days. Am now writing in an old cave (stone quarry) and it is the fifth day of this battle—continuous. I cannot say where or anything about casualties, except that

Carpenter-Garnier, young "Bones" and Thornhill are killed. Bill and self well as can be. The very hot weather during our retreat from Belgium, has given place to cold, wind and sheets of rain, but thank goodness we have got fairly dry to-day.

Thanks ever so much for your wire on 31st, received by me on 14th, and for foot-grease, pipes, tobacco and cigarettes. They arrived when we had absolutely nothing left, and only one box of matches amongst our officers and men, B Coy. (about 200 of us). We split open cartridges and use the cordite as matches now.

I cannot understand your not having received a letter. I have sent five, but heard that 400 bags of our mails had to be burnt, which may account for it. George and John Manners are in the 2nd Division and quite separate from us, so probably had facilities which we had not.

You evidently did not get my letter telling you of our baptism of rifle and shrapnel fire; we got it first on ——— and have had it intermittently ever since up to the 14th; on that day the genuine battle began for us, and we have been shelled all day and every day, and some of the nights ever since. We are entrenched within about a 1000 yards of each other and get in with the rifle now and then at small parties. I can't say anything definite, as otherwise you will not get this letter, owing to censorship. Our men are grand, and the Germans are more uncomfortable with us in front than with anyone else.

During our strategical retirement we did ten days' big marching, and the Battalion stuck it better than anyone else we saw, owing, I think, to discipline. The Colonel is slightly wounded, as also several officers.

The most unpleasant work I have had so far is being escort to our guns, which of course draw all fire, including that of the German heavy siege gun, which was meant for the siege of Paris, which they were so certain of reaching!

I have acted throughout as officers' cook and messman for my company, and on the few occasions when we have been able to get both eggs and milk the result of my cooking has been praised to the skies! I have also (owing to knowledge of French, as the Colonel told me) acted

as billeting-officer since the fourth day after our arrival. It entails going on ahead of the Brigade and seeing to the lodging or bivouacking of the Battalion, and commandeering all eggs, butter, milk, etc., possible. It is no easy matter, and when one arrives about 11 p.m. dead tired and pitch dark, with rain, it requires an inordinate control of the temper!

The most welcome presents are cigarettes and chocolate, none of which exist any longer in N.E. of France.

Please send me out another pair of regulation puttees (from Cater, Pall Mall), mine are in shreds now. We all look very sweet sights and have not seen water, except to drink, for 7 days, but the rain has done a good deal; no clothes off for the last 10 days, and of course no billeting, and no sleeping-bags, etc.

The German atrocities cannot be exaggerated, there is nothing they will not descend to.

Give my very best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

*Rain began on 10th Sept. and practically ceaseless up to 20th. Trenches one to seven or eight inches deep in mud and water; very cold at night.*

*Practically ceaseless bombardment from 13th onwards, with frequent day and night attacks, especially latter. Germans wasted hundreds of men in these attacks. Prisoners very thin and haggard, and complained of hunger and fatigue.*

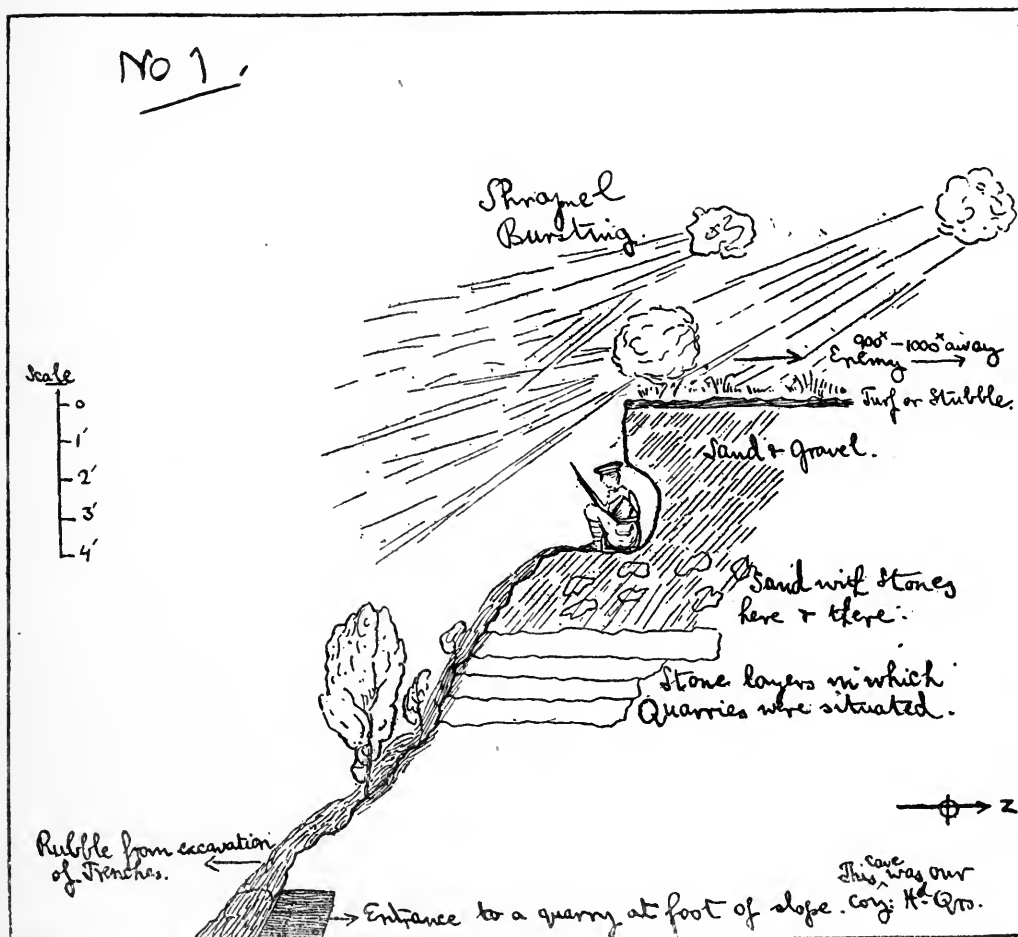
*Brasserie de Cidre et de Boisson,  
Victor Bredel,*

*45 Rue de la Republique 45 (Havre).*

*The second day of the battle of the Aisne (Sept. 14th) was far the hotter as regards shell fire, as trenches were in many places not yet perfected and they got several of their big howitzer shells amongst us as well as shrapnel.*

# THE TRENCHES OF THE AISNE

(From drawings by Sir Edward Hulse)



The slope in which were situated the quarries, was about 30 feet high, and partially wooded, with small trees and bushes. In places it was almost sheer. This slope is marked A in the accompanying section (see next page) of the whole hill and valley. Our trenches were hastily dug out, and men, by squatting, as shown on this sectional sketch, were absolutely safe from shrapnel, however close it burst. At times it burst so close that one could feel the heat. Many bad bursts and faulty timing of fuses were noticed.

While in these trenches they did not attack us while their shrapnel had got the exact range. The men, when standing up, could fire with ease to the front, though the field of fire in some places was not more than 60 yds. !

No 2

Direction of enemy  
on opposite hill  
with 3 rows of  
trenches in tiers,  
1000' distant.

Direction of  
big shells.

about  
250 feet from  
level of valley

Saddle

1st line, cohes etc  
down at foot of hill  
a few horses killed here by big howitzers.

Supports.



100 50 25 0 100 200 300 400 500

Approximate scale, in yards.

A. Only top half of slope A is shown in the other sketch.

D. Is road running along whole length of our lines, between ridges A and B.

C. Section of heights above VENDRESSE, just N. of the Aisne, which 1st Brigade held during the first 5 days of the battle, until relieved by 6th Division. We rested for 30 hours and then relieved 5th Brigade 2 miles west of this position.

E. Supports on very steep slope, quite safe from heavy shells, which, if they carried the top, were bound to go on to the foot of the hill or even beyond.

Observation during the day was done from a haystack just in front of our line, and by night by observation posts, pushed out about 150-200 yds. in front of the trenches, overlooking the slope towards the enemy.

Our guns were on positions on a range of hills behind us; between them and us, in the valley, the village of VENDRESSE got well plastered by the Black Boys; one hit the only water supply, which took about six hours fixing up again.

Parties marched down with water-bottles after dusk, when shell fire had slackened.

All rations, etc., were worked by night, as no movement possible in most parts of trenches by day.

The large majority of big shells cleared our trenches and burst in valley behind us, in and around VENDRESSE. Hospital had great luck, and was never actually hit.



*But provided that they did not actually strike the line of trenches we were all right. A few men in the trenches were hit by stray bits from shells bursting between points A and B (see sketch No. 2), especially by bursts on slope B—D, which easily reached us in trenches at A, tho' most of it was either mud or stones displaced by the burst.*

*In one place the hill from trenches down into the valley was so steep, that all first line transport was practically safe from the big shells, and the damage done to a few horses (Black Watch cookers) was entirely due to their being too far out away from the foot of the hill.*

*Brigade headquarters were in a cave (stone quarry) half way down slope C (see sketch No. 2).*

*All roads and paths were 6 in.-9 in. deep in mud, and in places over 1 ft. deep.*

*First two days no great coats and few oilskins. Incessant rain and very muddy trenches, in some places several inches of mud and water in trenches themselves. Men did most sleeping by day, and night attacks were frequent. Enemy did not take on a day attack with infantry.*

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21.9.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Have received all your letters in two batches and all parcels, for which ever so many thanks. The great thing in sending welcome little parcels is that they should be small and frequent rather than large at long intervals, as we have all we can carry as regards weight on our backs. Please send one thick vest and one pair short drawers (thick, and only down to above the knee) at once; also the same a fortnight afterwards.

And now for any little news I can give you.

After six days' fighting on the same spot night and day, we have been relieved and are billeted in a village just in rear for 48 hours' rest. We have had brisk time in foul weather, and are well and fit

after it. No wounded officers of ours are bad, and the Colonel will rejoin very shortly (slight wound in hand, chest (scratch) and foot). I am conscious of having left out the date of our baptism of fire in my last letter, it was the 28th of August, and since then we have pretty well been at it all along. However, the fight of the last six days has cut out anything we have seen before, and French, who motored through here to-day, called on the Brigadier, and told him specially to compliment our Brigade on having done a big thing under trying circumstances, and in the most advanced position of the allied front.

Posts (except actually during a fight when transport must necessarily be well in rear) are frequent now that we are advancing, and letters are appreciated more than anything, and waited for with feverish anxiety. Write as many as you like.

I am very sorry indeed about George, and only hope that he will turn up all right, which he ought to, provided the wound is slight.

People think the German atrocities are exaggerated, I believe. I will now give you an absolutely authentic instance of what they do. This is a true story of ——'s death. He was wounded, and together with some of our men and the Black Watch, and, I believe, a few Coldstream, had crawled into a pit to avoid further fire. The Germans came up and fired on this party of our men (35-40 in all) and all wounded. —— and a Black Watch officer put up a handkerchief as a signal to them, upon which the Germans walked in and shot the lot point blank. Two men escaped,—and one of them was ours,—by feinting to be dead and crawling back by night to the lines; they had two wounds each. The rest, as I say, were butchered, although already incapacitated completely. Again, a Medical Officer, wounded, lay on the ground, and when Germans came up, he handed them his revolver, upon which they took it and shot him through both hands, and left him. He is now in England. Hundreds of other things I could tell you of the same incredible nature, so don't let anyone think that the stories one hears are mere exaggerations.

By-the-by, two Jaeger cholera-belts would be most acceptable.

Quite right of you to stop *Gun at Home and Abroad*, all luxurious expenses must cease at once.

Your story of Nicklen most amusing. Will you please send two sheets and two envelopes of foreign paper in every letter you send me, as no envelopes available.

Very best love.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—I am only writing to you at present, as no time for other letters. Much better to give you frequent news, and you can pass it on. E. H.

*Back to Œuilly, nominally for three days' rest, but only had thirty hours, broken by alarms, when we went out to Verneuil to relieve 6th Brigade, 2nd Division. I was carted out of our funk-holes there on the night of the 22nd.*

(NANTES) 27.9.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,<sup>1</sup>

Here I am at an overflow Base Hospital, living in great comfort, though not in too great luxury.

We are at Nantes, but may be moved at any time, and the fellows here with wounds in the arms or legs (that have healed) may be sent home for a bit, or may remain here. No one seems certain, and I believe it is all a question of clearing the Hospitals at the Base, on the sea; one has to be gradually shifted down, as there is room. All hospitals from Base to Firing-line are chock-a-block, and we have 700 cases here in French hospitals.

<sup>1</sup> Found at home on my return from France.—E. M. H.

I had bad dysentery for two days in the trenches (in which we were for nine days, with one day's respite) in pouring rain and cold; added to that my old right leg, in which you will remember I had rheumatism years ago, went quite stiff, a week ago (Monday night). I could not move at all, and was just a helpless lump, so was carried down from the trenches under cover of darkness to a village in rear. I don't remember much about it, but have hazy recollections of a medical officer, a horse ambulance, German wounded beside me, then a motor ambulance and a bed in a clearing Hospital, a short sojourn there, and we were put into a train (well fitted up as a hospital), and at an incredibly slow pace, and taking three days and a bit, we arrived here. On the train I made the most astoundingly quick progress (far quicker than any other similar cases), and though weak as a kitten, and with no legs at all, the pains, and head, etc., went off almost entirely. The warmth of blankets, etc., fetched out the rheumatism, but that is no longer painful now. I can get about the room now, and am to be allowed out of bed to-morrow. I have been put on ordinary light diet (no longer milk) and have an appetite like an ox.

Several of the 1st Brigade down here, and luckily one Edwardes, Captain in the Coldstream, in the next bed. He is almost all right (shot through the arm), and goes out and forages for me very kindly for papers, etc. The M.O. gave me some cigarettes to-day, so you can see that I am well on my way back to the d—d barbarian host.

It is absolutely inconceivable what they do, and not worth mentioning what they don't do! I see the Commission on Atrocities is doing grand work. It is a great pity and absolutely wrong, if people get it into their heads that the reports are exaggerated in any way.

Interesting points about our fighting I am afraid I cannot mention. Everything was cold, sodden and running inches deep in water and mud. Constant attacks and counter attacks and very heavy shell fire. The German big high explosive has done us little damage, though moral effect is very great. Our men have been wonderful, and little sickness has occurred so far, considering the very rigorous conditions

when large forces have been stationary for ten days and more in soaking trenches. The Germans have got enteric in their trenches, and, according to two wounded officers (absolute swine and ill-conditioned brutes) who came down with me, are suffering severely from it. All German privates, captured or wounded, ask at once whether they are going to England, and if answered in the affirmative, are relieved beyond all words. Wherever taken they seemed to be hungry and very thin, showing signs of wear badly. They favour the night attack (at least have with us) and they drive their men forward in very large numbers. But our rifle-fire is out and away too much for them, and they have not got in our part of the line at all. They fairly hate the cold steel. I have done none of that yet. In one place two German officers were found dead thirty or forty yards in front of their trenches, and all the men themselves dead *in* the trenches, showing that they will not follow their officers. They fairly hate the sight of them, and have to be driven, not commanded and led.

Please stop sending anything to me at the former address, until I tell you. At present my address is,

Officers' Hospital, No. 2 Base,

Expeditionary Force.

At present please send only letters.

I suppose all that rumour about the Russians in England was wrong? I expect a lot of stories like that have been going about.

Let me know all the news from home as soon as possible.

My very best love.

Ever your loving

TED.

## NOTE BY LADY HULSE.

*On September 28th, 1914, I received a telegram from the War Office telling me that my son was in Hospital at Nantes. On enquiry, I was told he was suffering from dysentery and rheumatism. So, being most anxious he should make a good recovery, as I knew how miserable he would be if invalided home, I settled to go to Nantes.*

*I had got my passport ready in case of necessity. I left Southampton at 4 p.m. on September 30th and arrived at Nantes at 1.30 a.m. on October 2nd.*

*I found that the English Officers' Hospital was in the Rue de la Bastille, and I arrived there about 9.30 a.m. The kind and courteous C.M.O. took me at once to the ward where my son was, with three other officers. He was sitting up for the first time, and on seeing me, exclaimed: "By Gad, I didn't know you could get here!" I replied, "you can't," recalling the struggle of my seventeen hours' journey from St. Malo to Nantes, instead of what should have been about five or six hours. My son looked extremely thin and pulled down, and was very weak, but told me he felt "on the mend," and had improved even on the train journey from the rail-head, Braisne, to Nantes. He had been lifted out of the Aisne trenches, partly unconscious and in high fever, the night of September 22nd, as I learned subsequently from his soldier servant, and helped back to a village behind our line of trenches. He remembered a little of one night in a cellar, and one in a Church,—then to the rail-head by motor, and a two days' journey in a train full of wounded and sick; but during those two days the dysentery abated, his temperature came down, and the warm blankets did wonders for his rheumatism.*

*The C.M.O. of the Hospital, grasping the fact that I had come, not to try and get my son home, but to try and get him thoroughly fit for duty again, allowed him to join me at the Hotel the afternoon of October 2nd, and in two or three days he improved wonderfully, eating plenty of healthy and nourishing food. We took motor drives, and saw all the wonders of the great thriving French town transformed into the English Army Base, with W. and G. Taxis, and Hampton's, and Waring's vans whirling about the streets. After the first two days he constantly called at Head-quarters to know when he would be able to get back to duty, and after being passed medically fit for light duty, he started for St. Nazaire early on October 7th—looking forward with the keenest pleasure and interest to rejoining his battalion before very long. As we parted he said, "If you roll up in the firing line I shan't turn a hair," and I returned to England via St. Malo and Southampton.*

EDITH M. HULSE.

HAVRE,

11.10.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Complete chaos and shifting about have prevented my getting a letter through to you. I took a quiet five and a half hours getting to St. Nazaire that day, and after reporting at the Base Commandant's was told to join a select little party of nondescript officers and a party of the roughest and most ill-clad men of all regiments of the army, numbering 320, who were classed as "B," meaning convalescent, and fit for light base duty. Our Head-quarters were the Casino, where I spent a hard and very cold night with one blanket only on a stone floor. Next day we were put into a train for Havre, and here we are after two days in the train, very few rations, but we (4 officers) looked after ourselves all right.

On arriving we found that we had to go to a camp two miles out, above the town. We are doing nothing at present except trying to get fresh kit, etc., from England, and the difficulties in the way of any officer trying to get back to the front are incalculable. However, I have written to our C.O. to apply for me. At present officers returning from here to the front have to go via St. Nazaire; it seems inconceivable.

They tried to put us all in camp at first. Of course we had no blankets, nothing to sleep in or on, so I boldly tackled Head-quarters and explained that half our men were rheumatic, etc., had no kit, and that three out of the four officers were under doctor's orders not to sleep out yet. I managed to get leave for billeting, and have ensconced myself and the other officers at a grocer's close to the camp, and have



worked an Officers' Mess at a little "Buvette" close by. They do us well and very cheap. If we had not been very firm we should have been put down in the camp on very short rations, and without a blanket or anything.

Why they sent us here goodness only knows, as they have only just begun to reconstruct a base here, and all the brains and working-machinery remain at Nantes. Result, complete chaos here, especially as most available buildings are full of French wounded, and the schools are reopening, which does away with the most valuable type of building for military purposes. They have, so far, given us no work of any sort, and as soon as I can refit properly, I shall probably step lightly into a train for Rouen and Amiens, and work my own way to the Regiment.

I saw our 3rd, 4th and 5th reinforcements at St. Nazaire, with Archie Douglas-Dick, Romer, and Jack Wickham, and had a good talk with them. They are bored to tears stuck down there, and no talk of being wanted at the front yet.

Am rather hurried now, but will write again shortly.

Please put the ordinary address (Scots Guards, Expeditionary Force). You can put on your next letter: No. 1 Base, Details, Le Havre. Write by return as I must be here for another week, and the posts, I believe, only take two and a half to three days.

Very best love to all, and my sketches must wait a bit.

Ever your loving

TED.

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16.10.14,  
SCOTS GUARDS,  
No. 1 BASE, DETAILS,  
LE HAVRE.

Please put this address until further notice.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

No news here, and we can get nothing definite about movements at the front. A change is going on, but the 3rd echelon still being at Nantes, we cannot find out where even our own army corps is. The Belgian Government arrived here amidst great acclamations and was heavily fed at the Hotel de Ville.

I have had nothing from Cater yet; please telephone and ask him if he has sent cap and waterproof sheet yet. Also please ask Thompson (St. James' Street) to make me a pair of thick khaki knickerbockers, the old fashioned shooting kind, to fold over well at the knee, to fasten with a plain buckle, on a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch strap; same stuff as my last pair of service breeches (thick), to be sent to above address and dispatched if possible on the 23rd.

The M.O. will not let me go up before the end of the month. Do send some D.Ts. We get your posts now in three days.

Very best love to you and Olive and all at B.H.

Ever your loving

TED.

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No. 1 BASE, DETAILS,  
HAVRE,  
18.10.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I have now become a sort of Quartermaster. A party of fifty motor-cyclists, Reserve Signal Coy., arrived yesterday in a hurry from

Aldershot, with absolutely nothing except motor bikes and revolvers. No equipment for the front, no blankets, waterproof sheets, or rations—and very hungry. Being a Detachment and coming under our camp of various details, I was put in charge of them, and endless indenting and requisitioning began. I am running them on my own, and they are a curious lot, chiefly University men, etc., who have enlisted : two fellows who were up at Oxford with me, one a brother of Geoffrey Loyd. They are all Corporals, except three, who are Sergeants. Several seemed very pleased to see me this morning, in fact more so than was quite compatible with discipline. However, they have already shaken down, and salute instead of wishing me a very good morning now !

After endless work and worrying Head-quarters and the Ordnance yesterday, I managed to get them a hundred blankets, four dixies and rations, and pay, which they had not had for a fortnight, and am going to work them in, in future, for rations with our own camp, as motor or horse-transport from the quays up to this camp is scarce.

Last night the jumpy captain, who has been in command of our rough lot, got another go of his fever, so that I and a young subaltern in the Seaforth's, Villiers Price by name, are running the whole show now. To-day we have 680 men under us, belonging to 84 different regiments, and enough work to keep us going for a month. It is no easy matter, as non-commissioned officers are scarce, and our Sergeant-Major is a gunner, and therefore not nearly as good at the job as an infantry S.M.

Last night at 6 p.m. a party of 110 arrived without any warning from anyone. We settled them down and got 220 blankets for them. We had just finished, got their rations arranged and everything, and had sat down to dinner at 7.30 p.m., when a French interpreter came in and announced the extremely unwelcome news that he had just brought up a party of 181 men of all sorts of regiments, without an officer, who had arrived convalescent from the hospital at Rouen !

Not a word had we from Head-quarters as to their arrival, and it transpired that Head-quarters had only heard half-an-hour before.

There is obviously something wrong somewhere, as 181 men cannot get into any train without someone knowing, and that someone ought to acquaint Head-quarters at the place of destination long before their arrival.

Well, by great luck, we had pitched thirty extra tents yesterday, in case of fresh arrivals, and they just took the 290 men of the two parties comfortably. It was 11 p.m. before we could get the blankets, 362 more, up, and any rations, for these unfortunate devils who were only just dismissed from hospital, and felt the cold. We are on a big hill two miles above the docks, and one doesn't get supplies up in ten minutes, as you may imagine. The only way we got anything was by talking to Head-quarters like fathers, extremely short and to the point!

The main base being still at Nantes, the brains, machinery and supplies not having yet arrived here, we have the greatest difficulty in getting anything at all out of the Ordnance. In fact they say that all troops coming from England are fully equipped. The detachments in turn who arrive without anything, have been told, "when sent from Aldershot, "Oh, you'll find everything to fit out with at the base." As I said before, this is really not the base yet, although they feed the whole army from here now, and all mails pass through here. Until the Ordnance moves from Nantes to this place, it is likely to remain complete chaos. I cannot even get a man's web-equipment and pack to fit myself out with for rejoining. However, it is all very good practice for me, and it's far more interesting when one is running a show oneself, even if the show consists of the motley crowd of which mine does!

I have got myself so well known at Head-quarters now, that merely on my appearance the Staff Captains and Majors suddenly find themselves awfully busy, writing away like fun, as they know I have come down with some new problem, which ought to have been settled by them, or at any rate warning given to me by them, when actually nothing has been done. Some of them find that Havre is much further from Tipperary than they at first thought!

The place is already crowded out with French wounded, and Belgian refugees, and although the schools have reopened, I expect they will have to shut when our base moves here, as we require a great deal of accommodation.

I enclose a Railway warrant, which I failed to hand in at St. Nazaire on arrival, as I thought it might be a good souvenir! Please keep it!

The French have been very keen to get us on to the extreme left wing, as our lines of communication from St. Nazaire and Nantes by Le Mans and so to firing-line crossed some of theirs. This new move has given us the opportunity of changing, and I imagine that we shall now stay on the left, with our bases at Havre, Boulogne, etc., according to circumstances. I believe the Cavalry are now being fed from Boulogne, and the whole of our army from here. Incidentally, we again came in for the brunt of the fighting.

Wasn't that a bad move, sending Marines to Antwerp? Of course, we do not know all facts, but it seems so.

Have had no cigarettes since I saw you last. Please give this address, No. 1, Base Details, Havre, to F. L. Smith, Albany Cigarettes.

I will let you know change of address directly it occurs, and will you please let Cater, Smith, and Thompson, the tailor, know.

A message has just come that 40 more men are coming up; D—n. Our command is now 720 men. I shall shortly call myself Colonel, if they don't watch it.

Very best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

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HAVRE,

25.10.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Only a short letter, from the orderly-room, or rather tent, which I have got going properly now, with a good sergeant, as clerk to

myself. I was to have moved to-day to St. Nazaire, but I believe our reinforcements are moving here now, so I have apparently to wait for their arrival. Troops are coming in at all hours of day and night, and I am kept well at it until about 7.30 or 8 p.m. each evening. I am sleeping under canvas now, since I was passed fit. Amusing and very green details of different regiments and signalling services continue to pass through my hands. I have had a lot of military police lately, but have sent most of them off on lines of communication, and some up to Headquarters. All the details arrive without a thing from Aldershot, and have to be completely equipped ; they generally only stay a night or two, when I get a telegram or 'phone from the Base Commandant's, and pack them off at short notice to all sorts of imaginable places.

The only real difficulty is that one gets no notice at all of their arrival, until one finds them looking for tents. Many of them hardly know how to take care of themselves, and in drawing rations at the camp cook-house get well done down by some of our B. details, convalescent, all of whom are old stagers, and only too apt to take other men's shares as well as their own.

I heard from Uncle Baa yesterday, who seems to be very busy with refugees in B—mouth. I have had three lots of D.T.s from the Office, all in one go, but they included no less than three copies of the D.T. of Wednesday 21st.

I cannot get anything from Cater ; please ask him to send things at once, if he has not, also Thompson (breeches). Address No 1 Base, Details, Havre, as even if I moved, they will be forwarded, and have instructions of any alteration of my address at the P.O. here. I will let you know at once on moving, probably by wire. Two slabs of chocolate would be very gratifying from time to time, after I go up to the front. Also, after I start, wherever you write, please enclose two sheets of foreign paper and an envelope, for me to answer with.

Yesterday, I saw an old grey haired and grey moustached man in Headquarters whom I recognized. I talked to him, and found that he had just come out of the Remount Depot, with the rank of Captain. I

can't get the name, but he hunts with the Wilton, and gave me the latest news of what sounded like very comic and inefficient cubbing !

I will keep an eye open for Guy Crichton, as I go to Head-quarters every day and look up the arrival book, in which all names have to be entered, so I shall probably find him.

The Camp Commandant has just this minute put his head in and given me a new command. It consists of about 500 men (A. class, namely passed from B. convalescent, into fit for the front again). I have now got to get the camp pitched and start a new staff going. I shall strike shortly for increased wages !

Very best love to all, and will let you know the minute I move off.

Ever your loving

TED.

HAVRE,

2.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just off to No. 3 Camp, where the reinforcements are ; ours have not yet come from St. Nazaire, but ought to be here very shortly. Please continue same address until further notice. Please ask Cater to send cap and oil-sheet immediately. I do not know what he has done with them. I am sending three amusing papers.

In the *Lectures pour Tous* there is a good sketch of German trenches, except that on the Aisne they are more elaborate still.

Very best love.

Ever your loving

TED.

HAVRE,

4.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I have written to Uncle Mi in spite of your letter saying best not, as he must feel Bill's death frightfully, and was always so proud of the way in which he was following his own footsteps in the regiment. It seems a certainty, although I have seen no casualty list in which he is mentioned. There was no young subaltern, I think, more popular in the regiment (both battalions included). It is awful for Marge and Olivia, especially the latter.

My reinforcement does not arrive from St. Nazaire for several days yet, so please keep on with the same address. Territorials of all sorts are pouring in here, and I saw the Leicestershire Yeomanry (talked to Bertie Hanbury and Major Ricardo) to-day.

It is hopeless messing about down here, and I wish to goodness I could get up and have a slap at them. Things seem to be going well, but I should think that they will have another big go at us before retiring. Am very busy with every conceivable regiment in the British Army still!

Will write shortly. I am too sorry for words about Bill, he was what Uncle Mi himself would call "a real good boy."

Very best love.

Ever your loving

TED.

HAVRE,

9.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just received your last three letters. I am too sorry for words about Teddy B., the loss will be dreadful for poor Aunt May. I had not heard, but will write to-day.

It is a terrible thing about our 2nd Battalion, but apparently the rest of that Brigade had just as hot. On top of that comes the news



that our 1st Battalion has suffered very heavily, especially my company. Peckham, Jack Balfour, Ogilvy and Hamilton killed, and worse than all, Stephen the Adjutant, who, in the Colonel's absence, absolutely ran the Battalion. His will be the worst loss of all to us.

I am here with Romer (late Adjutant) and 300 men, expecting to move at any moment. Fourteen officers have arrived, or arrive to-day, seven for each Battalion, including Tom Coke, Dumps, Nipper Poynter, Lisburne, Dick Coke and others.

There must be a ghastly casualty list coming out, as we have got none of the 1st Bn. losses here yet. A Captain from Army Headquarters told me yesterday that French and Joffre are eminently satisfied, and extremely optimistic with regard to the situation in general. They incline to an early termination of the war ; I can't see it myself.

Territorials and reinforcements pouring in here in a ceaseless stream night and day.

In very great haste, writing shortly. Please send nothing in the way of "comforts" (socks, etc.) until I ask for them, but start on chocolate directly you get wire that I have started. Cigarettes continue as usual.

Very best love to all, and deepest sympathy with Aunt May.

Ever your loving

TED.

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2ND BATTALION SCOTS GUARDS,  
7TH DIVISION,  
ON ACTIVE SERVICE,  
12.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Romer and I were joined at Havre by Dick Coke, Barry and Massey, and we had 300 men as reinforcements for the 1st Battalion. Seven officers and 250 men left the day before us for the 2nd Battalion. We then got an order to leave with the 7th Division reinforcements

in a hurry, and here we are with the 2nd Battalion for good, as far as I can make out.

Romer and I were annoyed beyond words, as we had been looking forward to seeing the Colonel (Lowther) again, and finding ourselves under one of the ablest and best C.O.s in the army. Instead, we have arrived here at — behind the firing-line, about six miles, where the 2nd Battalion are reconstructing, and we are hard at it mixing up the “remains” with the two new reinforcements in due proportion, and finding N.C.O.s, etc. We are pretty short of the latter, and they are different from the fine lot I had under me before ! However, physically they are just as fine a lot, and I have just got my platoon together, and told them how I intend to run things, and they seem a really good bunch, and mad keen. Of course there is none of the fatigue, or “Tired Willie” about them yet, and discipline is being worked perfectly.

George Paynter in command and has been doing very well indeed, I believe. Alby Cator, who was Brigade Major, is now Brigadier—vice Ruggles, who was wounded. General Putty came to see us last night in this café, where we are working a mess (the Battalion all in billets). He was in tremendous form ; brought along Castlereagh and Pembroke with him.

By sending us to complete this Battalion (we have orders to move at any moment), I imagine that they mean to take the remains of the 1st Division, or anyhow 1st Brigade, out of the firing-line, to recoup in the rear, as there are now no reinforcements to come up for the 1st Battalion. They have had it very hot indeed, and the whole of my old company has disappeared. Peck, Jack B., Ogilvy killed and Campbell missing. Stirling Stewart was wounded on the Aisne and myself here, so that there are none of the original lot left.

All officers and men in great form and spirits here,—it is the best way to carry on.

Pouring rain and pretty cold, so thank goodness we have some respite in billets. Everyone eminently satisfied with the way things are

going, and troops being lumped in everywhere. The Alpine regiments came up with us, and were pushed in from here by London Motor Bus yesterday!

Our 1st Battalion are near, as the 7th and 1st Divisions have been working together, pending the arrival of the 8th Division:—the 7th and 8th will then make up one Army Corps (the 4th) under General Rawlinson. I believe Ruthven is coming to command this Battalion.

I am as fat as a pig, having laid in a good store during my sojourn at Havre in view of light feeding in the near future! At present we are doing ourselves proud, on eggs at 3d. apiece.

My company consists of "Bubbles" (Bagot Chester) Captain, Pip Warner, myself and Ottley, and a sergeant, as platoon commanders.

I am full of underclothing, etc., at present, but please let F. L. Smith know of change of address at once, 2nd Battalion, 7th Division. Give my very best love to Olive and all at H.B.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Colonel, Jack and others apparently were, as you say, buried and stunned by Jack Johnsons, and dug out by Germans.

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2/BN. SCOTS GUARDS,  
7TH DIVISION,  
19.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just a very hasty note to let you know that I am going strong, in exceptionally cold and unpleasant circumstances. We have been in the trenches five days, with frost at night, and snow and sleet by day, and have changed nothing, not even boots or socks. We take turns in going back to head-quarters of the Battalion by night,—a very wet and muddy walk of about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. I could not get a letter off before, and

am sending this in haste as a post is going out which I have only just heard of. A long letter is following immediately.

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

2ND BATTALION SCOTS GDS.,  
7TH DIVISION,  
20.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Apologies for last hasty note which I wrote, but it was the first opportunity I had to write.

We moved into these trenches from — where the Battalion re-formed and fitted after the hot time they had near Ypres. We are further south now and relieved a battalion which had been in these trenches for three and a half weeks. I hope to goodness our sojourn will be shorter. It is damp, very cold and unpleasant sitting still and not being able to put one's head above the parapet without a little conversation from the "Bosches" in front of us. It is low-lying, wet arable land, and we are only 150 yards from the enemy's trenches. Just on my left Pip Warner's platoon is only 80 or 90 yards from the Germans, as the latter have sapped towards us, and have well-placed snipers, who have killed three of our men and wounded three others. However, we have been doing our bit, and just to my left are seven German bodies, the result of inquisitiveness on their part two nights ago. They are only fifty yards off, and no one can bury them as they are just between the lines. We creep out at night, and get water and rations, and the food supply has been working admirably, luckily, as in this cold the men must have plenty to eat.

Our guns have been doing some good work and have blown two

haystacks and a farm to bits which the Germans were using as artillery observation-posts.

I have not yet seen a German aeroplane, but ours appear every day, and are shot at by some German gun to our front. They fired 51 shots at one of ours yesterday, and were never near him, though he persisted in flying round and round over their positions. They have a strongish position some hundreds of yards to our front, and only occupy the near fire-trenches in the day-time to keep us quiet!

It has been snowing hard, after two nights' sharp frost, and it is lying about two inches deep, except in the foot of the trenches, where by the continual passage of men up and down, it has become a freezing cold slush of mud, and chills one's boots right through. We have not changed our boots or socks even, and far and away the worst part is the cold in one's feet at night, which makes sleep impossible for more than half an hour or so at a time. Otherwise we are keeping pretty warm in our dug-outs, and are gradually getting a bit of straw into them, where it keeps dry and is warm to lie on. We get a certain amount of charcoal served out, but not much, and with old mess tins, with holes punched in all over them, get the charcoal going, spread two or three oil-sheets over the trench, and with three or four men sitting round, they can get quite a degree of warmth out of it. I believe blankets are coming up, but we must get them into the trenches *dry*, or they will be no good at all; even so, they can only come in by dribblets, as so few men are allowed to leave the trenches at a time, and of course only by night.

The three-quarters of a mile or so of slush, across churned-up ploughed fields with deep ditches and well sprinkled with dead cattle, etc., is a trying journey, and none too easy on a dark night. The first night the ration parties and watering parties on their way back got lost, were sniped at by the enemy and promptly "panicoed." Instead of crouching and keeping stock still, they dropped the rations and doubled about the place like lost sheep, and finally arrived in

helter-skelter, by twos and threes, into the trenches without any food or water; and the result was we went hungry for the next twenty hours. I cursed them to heaps, and had all N.C.O.s up and explained everything all over again and took them out and back the next night myself. At last they cooled down, and are working properly each night, and with less hubbub and pandemonium and talk than at first.

You have no idea how difficult it is to work things well under trying circumstances, when one has hardly any good N.C.O.s! However, a week or so of this will teach them a great deal, and it is just as well that they can learn now when we are sitting still and not fighting hard. The enemy, for some unknown reason, have at present only one gun in front of us, so that we have practically only had rifle-fire to deal with. But they will see to that deficiency pretty soon, I expect. At present it is very gratifying to see and hear our shells bursting just in front of us, on their positions, and to have none in return, but, as I say, it will not last long, unless they are short of them, or have moved them all up to the big fight going on just north of us.

Bubbles is going sick to-night,—not serious,—so that Pip and I will be running the company with Swinton as ensign. Tom Coke has been sent off with appendicitis, so that we have only George Paynter as C.O. and Dick Coke the only Captain. Romer had to go sick at once and ought really never to have come up.

As I write this, a mail has just come in with papers, etc., of the 16th (astonishingly quick). I see Jack Harrison appears as wounded, I do hope not serious; let me have first possible definite news which you get of him. Also Frank Crossley as missing. It is very sad about the “grand old man,” Bobs. He passed through — when we were there the other day, and the whole of the troops shouted themselves silly and hoarse! But it is a great thing that he not only saw the war, against which he had warned us so long and so ardently, but also died within sound of the guns of one of the most fiercely contested fights which there have yet been. He was a grand

old man, and Pembroke told me he saw him walking past the troops like a two-year-old, erect and full of vigour. The great thing is that he died as he would have wished, near British troops in battle and successful against repeated attacks and heavy odds.

The First Division was decimated again, when the big attack of the Prussian Guard struck them. The Guard had definite orders to achieve what the rest of the German army had been unable to do, namely, to sweep over our trenches. That was the actual wording of their orders. They did it, and swept right over the lines of the First Division, but were bayoneted back again by our reserves. They found 700 of the Prussian Guard dead *behind* our lines and over 6000 dead and wounded in front. So much for the Guard! But our losses were, of course, in proportion, and they say that there is only one officer and thirty men left of the 1st Battalion. It is a stern business, and I don't know what Meat Lowther will find to command.

"Pa" Heyworth has arrived here to take this Brigade (the 20th), and arrived spotlessly clean and dapper, but won't remain so for long. To-night he is dining at our Battalion Head-quarters, which are in a cellar of a farm (one mile to our rear), which has been blown to pieces and burnt. George has cleared out the cellar, found some chairs and a lot of straw, and is doing himself proud there. However, to get to it, you have to go through mud in places a foot deep, so Pa's beautifully cut and polished field boots will suffer!

I have a week's beard and look very sweet!

*(Continued 24 hours later.)*

Perfect day, bright sun, but hardly thawing at all, and still freezing in shade. We have been hard at it improving bomb-proofs and digging kitchens, smoking-room and young Ritz Hotels.

General Pa had lunch in my dug-out yesterday on his tour of inspection down the trenches, and was in great form.

I believe we are to be relieved to-night for three days' rest and cleaning up, and then back again to these same trenches.

I will write to-morrow if possible, or at latest the day after.  
With best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

21.11.14.

P.S.—I have a German's diary, which I will send you when possible.

E. H.

Remember to enclose paper and envelopes whenever you write. Send nothing except cigarettes and chocolate at present.

A small plum pudding in a tin would be most acceptable, as supplied by Fortnum and Mason, Piccadilly.

E. H.

23.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Nothing from you for a fortnight, but that is to be expected, as everything will have gone to the remains of the poor old 1st Battalion, and will then have been returned to the base.

We were relieved the night before last from the trenches, and are now in a farm doing ourselves bang up. I have just had a wash in half a beer barrel and change of underthings and feel several years younger!

It is still freezing hard, though the temperature has gone up a bit and it looks like more snow. We have had 12 or 16 degrees of frost every night for the last five days, and the country is under snow, from one to three inches deep. The roads in places are very bad for transport and movement of guns, and one has to watch it marching at night or one takes a very 'eavy fall.

We are in Divisional Reserve while resting here, and go back to the same trenches to-morrow night. We have been refitting, resting, reorganizing and generally shaking down, and eating enormously! The people in this farm, which has not been damaged, are doing all they can for us,



and we pay for everything, so that they are quite content and only too pleased to have us here instead of *les Huns*, who billeted here for eight days.

Every single farm and homestead near our trenches, four miles from here, is knocked to atoms and blown to pieces, and a few poor old cows are wandering about with nothing to eat, ground frozen and no shed to go to at night. We shot one, and have portioned her out among the Battalion, and also a stray pig found wandering down a hedge. We are west of Lille, about seven miles. Posts are quite regular to the trenches, although irregular from them.

My very best love to you all at H. B.

Ever your loving

TED.

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27.11.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Back in same trenches three nights ago, and stay here till relieved again for a rest. Thaw and rain and damp has followed the hard weather and makes the trenches extremely unpleasant, but we are at it all day, improving and cleaning them up, and have very strict sanitation, which is needed, every bit of it.

Last night I had an exciting bit of work, detailed account of which will follow when I have more time.

There was some doubt as to what was going on in the German trenches, and the Brigadier ordered a small raiding party of one officer, one N.C.O. and eight men to go out, and try to creep up to the enemies' trenches, and shoot a few. The C.O. detailed R.F. Coy. (mine) to do it, and I got nine volunteers.

We started at 1.30 a.m., pitch dark and raining, and found, instead of the thinly held line, as hitherto, that there were as many Germans in their trenches as we have men in ours; also that they were very much awake, which they have not been lately. We managed to do the business, polished

off four or five, and then ran like hares. They opened on us with rifle and machine-gun fire, and I think we had a marked degree of luck in getting back. I lost two men, unfortunately, but as there was no sign of them to-day, I think they must have overshot the mark in the dark, and fallen into the German trenches. We were plastered all round, but none of the rest of us hit.

I enclose two copies circulated to-day through the companies of the Battalion. I have just got to go off to Head-quarters, but will write at length at first opportunity.

Very best love to all.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Just received your letter dated 19th.

Yes, Pa is Brigadier,	}	We are 7th Div., 20th Bde.,
Capper, Div.-Commder.,		4th Army Corps, under General
Alby Cator, Brigade Major.		Rawlinson.

George Paynter sick, temperature and chill, I think, so Dick Coke is C.O.

Several officers have gone sick.

*29th November, 1914.*

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I enclose my duplicate copy of report I sent in to Head-quarters; you must make allowances for moderate editing as written at 5 a.m. by candle-light in a funk-hole and also in a hurry. You will notice that *our* barbed wire was very easily passed. This has since been remedied, although unfortunately the Captain of the R.E. was killed by a stray shot in doing it, and two of his men wounded in bringing him in.

The enemies' trenches in front of us had been extraordinarily quiet for several days, especially at night, and we had ascertained that they were

only occupied by snipers and digging parties by day, and they retired at night into their second line of trenches (main position), leaving just a few sentries and snipers. It was thought desirable that something should be done to find out, and they detailed a raiding party of 1 officer, 1 N.C.O. and eight men to carry this out. I got an N.C.O. and eight men to volunteer with great ease ; we were to have started at 11 p.m., but there was a bright moon, and we stood over till 1.30 a.m., when it was pitch dark and raining. The C.O. and Adjutant came down to see us off, and give us instructions, namely, to get right up to the trenches, peep over if not spotted, select our marks, fire two rounds rapid, and kill all we could, and then each man for himself. On an ordinary night we could probably have done this, as their trenches were lightly held and sentries apt to be sleepy ; but when we had got half way some firing opened away on the right, I think by the Border Regiment. This put the enemy on the alert, and by then I had satisfied myself that there were just as many of the enemy in their trenches, as of us in our trenches, an unpleasant conclusion to arrive at, when we were supposed to be raiding a lightly held trench ! A little further on I made certain of this, as I saw five fires, or rather the reflections of them (as they were in dug-outs and bomb-proofs and one could just see the reflection on bits of smoke which penetrated through) within a space of 50 or 60 yards ! These were charcoal fires with a bit of wood burning probably. The fire I was making for was a proper wood fire, shewing a lot of smoke, and it was there that I hoped to be able to peep over and find a little group of men to polish off. Progress was very slow indeed, as it was all crawling on hands and knees over turnips, and only four or five yards at a time, and then "lie doggo" and listen. Their sentries to our front were firing every now and then at our trenches, but all bullets passed over us, and we could locate them by the flash of the rifle.

All went well up to about 15 yards, when I extended from single file, to the right towards this fire. We did another 5 yards and I had given instructions that directly I loosed off my rifle, we should double forward, select marks, do all damage possible, and make off. I had seen where the sentry in front of me was, and told the scout to fire at the top of the

parapet, in case he had his head over, and that I would fire at the place where the flash of the rifle appeared. We could only just make out the line of the top of the parapet at ten yards' distance.

We were just advancing again when the swine called out in King's English, quite well pronounced, "Halt, who goes there," and fired straight between the scout and myself; he immediately fired where I had told him, and I fired at the point of the flash of the rifle, and there was a high-pitched groan; at the same time we all doubled up to the foot of the parapet, saw dim figures down in the trenches, bustling about, standing to arms, and my N.C.O. fired the trench bomb right into the little party by the fire. The other fellows all loosed off their two rounds rapid; there were various groans audible in the general hubbub, and we then ran like hares. The minute the alarm was given they threw something on the fire which made it flare up, and the machine gun, which we knew nothing about, opened just to my left. I had time to see that it was in a little shelter, with a light inside, visible through the slit (for traversing) and they had evidently just lighted up to set the gun going. They had already stood to arms by the time we had turned tail, and they and the machine gun opened a very hot fire on us. I ran about 30 yards, and then took a "heavy" into the mud and slush of the ploughed field and lay still for a minute to find out where the machine-gun bullets were going. They were just over me and to the right, so when I got up again and turned half left instead of half right, as I had been going originally, and did another 30 yards or so. I found that the bullets were all round me, so fell flat and waited another half minute or so, until they seemed to alter the direction of their fire a bit. Then another run, and a heavy fall bang into our barbed wire, which was quite invisible, and which I thought was further off. These short sprints were no easy matter, as one carried about an acre of wet clay and mud on each foot. I had to lie flat and disentangle myself, and at that moment their machine gun swerved round and plastered away directly over my head not more than 2 or 3 feet. I waited again till it changed, and then ran like the devil for our trenches. I had lost direction a bit, and came on them sooner than I expected, and

took a flying leap right over the parapet down about 9 or 10 feet into the trench. We had gone out on our extreme right, up the above-mentioned ditch, and I found that I came in about 50 yards to the right into the Borderers' trenches (they had relieved the Grenadiers).

Barring my rifle hitting me a good thump on the head as I fell into our trenches, and a bullet hole through the skirt of my coat, I was sound and whole, although extremely out of breath, and with a completely dry and salt taste in my mouth (the latter chiefly attributable to the intense anxiety to avoid the machine-gun fire). I had appointed a place of meeting for my men, and unfortunately only six turned up with the N.C.O. They had come in at every conceivable point ; one who lost his direction had come in 400 yards down the line ; I am sure that the two missing had tripped up over the foot of the enemy's parapet, and fallen into their trenches, having misjudged the distance ; I myself very nearly did it, and was just able to stop only. From what I could see in the pitch darkness the trench curved out towards us on the right, and whereas I had to run 8 yards or so, the men on the right had only four or five yards to do ; hence their probable error of judgment, and probable headlong fall into the trench in front. The men behaved admirably, and although we all had coughs and colds, there was never a cough or noise of any sort, and our method of advance was, of course, a very trying one ; men will always charge all right, but quietly crawling along in single file, taking half an hour to do ninety yards, is a great test of the men, and they did it perfectly. It was very good for them, and they were pleased beyond words when a list of their names was asked for afterwards, and "Pa" complimented them.

The great thing was that we found that the enemy had brought up machine guns, tripled their numbers in the trenches, and were very much awake and could stand to arms at a moment's notice ; all of which was very different from reports about them from our scouts on previous nights. The C.O. and Adjutant frankly told me that they did not expect many to get back, and it was by lying flat that we avoided more casualties. A great many bullets hit our parapet, directly in the line on

which we doubled back, and it was just as well that we did not try to double straight in without a stop.

One more incident; when in single file before we extended, the order was as follows—Two scouts, self, N.C.O. (with patent bomb stuck in the barrel of his rifle), then the six men. Twice when I touched the scout in front (which was the signal to stop, lie flat and listen), the N.C.O. behind me, not seeing in the darkness that I had stopped, ran the ghastly grenade into my back. It was all ready fitted into the rifle, with its special cartridge in the breech, and although the safety catch was back, it frightened me far more than the enemy in front. At 20 yards from their trenches I stopped to extend, and incidentally to pull a little pin out of the neck of the grenade, which started it off ready to be fired. The N.C.O. and I both hated the infernal machine, and thought it would go off at any moment. Of course we had never seen one before, and did not know how it would behave. However, he got it off all right at the crucial moment; there was a very bright flash down in the trench, but we had no time to estimate the damage that it did.

I went out quietly alone to within 25 yards of the trenches at a different point last night, and heard talking, saw fires, and established that the other part of the line is more strongly held also than hitherto. They have an absolute network of trenches and communication—ditto to the rear.

Everything pretty quiet to-day; usual sniping by both sides. The dirty brutes will not bury their dead, and leave them just in front of their trenches; opposite me there are 5 or 6 which have been lying there for ten days, and are only about 10 or 12 yards in front of their trenches. Need I mention that the prevailing wind is towards us?

So glad John Dyer and Jack are doing well—best love to all—send me all news possible.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—I love the mothers' meeting remark.

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27th November, 1914.

From Lt. Sir E. Hulse

To O.C. 2nd Battn. Scots Guards.

Sir,

*I have the honour to report that at 1.30 a.m. this morning, in accordance with instructions received, I went out to the German trenches with an N.C.O. and eight men who had volunteered. Starting from the right of the Coy. lines, I followed a ditch running from right to left across our front for a distance of 80 yards. I then crossed from the left side to the right, passing through our wire (2 strands, very easily passed). The party was in single file, and I did not extend until within 25 yards of the enemy. Progress was very slow owing to the nature of the ground consisting of roots chiefly.*

*When extending to the right towards one of several fires which we saw burning, a brisk fire was opened away on our right by the Borderers, and the enemy was put on the alert. I heard a good deal of talking and could now see the reflection of five fires.*

*I advanced on the nearest of these, and when within about ten yards, a sentry challenged in English, "Halt! who goes there?" He fired, the bullet passed between the leading scout and myself, and we doubled forward to the parapet. Two rounds rapid were fired by us at each of the groups by the two fires in front of us, during which time the enemy stood to arms and opened a heavy fire on us as we retired.*

*My N.C.O. fired the bomb served out to us, right into the trench; there was not a loud explosion, but a bright light.*

*It was very dark indeed, and figures could only be made out with difficulty, in the trenches.*

*I had ordered each man to shift for himself after firing. The enemy opened on us retiring with a machine-gun; most of the shots, however, passed to our right. I am practically certain that this m.-g., of which we knew nothing, is situated in a small shelter by a solitary willow-tree, to the right of the ditch up which we advanced. It was about ten yards to my left when it opened.*

*I saw a light inside some form of shelter, standing out from the general line of the parapet.*

*The enemies' trenches were more strongly manned than hitherto, and I place the number at the point of our raid as equal to that in our own trenches. I believe that fresh troops and m.-gs. have been brought up during the last two days.*

*I found no wire in front of their trenches. The enemy was far more alert than usual.*

*It is impossible to state the number of the enemy hit by our fire, but the leading scout and I can account for one from our own rifle-fire, and I take it that not less than four of the enemy were hit by the rifle-fire of the rest of the party.*

*This is exclusive of the damage done by the grenade, which was directed at a group dimly visible in the smoke of a fire, and which burst right inside the trench.*

*I regret to report two men missing ; scouts were sent out later, but could find no trace.*

*I have the honour to be, Sir,*

*Your obedient Servant,*

(Signed) EDWARD H. W. HULSE,  
Lt. R.F. Coy.,  
2/Bn. Scots Guards.

5.15 a.m.

27/11/14.

2.12.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Back in billets again for three days, after seven in the trenches. Dick Coke was shot in the shoulder the day before yesterday, while digging in rear of the firing-line, at our Head-quarters. I think a stray bullet, of which there were a good many at the time. He is getting on all right, I believe. That leaves us without a Captain at all, and Giles



Loder, a subaltern, is doing C.O. George Paynter, Alby Cator and C. Fox have got D.S.O. I hope George will be well enough to come back soon. They have started giving officers a few days' leave, and Fitzwygram went off to England for three or four days, the day before yesterday. If I get any I will let you know probable date, but as we are so short now I cannot see that they will give any more leave. If they do, it takes Pip Warner next. He and I have been having a rare time with Right Flank Coy. The N.C.O.s are improving; we have been promoting men from the ranks, and corporals to sergeants, to replace the absolute stumers that came out with the drafts, which made the Battalion up when I joined it at Bailleul.

As usual, the long and short of it is, that whether it is a serious matter, or only digging latrines, or cleaning up, the whole thing devolves upon the officer, and one has to stand there and see it done oneself, and even show the N.C.O.s how to do the simplest things oneself.

The other night, after two hours' sleep, I woke up and thought I had better go down the trenches to see that everything was all right. Of course I found one whole platoon in the most hectic state ever seen. Not a sentry on the alert, the N.C.O. on duty sitting down instead of patrolling his lines, and 100 other things. Any enterprising 20 or 30 Huns could have simply walked right in; unless one is at it day and night, nothing is done.

There are individuals, scouts, etc., volunteers and picked men, who are priceless, and worth a whole platoon in themselves, but, by Jove, one has to work at the rest. The unfortunate part was having every single one of our serving N.C.O.s knocked out when the Battalion took the knock originally. As half of them don't seem to understand English, or any other language for that matter, I have kept myself busy in spare moments writing "standing orders" for the trenches. They were circulated to all N.C.O.s in the trenches, and I got much better results, and could drop on a fellow more heavily if they were not complied with. I have broken three this morning, and replaced them with three jolly good men from the ranks, and "things is movin' now" !

Our first day in billets is always a rare old field-day of getting straight after the week in the trenches. This last week was infinitely more comfortable than the one before, as they over-fed us, if anything; and we were warmer, what with higher temperature and extra "comforts" sent up. Also, we had improved dug-outs and bomb-proofs, and our Ritz Hotel is a grand success. Swinton and I sleep in it, and Pip comes along to feed. We have dug a big kitchen just in rear for the servants and cooking, and altogether we do ourselves proud. They have served out goat skins in the shape of waistcoats, for the trenches; these remain in the trenches, and are handed over to relieving battalions. They have the fur outside, and are like short hairy motoring coats. They are used chiefly for sentries at night, and we look thoroughly comic in them.

At present I am doing a sort of Adjutant, though I have to do my company work as well. Whether I shall do proper Adjutant when we go back to trenches the day after to-morrow, I don't know. Giles is doing C.O. and Adjutant together at present. The King was here last night. The Border Regiment (which subsequently relieved us two hours late) supplied "Guard of Honour," and I believe that he is not far off to-day.

Please thank O. very much indeed for socks, which came at a most welcome moment, and have benefited Pip as well as myself. They will last me at least a month. Please ask Winter, Conduit Street, to send me out a pair of stocking-puttees; they are a special make and far more serviceable than the ordinary brand. The chocolate enclosed with socks was much appreciated.

I have got your letter of 25th. So glad shoot is working well; I expect they had all they could do to hit them at the Limekiln and Miz-Maze. I have seen an account of Jeanie's wedding in a paper. I was much amused at your description of Peter's behaviour: priceless!

As a comment on your allusion to stoves in the trenches:—Pip had one sent out, and it has just arrived *minus* its inside and all oil. This had been carefully removed on the way!

Delighted to hear Hobson getting on well, tell him I hope to see him here in the 2nd Battalion, when he comes out again; and tell him to

mention the fact that I have asked for him to rejoin me here (in case they want to send him to the 1st Battalion). He must not hurry out though, as he must have had a good doing, and is lucky to have got through it. In case he or his people want cash, his pay was 10/- a week from Aug. 11th to Sept. 21st, when I left the trenches. This, of course, is what I pay him, regardless of his Army pay. If he wants it, please pay him and keep note against me.

I have just got your chocolate from A. and N. Stores, and warm, woolly cap, for which many thanks. The cap is excellent, as hitherto I had only the ordinary men's stocking-cap, service pattern.

Another letter shortly.

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

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11.12.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just been relieved by Grenadiers, King's Coy., and we and they are now always going to relieve each other, which will simplify matters a good deal in the matter of taking over trenches. Every time we took over from the — or — they were about two hours late relieving us, and never carried on the work we had been doing properly; result—a good deal of unpleasant bickering, which is very undesirable between battalions.

I have got all your letters and parcels now. They came in a rush, and everything is coming regularly now. I have got O.'s socks, your Balaclava helmet, three lots of chocolate, a plum-pudding, Lady Hall's things, etc. Please thank her a thousand times, and say that I did not know who the kind benefactress was.

I regret more than I can say not being able to talk German, as time and again I have heard conversations in their trenches which I

should like to have been able to report, and every word of which I could hear, but could not understand.

Ottley (one of our five months' Sandhurst lot) is a cousin of Bruce. He talks German well, and crawled out the night before last with two scouts. He heard two officers talking about their dug-out, and saying that our machine gun had killed three of their men the night before while they were digging the dug-out for these two officers. We dig our own! He also found out that they have got good discipline in front of us, as just as he got near to their trenches, there were several Germans talking aloud in the trenches, and an officer told them to shut up, and they boxed up complete! (That's more than some of our bright little lot do; some of these old hairies who served in South Africa are the devil to deal with.)

Pip has been on leave and said he would try and see you, so I have been in command of R.F. Co. A perfectly hectic time taking over the Grenadiers' trenches, as we did five days ago. Every night pouring rain, and more and more of the trenches fell in, landslides everywhere, and as fast as one dug, one fell, and had revetted it, or shored it up properly, another bit of trench would come down with a run. My Company Sergeant Major went on leave with Pip, so that I had only an acting C.S.M., totally incompetent, and Swinton the only other officer. You will readily understand that that meant very little sleep night or day! I found the accommodation in the trenches very bad and anything but rain-proof. Having no time to dig myself, I got two defaulters on to a new Ritz-Carlton, and the servants on to a kitchen and bug-hutch for themselves, the whole connected by a neat little trench, and after two days' hard work the new Coy. Head-quarters were completed; and having a little more time to myself, Swinton and I did the skilled labour, namely fitting up the inside and roofing—the latter we did quite extraordinarily well, and in the most scientific manner. It is quite rain-proof and proof from shrapnel, and luxurious beyond words. Little recesses, cut in the walls, hold a young library, food, plum puddings, and all the more valuable comestibles and drinks,

which we do not trust in the servants' cook-house dug-out. The inside, well lined with straw, is warm and well lit by a small oil lamp, supplemented by candles, for which we have cut little recesses. In short, the interior looks exactly like a shrine in a crypt! All this is all very well, but the trenches are inches deep in mud and water, and far worse than the ones we occupied before. The men's bug-hutches are far worse than before, where we had made proper section dug-outs, but we are beginning all over again, and these fellows dig pretty well when it is for their own comfort.

We are now varying between 350 yards—500 yards from the enemy; I mean the trenches we have just left are. You will remember that our old trenches were only 100 yards from the enemy in places; but they make pretty good practice at us, and I had one man killed the first day in our new trenches, and two wounded. They had all three shown themselves, contrary to my orders, thinking that, as they were further off, they could put not only their heads but most of themselves outside the cover of the trenches.

I have accounted for two Germans myself, one on the night of the raid, whom I share with the scout who was next me. We both fired at once. The other I bagged two days ago, a fair shot at 400 yards; he was carrying wood along his parapet, and he threw up both arms and went by the board properly.

Am delighted that you got the various messages about the raiding party, though it seems to have attained larger proportions than it deserves. What annoyed me most was that owing to the enemy having been reinforced, we could not bag a prisoner, or even bring in "fresh meat," or a cap or badge, which was what the General really wanted. If it had come off two nights earlier, I believe we might have done a big thing.

Please thank O. for her letter of congratulations and say I shall write on first opportunity. Uncle Baa has also written. Please thank Gramps for the cigarettes, and give him my best love. He will understand that writing is difficult, except when in billets, as now and

then even we are just as busy, and I leave it to you to pass on any news to relatives from my letters. I love Gramps' remark on my exploit! It rather tallies with a letter which I have just got from Charlie Stanford, but puts it in a much more terse and business-like way! Charlie spends a whole page on congratulations, and another whole page on advice not to do it again! Priceless!

I had a very nice letter from Aunt May in reply to a hasty letter I sent her; the loss must be tremendous to her.

I was most amused at what you said about Breamore village connecting my raid with the *Daily Mail* heading as to finish of fight in Flanders! By-the-by we have been in extreme N.E. France, not Belgium, for four weeks; we are just off the border, near Lille.

Yes, please continue chocolate, plum puddings, etc., but send no clothing of any sort until I ask for it, as I have some over still.

Very best love to you and O., and another letter at first opportunity.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Awful hurry. Have just heard that I have got to change billets in pouring rain!

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20.12.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

All best wishes to you and any of the family you may see for Christmas. I have not had a minute to write, so as to time this letter for the 25th. The following is the reason. Three days ago we were to have been relieved, and to have come to these billets (where as you know, the best facilities for writing are afforded). That day Kit Cator was wounded, and I was given "G Coy." in his place, and removed from R.F. Coy., to which Pip had just returned from leave. There was some move in the air, we knew, also as I was to have started for a week's leave on the 14th,

and had got my things ready, when at the last moment all leave for officers and N.C.O.s was cancelled. I had had mine granted, as I said, and leave being cancelled at such short notice, meant that there was something on foot !

That something came the night before last. George summoned Coy. Commanders to a pow-wow, and told us, (at noon) that we were to attack the German trenches at 6 p.m. I cannot put down details fully as I should like to, but we attacked with two Coys. and the Borderers on our left, and two Coys., including mine, were in reserve in our fire-trenches. Directly the attack was launched, we began digging communication trenches under fire, (a dirty task) towards the line of German trenches which our other two Coys. had taken. We held part of their trenches for varying from 6 to 11 hrs., but gradually had to fall back to our own again, as the troops on our left never reached the German trenches, and the enemy had a strong second line, which made it untenable for us, except in far larger numbers than we had.

I will relate amusing details later, when we can put more in writing. Five of our fellows literally lynched a German officer, and finally, when ordered to return to our trenches, came back with three candles, two boxes of sweets, three boxes of cigars, lots of papers belonging to him, two rings off his fingers, an iron cross, another medal, some very low and vulgar postcards and a photo of himself. He was a fat and very bourgeois vulgarian, and wore a 'eavy beard. They state that they caught him polishing off one of our officers (who was already wounded) with his revolver. They had completely gone through his "dug-out" and found it extremely "well appointed" !

At one time I was sent to get more of our reserves out of communication trenches, with more tools for digging, and had a narrow escape from a "Minen-Werfer" (or whatever they call their trench bombs). It plastered me with mud, etc., but no fragment hit me ; I think it must have been a faulty burst, as it was so close and did no damage.

Ottley, who had to take one of my platoons to carry a portion of the German trenches which our first line had failed to do, was badly wounded

in the neck. I have heard all about him from a corporal who got him back under heavy fire, and whose name I am sending up to be "mentioned" for "good work under heavy fire." Although severely wounded Otley got up and tried to get his men on and actually reached the German parapet, when he fell again and was carried back by the corporal I mentioned above. The doctor says he will get all right, but the nerves in his neck and shoulder are affected. He is a d—d plucky fellow, and did very well indeed. Owing to losses in officers and men, we have hardly a minute now, and are kept at it reconstructing, reorganizing and refitting, and we have lost some of the few good N.C.O.s as well as officers. We know nothing of Hugh Taylor, or Dick Nugent or Hanbury-Tracy. Saumarez is severely wounded, and may lose his hand. He was pluckier than anything I have yet seen, as he also had a bullet in his side, apart from half his hand (right) blown off, and persisted in saying that it was so damnable that he would not be able to play polo again !

Fitzwygram had a graze on the side of the head ; it knocked him out, but he walked all right afterwards. I don't think it has affected the skull. It *was* a dirty business being in reserve and having to do spade work during all the excitement ; however there was not much time for thinking. Nearly all our casualties were due to fire from a second line of trenches ; the enemy in the first line of trenches which we attacked did not fire much, and kept their heads well down ! We took a young fellow prisoner whom two of our men found crouching, well out of the way, in a dug-out ! He was a "Jaeger."

We killed and wounded a good number of the enemy, and I believe our shrapnel did a big thing amongst the reserves which they were hurrying up.

We probably lost more than the enemy, as we were the attackers.

The enemy kept on passing down orders "Scots Guards, retire," etc., all in good English, but we had foreseen and forewarned ! I have not a minute to write anyone else at all. Please thank Gramps ever so much for his letter of congratulations and cigarettes, and tell him that at present I want nothing sent out, as we are full of food and comforts. Also thank O.



a thousand times for her parcel with caramels, etc., and warm waistcoat, also one pair stocking puttees. Buzzard cake has arrived, and I have just got your letter of Dec. 15th. I am receiving a large number of parcels addressed O.C. G. Coy. for distribution amongst my men, and in half the cases do not know how to acknowledge receipt of them or whom to thank. Delighted to hear about Uncle Mi ; am sure his fellows will do tip-top.

The —— (Territorial) have not quite shaken down yet, in fact the other day, when occupying the trenches next to us, they had given up the ghost complete ; it had been pouring, and mud lay deep in the trenches ; they were caked from head to foot, and I have never seen anything like their rifles ! Not one would work, and they were just lying about in the trenches getting stiff and cold. One fellow had got both his feet jammed in the clay, and when told to get up by an officer, had to get on all fours ; he then got his hands stuck in too, and was caught like a fly on a fly-paper ; all he could do was to look round and say to his pals, "For Gawd's sake, shoot me !" I laughed till I cried. But they will shake down soon, directly they learn that the harder one works in the trenches, the drier and more comfortable one can keep them and oneself.

We shall be in the trenches on Christmas Day, but we are going to do things as proud as we can for the men nevertheless ; and the whole Battalion will have plum-puddings, which are being escorted out here from England. All of us have been making reserve-sacks of food and warm things, which officers have found superfluous owing to our diminishing numbers, and parcels of stuff arriving for wounded or sick officers, and we are going to issue it all out to our Coys. on the 25th.

Please give every sort of message and greetings to all Breamore friends ; I have not even time to write to Grandma, as I had hoped, I may be able to to-morrow.

Very best love to you and O. and all at H.B., and best wishes.

Ever your loving

TED.

22.12.14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

No sooner in billets and trying to get a well deserved rest, than I had to take my company out at short notice last night to dig. Four miles back to the dirty trenches—dig till midnight, and then relieved by another company, and four miles back in pouring rain and sleet. Our trenches are rapidly becoming young rivers, and one can do practically nothing to stop the water rising. I am hard at it again to-day, refitting and reorganizing. I have one amusing thing to tell you. Yesterday, when censoring letters, I came across one in which a man, referring to our attack, said “I thought every minute was my next.”

Owing to a few little hitches and difficulties with the —— and —— we got a lot of extra work, and our rest in billets this time has been no rest at all. We return to the trenches to-morrow, and shall be in them on Christmas Day. Germans or no Germans, water and mud or no water and mud, we are going to have an 'ell of a bust, including plum puddings for the whole Battalion. I have got a select little party together, who, led by my stentorian voice, are going to take up a position in our trenches where we are closest to the enemy, about 80 yards, and from 10 p.m. onwards we are going to give the enemy every conceivable form of song in harmony, from Carols to Tipperary. Variation is always acceptable, even to the Huns! My fellows are most amused with the idea, and will make a rare noise when we get at it! Our object will be to drown the now far too familiar strains of “Deutschland über Alles” and the “Wacht am Rhein” we hear from their trenches every evening.

The morning after our attack, there was almost a tacit understanding as to no firing, and about 6.15 a.m. I saw eight or nine German heads and shoulders appear, and then three of them crawled out a few feet in front of their parapet and began dragging in some of our fellows who were either dead or unconscious close to their parapet. I do not know

what they intended to do with them, but I passed down the order that none of my men were to fire, and this seems to have been done all down the line. I helped one of our men in myself, and was not fired at, at all. I sincerely hope that their intentions were all that could be desired with regard to our wounded whom they fetched in.

I also saw some of them, two cases, where the two Germans evidently were not quite sure about showing themselves, and pushed their rifles out to two of our wounded and got them to catch hold, and pulled them on to their parapet, and so into their trenches.

Far the most ghastly part of this business is that the wounded have so little chance of being brought in, and if heavy fire is kept up, cannot even be sent for. There were many conspicuous acts of gallantry that night, in getting in the wounded under fire, but many had to be left out. One notices that sort of thing so much more when the two lines of trenches are very close, and the morning light reveals not only the bag, but also the pick-up! to put it plainly.

We shall all think of you at home on the 25th, and hope you will be a bit drier than we shall.

Give my very best wishes to all. I have written a hasty note to Charlie at Breamore.

Very best love and wishes to you.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Trench-waders have arrived, and are excellent, please convey thousand thanks.

E. H.

P.P.S.—Have sent you a small box of superfluous things to keep, including Cater's 2nd oil-sheet and cap, which have only just arrived.  
*Also a German diary.*

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28/12/14.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Just returned to billets again, after the most extraordinary Christmas in the trenches you could possibly imagine. Words fail me completely, in trying to describe it, but here goes !

On the 23rd we took over the trenches in the ordinary manner, relieving the Grenadiers, and during the 24th the usual firing took place, and sniping was pretty brisk. We stood to arms as usual at 6.30 a.m. on the 25th, and I noticed that there was not much shooting ; this gradually died down, and by 8 a.m. there was no shooting at all, except for a few shots on our left (Border Regt.). At 8.30 a.m. I was looking out, and saw four Germans leave their trenches and come towards us ; I told two of my men to go and meet them, *unarmed* (as the Germans were unarmed), and to see that they did not pass the halfway line. We were 350-400 yards apart at this point. My fellows were not very keen, not knowing what was up, so I went out alone, and met Barry, one of our ensigns, also coming out from another part of the line. By the time we got to them, they were  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way over, and much too near our barbed wire, so I moved them back. They were three private soldiers and a stretcher-bearer, and their spokesman started off by saying that he thought it only right to come over and wish us a happy Christmas, and trusted us implicitly to keep the truce. He came from Suffolk, where he had left his best girl and a  $3\frac{1}{2}$  h.p. motor-bike ! He told me that he could not get a letter to the girl, and wanted to send one through me. I made him write out a postcard in front of me, in English, and I sent it off that night. I told him that she probably would not be a bit keen to see him again. We then entered on a long discussion on every sort of thing. I was dressed in an old stocking-cap and a man's overcoat, and they took me for a corporal, a thing which I did not discourage, as I had an eye to going as near their lines as possible ! They praised our aeroplanes up to the skies, and said that they hated them and could not get away from them. They would not

say much about our artillery, but I gathered that it does good damage, and they don't care for it. The little fellow I was talking to, was an undersized, pasty-faced student type, talked four languages well, and had a business in England, so I mistrusted him at once. I asked them what orders they had from their officers as to coming over to us, and they said *none* ; that they had just come over out of goodwill.

They protested that they had no feeling of enmity at all towards us, but that everything lay with their authorities, and that being soldiers they had to obey. I believe that they were speaking the truth when they said this, and that they never wished to fire a shot again. They said that unless directly ordered, they were not going to shoot again until we did. They were mostly 158th Regiment and Jaegers, and were the ones we attacked on the night of the 18th. Hence the feeling of temporary friendship, I suppose. We talked about the ghastly wounds made by rifle bullets, and we both agreed that neither of us used dum-dum bullets, and that the wounds are solely inflicted by the high-velocity bullet with the sharp nose, at short range. We both agreed that it would be far better if we used the old South African round-nosed bullet, which makes a clean hole.

They howled with laughter at a D.T. of the 10th which they had seen the day before, and told me that we are being absolutely misguided by our papers, that France is *done*, Russia has received a series of very big blows, and will climb down shortly, and that the only thing which is keeping the war going at all is England ! They firmly believe all this, I am sure. They think that our press is to blame in working up feeling against them by publishing false "atrocities reports." I told them of various sweet little cases which I have seen for myself, and they told me of English prisoners whom they have seen with soft-nosed bullets, and lead bullets with notches cut in the nose ; we had a heated, and at the same time, good-natured argument, and ended by hinting to each other that the other was lying !

I kept it up for half an hour, and then escorted them back as far as their barbed wire, having a jolly good look round all the time, and

picking up various little bits of information which I had not had an opportunity of doing under fire! I left instructions with them that if any of them came out later they must not come over the half-way line, and appointed a ditch as the meeting place. We parted, after an exchange of Albany cigarettes and German cigars, and I went straight to H.-qrs. to report.

On my return at 10 a.m. I was surprised to hear a hell of a din going on, and not a single man left in my trenches; they were completely denuded (against my orders), and nothing lived! I heard strains of "Tipperary" floating down the breeze, swiftly followed by a tremendous burst of "Deutschland über Alles," and as I got to my own Coy. H.-qrs. dug-out, I saw, to my amazement, not only a crowd of about 150 British and Germans at the half-way house which I had appointed opposite my lines, but six or seven such crowds, all the way down our lines, extending towards the 8th Division on our right. I hustled out and asked if there were any German officers in my crowd, and the noise died down (as this time I was myself in my own cap and badges of rank).

I found two, but had to talk to them through an interpreter, as they could neither talk English nor French. They were podgy, fat bourgeois, looking very red and full of sausage and beer and wine, and were not over friendly. I explained to them that strict orders must be maintained as to meeting half-way, and everyone unarmed; and we both agreed not to fire until the other did, thereby creating a complete deadlock and armistice (if strictly observed). These two fat swine would vouchsafe no information, and, beyond giving me a very nasty cigar, did nothing, and returned to their trenches.

Meanwhile Scots and Huns were fraternizing in the most genuine possible manner. Every sort of souvenir was exchanged, addresses given and received, photos of families shown, etc. One of our fellows offered a German a cigarette: the German said, "Virginian?" Our fellow said, "Aye, straight-cut": the German said, "No thanks, I only smoke Turkish"! (Sort of 10/- a 100 me!) It gave us all a good laugh.

A German N.C.O. with the Iron Cross,—gained, he told me, for conspicuous skill in sniping,—started his fellows off on some marching tune. When they had done I set the note for “The Boys of Bonnie Scotland, where the heather and the bluebells grow,” and so we went on, singing everything from “Good King Wenceslaus” down to the ordinary Tommies’ song, and ended up with “Auld Lang Syne,” which we all, English, Scots, Irish, Prussian, Wurtembergers, etc., joined in. It was absolutely astounding, and if I had seen it on a cinematograph film I should have sworn that it was faked !

I talked to a lot more Huns and found many very young fellows, but a good, strong, and pretty healthy lot. Probably only the best of them had been allowed to leave their trenches ; they included the Jaegers, 158th, 37th and 15th regiments.

From foul rain and wet, the weather had cleared up the night before, to a sharp frost, and it was a perfect day, everything white, and the silence seemed extraordinary, after the usual din. From all sides birds seemed to arrive, and we hardly ever see a bird generally. Later in the day I fed about 50 sparrows outside my dug-out, which shows how complete the silence and quiet was.

I must say that I was very much impressed with the whole scene, and also, as everyone else, astoundingly relieved by the quiet, and by being able to walk about freely. It is the first time, day or night, that we have heard no guns, or rifle-firing, since I left Havre and convalescence !

Just after we had finished “Auld Lang Syne” an old hare started up, and seeing so many of us about in an unwonted spot, did not know which way to go. I gave one loud “View Holloa,” and one and all, British and Germans, rushed about giving chase, slipping up on the frozen plough, falling about, and after a hot two minutes we killed in the open, a German and one of our fellows falling together heavily upon the completely baffled hare. Shortly afterwards we saw four more hares, and killed one again ; both were good heavy weight and had evidently been out between the two rows of trenches for the last two months, well-fed on the cabbage patches, etc., many of which are untouched on the

"no-man's land." The enemy kept one and we kept the other. It was now 11.30 a.m. and at this moment George Paynter arrived on the scene, with a hearty "Well, my lads, a Merry Christmas to you! This is d—d comic, isn't it?" They were much amused with him, especially when he said it was d—d cold; their spokesman immediately said, "Oh you feel the cold, do you? Of course, we don't, as we are used to harder winters in Germany than you are in England." George told them that he thought it only right that we should show that we could desist from hostilities on a day which was so important in both countries; and he then said, "Well, my boys, I've brought you over something to celebrate this funny show with," and he produced from his pocket a large bottle of rum (not ration rum, but the proper stuff). One large shout went up, and the above-mentioned nasty little spokesman uncorked it, and in a heavy, ceremonious manner, drank our healths, in the name of his "camaraden"; the bottle was then passed on and polished off before you could say knife.

We then retired to our respective trenches for dinners and plum-pudding, one of which had been issued to each man in the Battalion that morning, also Christmas cards from King and Queen, Princess Mary's card and present of pipe and tobacco, and a card from Lady Rawlinson, for 4th Army Corps. We all had a grand meal, and as we have only one officer per Coy. now, I had my meal in my dug-out with the Coy. cook and my servant and an Artillery Officer, who has a dug-out quite close to mine, as an artillery observation post.

We had steak, mashed potatoes, plum-pudding, ginger biscuits, chocolate (hot), whisky and water, and finished up by drinking your health and all at home in best Russian Kümmel!

During the afternoon the same extraordinary scene was enacted between the lines, and one of the enemy told me that he was longing to get back to London: I assured him that "So was I." He said that he was sick of the war, and I told him that when the truce was ended, any of his friends would be welcome in our trenches, and would be well-received, fed, and given a free passage to the Isle of Man! Another courting meeting took place, with no result, and at 4.30 p.m. we agreed to keep



in our respective trenches, and told them that the truce was ended. They persisted, however, in saying that they were not going to fire, and as George had told us not to, unless they did, we prepared for a quiet night, but warned all sentries to be doubly on the alert.

During the day both sides had taken the opportunity of bringing up piles of wood, straw, etc., which is generally only brought up with difficulty under fire. We improved our dug-outs, roofed in new ones, and got a lot of very useful work done towards increasing our comfort. Directly it was dark, I got the whole of my Coy. on to improving and remaking our barbed-wire entanglements, all along my front, and had my scouts out in front of the working parties, to prevent any surprise; but not a shot was fired, and we finished off a real good obstacle unmolested.

On my left was the bit of ground over which we attacked on the 18th, and here the lines are only from 85 to 100 yards apart.

The Border Regiment were occupying this section on Christmas Day, and Giles Loder, our Adjutant, went down there with a party that morning on hearing of the friendly demonstrations in front of my Coy., to see if he could come to an agreement about our dead, who were still lying out between the trenches. The trenches are so close at this point, that of course each side had to be far stricter. Well, he found an extremely pleasant and superior stamp of German officer, who arranged to bring all our dead to the half-way line. We took them over there, and buried 29 exactly half way between the two lines. Giles collected all personal effects, pay-books and identity discs, but was stopped by the Germans when he told some men to bring in the rifles; all rifles lying on their side of the half-way line they kept carefully! They found poor Hugh Taylor close up against the enemy's parapet (as most of our fellows were); he had been shot through the chest. They took him back to Head-quarters and buried him close by in a cemetery which we had made there. The officer, who could only talk French, told Giles that he had done everything he could for Hanbury-Tracy, but that he had died two days afterwards. He also told us that Dick Nugent was killed.

They apparently treated our prisoners well, and did all they could for our wounded. This officer kept on pointing to our dead and saying, "Les Braves, c'est bien dommage."

This episode was the sadder side of Xmas Day, but it was a great thing being able to collect them, as their relations, to whom of course they had been reported missing, will be put out of suspense and hoping that they are prisoners.

When George heard of it he went down to that section and talked to the nice officer and gave him a scarf. That same evening a German orderly came to the half-way line, and brought a pair of warm, woolly gloves as a present in return for George.

The same night the Borderers and we were engaged in putting up big trestle obstacles, with barbed wire all over them, and connecting them, and at this same point (namely, where we were only 85 yards apart) the Germans came out and sat on their parapet, and watched us doing it, although we had informed them that the truce was ended. (I shall have a further comment to make on that later on.) Well, all was quiet, as I said, that night, and next morning, while I was having breakfast, one of my N.C.O.s came and reported that the enemy were again coming over to talk. I had given full instructions, and none of my men were allowed out of the trenches to talk to the enemy. I had also told the N.C.O. of an advanced post which I have up a ditch, to go out with two men, *unarmed*; if any of the enemy came over, to see that they did not cross the half-way line, and to engage them in pleasant conversation. So I went out, and found the same lot as the day before; they told me again that they had no intention of firing, and wished the truce to continue. I had instructions not to fire till the enemy did; I told them; and so the same comic form of temporary truce continued on the 26th, and again at 4.30 p.m. I informed them that the truce was at an end. We had sent them over some plum-puddings, and they thanked us heartily for them and retired again, the only difference being that instead of all my men being out in the "no man's zone," one

N.C.O. and two men only were allowed out, and the enemy therefore sent fewer.

Again both sides had been improving their comfort during the day, and again at night I continued on my barbed wire and finished it right off. We retired for the night all quiet, and were rudely awakened at 11 p.m. A H.-qr. orderly burst into my dug-out, and handed me a message. It stated that a deserter had come into the 8th Division lines, and stated that the whole German line was going to attack at 12.15 midnight, and that we were to stand to arms immediately, and that reinforcements were being hurried up from billets in rear. I thought, at the time, that it was a d—d good joke on the part of the German deserter to deprive us of our sleep, and so it turned out to be. I stood my Coy. to arms, made a few extra dispositions, gave out all instructions, and at 11.20 p.m. George arrived. On these occasions Bn. H.-qrs. move into the trenches, and Brigade H.-qrs. move up to what was Bn. H.-qrs., so as to be on the spot. Some of the 6th Gordons were moved up as reserve in a communication trench to my rear, and we waited for some fun. Suddenly *our* guns all along the line opened a heavy fire, and all the enemy did was to reply with 9 shell (heavy howitzers), *not one of which exploded*, just on my left. Never a rifle shot was fired by either side (except right away down in the 8th Division), and at 2.30 p.m. we turned in half the men to sleep, and kept half awake on sentry.

Apparently this deserter had also reported that strong German reinforcements had been brought up, and named a place just in rear of their lines, where, he said, two regiments were in billets, that had just been brought up. Our guns were informed, and plastered the place well when they opened fire (as I mentioned). The long and short of it was that absolutely *nixt* happened, and after a sleepless night I turned in at 4.30 a.m., and was woken again at 6.30, when we always stand to arms before daylight. I was just going to have another sleep at 8 a.m. when I found that the enemy were again

coming over to talk to us (Dec. 27th). I watched my N.C.O. and two men go out from the advanced post to meet, and hearing shouts of laughter from the little party when they met, I again went out myself.

They asked me what we were up to during the night, and told me that they had stood to arms all night and thought we were going to attack them when they heard our heavy shelling; also that our guns had done a lot of damage and knocked out a lot of their men in billets. I told them a deserter of theirs had come over to us, and that they had only him to thank for any damage done, and that we, after a sleepless night, were not best pleased with him either! They assured me that they had heard nothing of an attack, and I fully believed them, as it is inconceivable that they would have allowed us to put up the formidable obstacles (which we had on the two previous nights) if they had contemplated an offensive movement.

Anyhow, if it had ever existed, the plan had miscarried, as no attack was developed on any part of our line, and here were these fellows still protesting that there was a truce, although I told them that it had ceased the evening before. So I kept to same arrangement, namely, that my N.C.O. and two men should meet them half way, and strict orders were given that no other man was to leave the lines.

I admit that the whole thing beat me absolutely, and I shall endeavour in my next letter to tell you how I think the "land lies." I am finishing this letter off, as it is a long one, and I want to get it off, but shall write the other this evening as a continuation, and you may get both by same post.

Well, again no shot was fired all day, and in the evening we were relieved by the Grenadiers, quite openly (not crawling about on all fours, as usual), and we handed on our instructions to the Grenadiers in case the enemy still wished to pay visits!

I enclose German Field-Postcard, which a Sergeant with the Iron

Cross gave me. Also am sending King and Queen's Christmas cards, and Lady Rawlinson's, which I want kept.

Let me know if you receive the box with cap, oil-sheet and German diary. Many thanks for your letters of 21st and 23rd, which amused me greatly with the various anecdotes. Please wish Gramps very many happy returns of to-day, and tell him that I have instructed you to hand this letter to him, as Birthday Wishes, as I have not a minute to write any others. Very Best Wishes for the New Year to you and O., and all at home.

Ever your loving

TED.

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28/12/14.

*Continuation of first letter of same date.*

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Have got a quiet evening and will now continue letter which I wrote early this afternoon, and which has gone to post.

So pleased that Hobson is getting well; don't let him hurry, although medical authorities will not let him over-stay his legitimate period of convalescence!

Send me Grandma's address, as I have not got it.

How right the Belgian officer was! It made me laugh long and loudly.

I fully agree with Mrs. X. One heavy Howitzer shell, on the cross-roads in Beaconsfield, would do a world of good; we are all very sorry for the unfortunate women and children, victims of the Scarborough incident, but we are all delighted to hear that any German ships have got out, as the more they get out, the more are we likely to sink, and it is ridiculous for people in England to think that the only duty of our Navy is to guard our shores from being shelled. Their duty is to guard us from invasion, and to protect commerce, and their whole

strategy must lie in letting German ships out, if we wish to mop them up ; and after all, sinking them is the only way that we can assure ourselves from invasion and protect commerce adequately. People in England seem to think that the duty of the Navy is to sit outside our shores and see that no one pumps a shell on to our island. That is an extremely narrow and selfish way of looking at it, but those are our chief characteristics.

It is quite right, however, that the State should make good damage out of the War Fund. Lloyd George always did talk rot, and it is just like him to have held us up, as making big sacrifices for other people. We should be looking d—d silly by now, if we had remained neutral. Tell Green from me that he will find my Mauser pistol in the gun-case, and will do well to put himself, as an advanced post (or rather elevated post), on the roof, as a necessary precaution against hostile aircraft. Your 20-bore might do too !

I think that the only thing that we have to fear in England is the submarine.

Now to continue former letter.

I forgot to say that we gave the Germans, on each day, all the latest English newspapers, but higher authorities would not allow us to give them Belloc's articles in *Land and Water*. (I wanted to give them the cuttings with his statement as to their casualties.) I asked several of them general questions about the war, and they one and all answered that our papers were grossly misleading us ; that really, if only we knew, France is absolutely done, and Russia has taken a series of very big knocks, and will climb down, and that we English are the only ones who are really keeping the war going. They all think that the war will be over in three weeks' time, except one well-educated fellow I talked to, who said that he thought it would go on for a long time ; I told him to improve his dug-out well, and we hoped to find extreme comfort when we take their trenches, as we have heard such a lot about their skill in trench digging !

The whole business of the past three days has been extraordinary

and not easy to explain. Yesterday, shooting began again, down in the 8th Division, but although we explained to the enemy that the truce was at an end, never a shot was fired.

Although I do not trust them a yard, I am convinced that all they want is to see us making ourselves thoroughly comfortable and (as you will gather from what I said about them watching us put up obstacles and entanglements) to assure themselves that we are not going to attack ; so much so, that I honestly believe that if we had called on them for fatigue-parties that night, to *help us put up our barbed wire*, they would have come over and done so.

They are, I am sure, pretty sick of fighting, and found the truce a very welcome respite, and were therefore quite ready to prolong it ; in fact made us prolong it by continually coming to talk. They watched us bring up masses of timber for dug-outs, wire for entanglements, shovels and picks and rakes (for dragging a small stream, which has become choked up, and is flooding us in places) ; we had parties working on drainage, and relieving the pressure of water from our trenches, in fact every sort of thing, which, with sniping, is only carried out at great risk and inconvenience. Also, they were the troops whom we had attacked, and some of them expressed admiration for us, etc., and they had also suffered a good deal by it, and, one way and another, they were quite ready to have a respite and to improve their own comforts and trenches like us. In fact, they had said to me that they could not be answerable for the conduct of any troops who relieved them, but that at anyrate they themselves would not start hostilities again unless we did. Now for a deeper and also fairly obvious reason :—

They must know quite well that what they achieved hitherto, they have achieved with tremendous losses, and that it can't go on for ever like that. They hold pretty well all Belgium and a bit of France, and in case of peace, have, on this side, got a nice bit to barter and bargain with. The main issue lies at present in Poland, and there, also, I take it, they have reached their zenith, and have lately a fair measure of success. Their object, as we all know, is to deal as big a blow as possible to Russia,

and probably to try and get her to make a separate peace, giving her a nice slice (probably all Poland).

To do this they have had to denude the Western battle line, and any attacks they have made on this line lately have only been bluff, in order to make us believe that they are still trying to advance here. If they can deal with Russia, then well and good ; they can then transfer all their troops again to this front and make again for Calais and Paris. I am sure that they are trying to make Russia sick of the war and to get her to climb down. The Kaiser must realize that he cannot win by prolonging matters, and that he can't lose the numbers he has, so far, many times more. This, I think, explains why they appear not to mind how comfortable we make ourselves here, so long as what we do tends to making them believe that we are going to sit quiet. I think it is pretty obvious. Also this would explain the following interesting facts :—

For the past two months their artillery has got slacker and slacker, and opposite us they either have none, and if they have, they have orders not to fire, and to save their ammunition. This may be due to genuine shortage, or to the fact that all available ammunition is sent to the big issue in Poland. Anyhow, the little they do fire is nearly all "blind" or "bad," as it hardly ever explodes. They have not fired shrapnel at us for three weeks or more. I generally take the reports in our papers, about shortages in Germany, with a grain of salt, but I must say that it looks as though they were having some difficulty with heavy ammunition. They have plenty of small arm ammunition still, at any rate opposite us.

However, it is all very curious.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day were perfect,—sharp frost, about 15°, but it has since turned to rain, and to-day has poured without a stop.

For the first time in his life, as he says, George is praying for a frost, as we all are. It is everything for the men's healths, and for general comfort in the trenches. One can always keep warm when dry, however sharp the frost, but the wet goes right through and buttons at the back, and knocks a lot of the men's feet up. We are reduced to George and Giles





CAPT. SIR EDWARD HULSE AND CAPT. E. WARNER

*(In the Trenches, Christmas Day, 1914)*



(C.O. and Adj.), Pip Warner, Barry, Swinton and myself as Coy. Commanders. Barry and Swinton are only ensigns, and the latter joined us straight from Sandhurst two months ago.

We are all very sorry indeed to hear of Ottley's death ; he was also a five months' Sandhurst cadet, and joined with Swinton. He was hard-working and capable, and mad keen, and led the platoon of my company which attacked on the 18th. We all thought that he would get over his wound, and were too sorry for words when we got the news yesterday.

Try and find out for me how Freddy Fitzwygram and Saumarez are getting on ; the latter, I believe, is very bad, and I should like to hear of them. Freddy ought to be getting on well. We hope to get both officers and men shortly, and need them badly ; I am at present far more fortunate in my N.C.O.s, in G. Coy., and have one very good one who was with the 1st Bn. in the retreat with me, but one officer per Coy. is not enough, and means very little sleep when in the trenches !

I am as fat as a pig and have been over-feeding systematically for a week nevertheless. We do ourselves proud !

There will be no chance of leave until we get more officers.

I am sending you Princess Mary's Xmas Box which I want kept. I may get it taken to London and posted there by one of our "padres" who is going home for leave on Thursday next. I hope to be able to send you shortly some small photos of self, Pip, servants, etc., in billets, and also, if they come out, a photo of us and the Germans together on Xmas Day. Swinton took them with a little pocket-camera, and the "padre" is taking the films home to get them developed. If the latter negative comes out, it will be a unique incident well recorded.

There are two extraordinary little kids here, about three or four years old respectively, who at the present moment are vastly interested in my signet-ring ; I have got one on my lap and the other is pulling at the strings of my stocking-puttees, and writing is not easy ; they smell a bit, but are little toppers, covered with smiles, and I talk French "dog-language" to them and seem to have a great success :—"viens, petit coco," brings them running along, and they nearly burst with merriment when

I give them ginger biscuits. They are brother and sister, and belong to a family of eight ; the father is fighting, and the mother and her niece run this farm, and are helped by the eldest sons (14 and 15 yrs. old). They go in for scientific farming, and their milk and butter is the best you ever tasted. I got six eggs from them this morning (at 6 sous each)—a rare luxury—and scrambled them extremely well myself. Milk, butter and eggs are not often to be had all together, and we fairly gloated over the result ! Swinton and I (L.F. Coy. and G. Coy., respectively) are in billets together here and wolfed the lot !

Please thank Lady Hall ever so much for her nice letter, and say that I am much looking forward to the “scouts’ diary.” Swinton and I are getting up a concert to-morrow night in the biggest barn, for our two Companies ; as we have to spend Hogmanay in the trenches, just as we had to be in them on Christmas Day. I don’t know what the devil I am going to oblige with, but must think something comic out !

We do a variety of things, and about a fortnight ago, when in billets on a Sunday, and about two miles from Head-quarters, I got the order to parade my Coy. and conduct a Service, there being no chaplain near. I conducted a 15 minutes’ service, including two hymns, which I had to set the note for. It is no child’s play setting a note ; but it turned out all right, and the key suited the men’s raucous voices. I never thought that I should conduct a Church Service, at any rate not at my present rank of Lieutenant.

We have got a “padre” in this district, and are going to have a Christmas Service to-morrow, here, in this barn.

Very best love to all, and again the best and heartiest of New Year wishes to all at Breamore.

Ever your loving,

TED.

BILLETS,

5.1.15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Back again in billets, but this time in Brigade Reserve, instead of Division Reserve, which means only a short way from the firing line, and that we have to go up every other night and dig.

I have got your letters of 30th and the 1st, and all parcels have arrived safely, for which very many thanks. The second pair of puttees arrived all right after all, and my servant had put them at the bottom of my pack, hence my overlooking them. I have had letters from Uncle Baa and Uncle Harry, and various useful little things from Aunt Estelle, including chocolate, foot powder, pencil, cigarette lighter, etc., all "tout ce qu'il y a de plus pratique."

One officer and forty men are all that they have sent us, as the draft intended for us, including Major Romilly, otherwise Romeo, were sent up to the 1st Battalion, who have lately had further losses.

We are rapidly becoming skilled drainage experts, and nearly all the work in the trenches now consists of draining, pumping, diverting channels, etc., and in one of our communication trenches which is deeper than most, 11 ft. 6 in., the water has now attained the astounding and almost comic depth of nine feet!

Many communication trenches have been given up, and we have been working hard draining all water possible in one big one, and passing it on to the enemy. They are doing the same, and the result is that, apart from miles of barbed wire, there are some very formidable lakes and streams in between the trenches, and a man has to be both an expert athlete and swimmer combined to cross from one line to the other by night.

Three days ago I climbed up a tree, with my glasses, and found out where the German officer's dug-out is just opposite me. I saw him plainly, and recognized him as the fat, heavy-jowled brute to whom I had talked on the 25th. I have had a look every morning

since, and every morning he has had four men scooping the water out from just round his dug-out, and, judging by the amount of pumping which they do, I should say that they are worse off than we are.

During the last fortnight I have had great luck, as my company has held the driest section of the Battalion's line; though that is not saying much, as everyone has to work like fun in order to keep the trenches and dug-outs tenable at all.

We had another comic episode on New Year's Eve. Punctually at 11 p.m. (German war time is an hour ahead of ours), the whole of the German trenches were illuminated at intervals of 15 or 20 yards. They all shouted, and then began singing their New Year and Patriotic Songs. We watched them quietly, and they lit a few bonfires as well. Just as they were settling down for the night again, our own midnight hour approached, and I had warned my company as to how I intended to receive the New Year. At midnight I fired a star-shell, which was the signal, and the whole line fired a volley and then another star-shell and three hearty cheers, yet another star-shell, and the whole of us, led by myself and the Platoon Sergeant nearest to me, broke into "Auld Lang Syne." We sang it three times, and were materially assisted by the enemy, who also joined in. At the end, three more hearty cheers and then dead silence. It was extraordinary hearing "Auld Lang Syne" gradually dying away right down the line into the 8th Division. I fired three more star-shells in different directions, to see that none of the enemy were crawling about near our wire, and finding all clear, I retired to my leaking bug-hutch. I had warned all sentries as usual, and had succeeded in getting about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour's sleep, when the Platoon Sergeant of No. 12 (my Platoon number from 9-12) burst in and informed me, most laconically, "German to see you, Sir!"

I struck a light, tumbled out, and heard a voice outside saying, "Offizier? Hauptmann?" and found a little fellow, fairly clean and fairly superior to the average German private, being well hustled and pushed between two fixed bayonets. The minute he saw me he came

up, saluted, covered in smiles, and awfully pleased with himself, said, "Nach London, Nach London?" I replied, "No, my lad, Nach the Isle of Man," on which the escort burst in loud guffaws! He could not talk a word of English, except "Happy New Year," which he kept on wishing us. He was a genuine deserter, and had come in absolutely unarmed. I went rapidly through his pockets, which were bulging on every side, and found no papers or anything of any value, but an incredible amount of every kind of food and comestibles. He had come in fully provided for the journey, and was annoyingly pleased with himself.

I ordered him to be marched up to Battalion Head-quarters under escort, and telephoned up to George and had him woken to tell him that I was sending him a New Year's present. I enclose receipt for prisoner, which is rather interesting, as it is the first bit of work, or writing, which 1915 brought me, and was considered by the ultra-superstitious private soldier, of which there are many, as of good augury.

It may have been the result of my telling them on the 25th that any of them who wished to report themselves at my barbed wire after dark would be fed and given a free passage to England! From what I could make out about a lot of talk from him, about "three camaraden," I gathered that three of his pals were going to come in and give themselves up at 3 a.m., but they disappointed us and did not show up. He told me that he had a wife and two children, and never wished to see a rifle again—at least, that is what I gathered from a few words which I could understand.

I am sending you a photo of myself and four of the raiding party, which was taken by an elderly artist-rifleman, who accompanies our Quarter-Master and takes photos for a Battalion book which our Quarter-Master is mad about. Unfortunately the others were not available, but it includes the Corporal who fired the rifle-bomb, and a grand, great fellow, Dolley, the big one on the left, who, I am sorry to say, was killed about a fortnight later. Our cleanliness is due to

this photo having been taken when we were in billets. I wish you could see us when we emerge from the trenches!

Please write and thank old Tucker for her letter, and explain that I have hardly any time at all for letter writing, and send you all the news. It is very good of her to have written. I enclose address.

Please keep me a Potsdam Diary, as I may get home for a week soon. Leave has begun again, and, although we are so short, one officer at a time is going to be allowed away, I believe; Giles Loder probably goes this week, and I am next after him. With luck, I may roll up about the 12th, but will let you know.

Giggles, Armine's brother, has arrived, and each company has two officers except mine. Poor old self has to carry on alone still, but I am lucky in some of my N.C.O.s, which means a very great deal of work and anxiety taken off one's shoulders. By-the-by, I am not a captain in rank, as you seem to think in one of your letters, although commanding a company. It is absolutely astounding, but the 158th German regiment have not yet fired a shot since Christmas, and I believe are genuinely sick of the whole thing. Artillery duels go on the same as ever.

So glad you get the old healthy bump every morning, though the weather is awful; it hardly stops raining at all here, and I have got to take my company up to the trenches to dig to-night for six hours, d—n and blast!

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

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I. I. I. 5.

O.C. 2/Battalion Scots Guards. 7th Army Corps.

*Herewith a German, 158th Regiment, who came right into our trenches on my right, No. 12 Platoon. The Sentry saw him close to our barbed wire, and covered him and challenged. He continued to walk straight in, unarmed,*



*and jumped into our trenches. Sergeant Macdonald (Platoon Sergt., No. 12 Platoon) brought him to me under escort.*

*E. HULSE, Lt.*

*1.10 a.m.*

*Com. G. Coy.*

*I have taken nothing off the prisoner ; his papers and effects are exactly as when he entered my trenches.*

*E. H.*

*Received from Sir E. Hulse one prisoner at 1.32 a.m.*

*JAS. MONCUR, Serg.-Major,  
2/Bn. Scots Guards.*

*BILLETS,*

*28.1.15.*

*MY DEAREST MOTHER,*

Strange to say we have had six days without rain, and the change has been very welcome, and has enabled us to make ourselves a good deal more comfortable in the trenches. We have even reclaimed several bits which had been abandoned, and have got to work with the pumps again. Keen frost and little snow at night is all we have had, and as a result the men are cheery beyond words, and years younger. They marched out of the trenches last night with mouth organs, penny whistles, etc., playing "Highland Laddie," as if they had only just landed in the country.

We have had one or two alarms during the last few days, but nothing came of it. The Kaiser's birthday was not celebrated by the enemy in any way beyond a little singing.

I and my C.S.M. have made some pretty practice, working together with rifle and glasses, turn and turn about. We have accounted for three Germans for certain, and probably two others during the last four days, but it is no easy matter, as they will not show up now, and three hours hard work may result in a complete blank !

Our army has had 212 cases of typhoid since the beginning of the war (very small number). Of these, only eleven cases had been inoculated, and all recovered. Of the remaining 201, twenty-two died, and some are in a serious condition. So much for the anti-inoculationists!

A heavy bombardment is going on, on our right to the North, but we have not yet heard what it is.

The poor old 1st Battalion took it in the neck again the other day. The enemy attacked five times, and R.F. and L.F. Coys., which were in the trenches at the time, had heavy casualties: more, I cannot say, except that we are all aghast and making large goggle-peeps at the official account, which appeared in the D.T. of 28th, or possibly 27th, under heading "La Bassée." I shall never accuse the German papers of talking again. I may be able to write more later on about it.

The younger Monckton, Gerald Crutchley and Morrison-Bell are reported missing, and anyhow, whether killed or wounded, are in German hands. I believe they are prisoners, and may be unwounded.

I have had a letter from Mrs. de Mello, and am waiting for arrival of parcels of smokes before writing to her.

Your three pairs of socks arrived at a most opportune moment, when we were short, and three men wanted them badly. Please thank Mrs. Meston.

There is very little news at present. I am enclosing two little items, one of which you have seen. Please send both on to Uncle Mi, who will appreciate the printed one, signed Little Tich Beerbohm. It is made out in regular form, like the information which is circulated from time to time. It really is a good joke, and I believe was composed by one of the "Artist Rifles" themselves. Ask him to return both papers to you.

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—The Potsdam Diary is having a tremendous success.

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VERSES BY A SUBALTERN OF "C" COY., 2/R.D.F.

- A is our Army, which with impunity,  
Bill said he'd smash at his first opportunity.*
- B is the Base, which is called St. Nazaire,  
No longer the home of the gallant and fair.*
- C is the Charge of the Scottish of London—  
From the papers you'd argue they only had done one.*
- D is De Wet, who thought it was wiser  
To break his allegiance and follow the Kaiser.*
- E is the End of this horrible war—  
It will probably last for a century more.*
- F are the Flares which never seem lacking,  
Sent up by the Germans to see who's attacking.*
- G are the Germans, a race much maligned.  
A more peace-loving people you hardly can find.*
- H are the Huns, their nearest of kin,  
A pastoral people they are said to have been.*
- I am the writer, a perfect nonentity—  
That is the reason I hide my identity.*
- J is the Joy on the faces of men,  
When they're told they must go down for rations at ten.*
- K is the Kaiser, who's said to be balmy.—  
We always feel safe when he's leading his army.*
- L is the Lake that protects us from fire,  
They call it a trench, when the weather is drier.*
- M stands for Mud, to describe which foul stuff  
Violent blasphemy's hardly enough.*

- N is the Noise which we generally hear  
On the night when the Germans are issued with beer.*
- O is the Order—obeyed with a yawn—  
Of “Stand to your arms—it’s an hour till dawn!”*
- P is the Post, which generally brings  
Parcels of perfectly valueless things.*
- Q is the Question we all do abhor,  
Concerning the probable end of the war.*
- R stands for Rum, and also for Russians,  
Our two greatest allies when fighting the Prussians.*
- S as you know always stands for Supplies,  
Whose excellent qualities no one denies.*
- T is Tobacco, that beautiful stuff,  
And thanks be to heaven we’ve now got enough.*
- U stands for Uhlan, who’s gained notoriety,  
Both through his kindness and wonderful piety.*
- V is the Voice of the turtle, which bird  
Has been turned into stew, so it’s no longer heard.*
- W stands for Wine, Women, and War,  
We’ll see to the first when the latter is o’er.*
- X is a perfectly horrible letter—  
I’ll leave it alone, and I couldn’t do better.*
- Y stands for Ypres, which the Germans desire,  
They shelled it as soon as they had to retire.*
- Z stands for Zeppelins, who long to raid  
A Circus, a Square and a certain Arcade.*
-

BILLETS,  
6/2/15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Back in Brigade Reserve again, and expecting to be called out any moment to dig.

By-the-by, Fortnum and Mason parcel has arrived safely, and Ludo's cake ; also 7 pr. of mittens from Grandma, for which please thank her, and tell her that they are very much appreciated by the men. Please tell Auntie Gar also, that Grand Duke Michael's gloves and mittens arrived a long time ago and practically all the men got them.

I have just had a letter from Mrs. Leo ; after infinite pains I made out the gist of it, and she and Mr. Leo seem to have been delighted with Breamore. I would have given anything to hear Mr. Leo and Charlie talking farm stock. I know Mr. Leo will be milking cows before long ! Please thank Mrs. Leo very much for the letter, and tell her that I will write when a little spare time comes my way.

The Government are absolutely raving mad, and we want some strong unscrupulous fellow with an iron hand to run things. How much better things would be run if we could put the whole country under martial law, Government included.

I don't believe a word our " eminent financiers " say as to Germany not being able to carry on owing to shortage of money. If a country has its back against the wall, and is under the sway of a desperate military caucus (shortly, I hope, carcase), she will fight on, money or no money.

A very interesting thing happened the day before yesterday : we had a trench-mortar working in my trenches, and it made a very nasty mess of the enemy's trenches and dug-outs as far as we could see. It made very little noise going off, and an appalling explosion when it arrived *chez les Bosches*. They replied with shrapnel, and we picked some up where they had burst weakly and were more than surprised to find that they contained marbles, rather larger than the lead shrapnel bullet

which I gave you, but lighter in weight by far than an ordinary marble, and made of some very light stone. It could not possibly hurt anyone, unless it actually struck one on the head, and even then I doubt whether it could penetrate.

On the other hand, they have been firing more than usual, and most of their shells explode now. They have been showing a certain amount of activity, but have wasted a good deal of energy, and I hope will go on doing so. My reference to our astounding newspaper statements still holds good ; we all held ourselves in readiness to go to the assistance of the 1st Division, but they did good work with their second counter-attacks ; the first failed. The second pushed the Germans back, and they got fair hell from our guns and the French combined, but the announcement that we retook *all* trenches was not quite compatible with facts !

I am afraid M. Bell is killed, and the other two probably.

The other night the enemy tried an attack on us ; the night before we had "feinted" an attack : that means that our guns opened a rapid fire on their trenches, followed by heavy rifle-fire ; the enemy, we hoped, would hurry up reinforcements, and our guns then opened again on their rear trenches and roads in rear, hoping to catch them. We believe that good work was done.

Well, on the night after, the enemy did the same ; we were ready for them, and they opened heavy fire of all kinds ; we thought it was a "feint" too, but on sending up star-shells, we saw men (probably officers) apparently urging their men on, and a good deal of shouting, etc. I am sure that they meant an attack, and that under the very heavy and prompt fire which we and our guns developed, they wouldn't take it on. An attack on the Middlesex never came off, and they show signs of nerves frequently, and whenever there is no moon, they keep on sending up star-shells to see if we are crawling forward against them.

There are also many proofs that the British troops are the only ones which are employed, time after time, on dirty work. The French, if they have a rough time, are immediately taken out in rear to rest, and the

enemy do the same. I really believe that our fellows are the only ones who will take it on three or four times.

During the last few days in the trenches I have had grand sport with a telescopic sight on my rifle. It is giving the enemy a bit of their own, as a telescopic sight is a "Zeiss," made in Germany. We know that they use them a lot, and lately I have been worried with a swine who makes infernally good practice ; he hits anything one puts up, and missed my C.S.M. by not more than 2 inches.

We put up several marks for him in the place that we generally snipe from, and which he had driven us out of, and watched carefully, and noticed that the bullets were coming at an angle ; this meant that his position was right away to the flank, and that he was not opposite us, where we were looking for him. We found a convenient little spot which faced in the required direction, and was shielded from the front, and at once spotted him and two other swine, right away to the right at about 550 yards (the trenches are not more than about 350 yards apart at opposite points).

My C.S.M. and I had stocking-caps on so as to draw less attention, and to assimilate easily with the background of the trench behind us. We had a man at the old place, about 20 yards to our right, and we knew that the German had spotted us there, so we made the man hold up a big turnip, with a stocking-cap on it, just above the loop-hole. I must explain that these rifles with telescopic sights cannot be used through loop-holes, owing to the size of the fitting and rifle together. Well, sure enough, bullet after bullet plastered into and around the old turnip, and the German was so keen that he leaned well on to the parapet to make better practice. I could see his two pals with their caps just showing, but he showed half way down his chest, and I could make out his telescopic sight clearly on his rifle. The moment had arrived, and, with my C.S.M. watching carefully with my glasses, I pulled ! With these telescopic sights you can see everything, every little detail, and it was an extremely pretty moment for me—his arms went up and his head went back, his cap fell off and he disappeared backwards, heavily into the trench.

He had let go his rifle, and one of his pals leant over quickly to get it, and I put another shot in, and just missed by the left. I was really pleased at getting the brute, as he had given us endless trouble. They have not got many crack shots, and what there are very rarely show themselves and nearly always use loop-holes, and it is a mere chance if one gets one through a loop-hole. Also the fact that he had a rifle with telescopic sight shows that he was a picked shot. I saw his two pals appear at loop-holes just after, and they fairly plastered our *old* position (where I had had the turnip dressed in the Balaclava helmet), and I made them both move up and down to various loop-holes, until they gave it up. The second I saw a rifle being shoved through a loop-hole I let drive, and could see the earth fly up just below, or just at the side.

It was a pleasant reward for three hours' hard work, and they daren't show their little fingers by day, now.

To put it shortly, "'e come down proper, 'e did." It is a novel and a pleasant sensation to see the fellow you hit fall. Generally, firing with the naked eye even at 250 yards, if a head or head and shoulders is your only mark, you don't see much of what happens. Unfortunately, we have only this one telescopic sight in the Battalion, and next time in the trenches another Company has got to have it.

I broke into song at a concert we had when last in billets, in a rash moment, and shall probably always have to "oblige" in future. I have made up a little song since (in the trenches), a skit about our Hd.-qr. Staff, including most of them, from George downwards, and, pending his consent, shall fire it off at the next concert.

By-the-by, please send me at once the *Anthology of Humorous Verse*, by Theodore A. Cook (Price 3s. 6d. net), you can get it at Bumpus', or anywhere. I have discovered untold talent in my Coy., including a really good tenor, who is the brother of a Scotch tenor who had something to do with *Buntz pulls the Strings*. He sang two Scotch folk songs quite remarkably well.

I am afraid the Crefeld lot are having a thin time ; they are unspeakable brutes, and why the —— our rotten Govt. can't make reprisals instead



of talking humanity and rot, I cannot understand. The prisoners in England ought to be made to do useful work for us (not for themselves) night and day! They are swine and will always be swine!

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

BILLETS,

17.2.15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

We have had a very busy time indeed in Divisional Reserve, and I have not had a minute to write;—hence my terse little Field Post Card of yesterday. We have had to make up books, lists and all company matters, and get everything ship-shape, as we are expecting a draft, but I shall not believe it until I see the men actually before me. We have heard of so many drafts, and none have arrived yet. In addition to that, we have been pow-wowing night and day, and submitting schemes for the best method of attack, both by night and by day, and yesterday had to carry out an attack on an old line of trenches  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile behind the firing-line. If only a German aeroplane could have seen us, I wonder what it would have reported! Two different methods of attack were practised. The Right Half-Battalion under Pip, and the Left Half under me. He attacked in open order, and I attacked in columns of Platoons. The whole thing was made as genuine as possible, in order to practise all ranks in the many and varied tasks allotted to them in the attack.

The Brigadier and staff watched, and I had to take it on first; we had an easy bit of barbed wire to get through, and everything went well until the inevitable happened. (This is not to be published.) To make matters thoroughly realistic, the Brigade bomb-throwers with live bombs, portioned up, so many to each of our columns, took part.

They were 6th Gordons, and of course just as we got to the barbed wire and were breaking through, when it was their business to bomb the enemies trenches, one of the damnable machines went off before it was thrown and blew one man's thigh half away and broke his leg and wounded another. Of course we stopped the business and had all bombs removed, and carried out the attack again without the infernal inventions.

I have not yet heard what lessons the Brigadier learnt from our efforts, but I have formed several very well defined views on bombs and shortage of wire cutters.

Apart from these little items, I spent the day before yesterday from 10 a.m. till 5.30 p.m. without a break at all, sitting on a Court Martial, or rather on a series of them.

Vivian B.-J. (Rifle Brigade) and Ned Coke came over to see me yesterday, and we had a long talk on the affairs of the world in general, without any of us knowing anything !

You will remember that before Christmas we changed our trenches, in order to take over and improve trenches on our right. Well, we have improved them 50% and my men have worked like fun at the wire, etc., and have done wonders, and also, of course, have made themselves pretty comfortable. To-day we go back to the trenches, and have just heard that we have all got to move to the left, and take over the —— trenches, which are in a filthy condition from neglect ; no work can be got out of them, and the higher authorities consider the line unsafe in consequence ; so the result is that as soon as we have got comfortable by sheer hard work, we have got to go and begin all over again, and do a great deal of strengthening and wiring to the front, all of which is ticklish work. It is hard on the men, but of course a great compliment. However, the men don't see that at all.

Filthy weather, rain and high wind. We have had two false alarms lately, but they are always good practice for turning the men out. (Please ask F. L. Smith to send me two boxes of a hundred cigarettes, over and above his ordinary consignments at once.)

I love your story of Queen Mary and "Little Mary," and also of the dear old Belgians. Telescopic sights, being made in Germany, are almost impossible to get, and cost from £12 to £15, and want specially sighting on rifles, etc. Do not trouble about that; we must trust to what we get sent out. Not another minute to spare. Hope to have time to write from the trenches, but doubtful.

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Many thanks for *Humorous Verse*.

---

BILLETS,

22/2/15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Many thanks for your wire; needless to say I was extremely pleased, although "rushed" hardly expresses the filthy, slow crawling which we did. You are quite right—the "machine gun did it!"

George Abercromby paid us a visit the other day, and I hardly recognized him; quite a fat face and a "glengarry" cocked on the side of his face or, rather, head.

Photo can appear in Journal; I hope Lady Leucha succeeds in removing me from her film, but as I take a prominent place in it she will probably have some difficulty!

It is the last thing and "the limit" that it should be possible for Mrs. X. to roll up at 4th Army Corps Hd.-qrs. Much better if some of the rotten Govt. had done so, as we might have got them into the bullet zone.

I saw General Rawly the other day; he shook me heavily by the hand and we had a few words together.

We have just spent an uneventful and rather wet four days, but by the direct intervention of Providence and a few forcibly put remarks

by myself, I did not have to take over the new bit of the line from the — and —. Pip had to do it, and has had a hard four days and nights, including two men killed. There was absolutely no cover at all, and the above-mentioned Regiments must have simply sat still for two months and watched their parapets and defences fall in without doing one stitch of work. Instead of moving the whole Battalion down from right to left, which would have placed me in the new and neglected bit (as I was on the left of the line), they quite rightly took Pip's Coy. out from the right and bumped it on the left, thereby necessitating the movement of one Coy. only, instead of four. It was hard on Pip, but I agreed to do all the "wiring" I could in front of him, and kept my part of the bargain,—during the last four nights I have put up entanglements, including 43 coils of wire ( $\frac{1}{4}$  mile long each) and 870 posts and pegs! One night the enemy sent up a star-shell, which dropped plum in the middle of my wiring party. The minute a star-shell is sent up by either side, if one is out in front of one's trenches, one has to lie absolutely flat and still. We did so, and although the flare dropped right in amongst us, they never spotted us.

The Brigadier was very nervous about the left of my Coy., which rests on a road, and especially about the gap which existed between me and the — and —, just on the left of that. Seeing that the latter could be got to do nothing at all, he turned me on to wire not only my left but also in front of the gap and in front of four forts of the —. It is always a ticklish job wiring in front, with occasional sniping, but I have got some good N.C.O.s who are absolutely expert on the job, and don't panic when shots come near in the middle of the night, as many do!

We have been at it for eight days now (our last two spells in the trenches) and completed it just before we came out; we have worked from 7 p.m. to 1 and 2 a.m. every night, and have perpetrated such an entanglement as you never saw; it far exceeded General Pa's expectations, and he was awfully pleased, and talked for ten minutes on end about it. He asked me to compliment the wiring party, which

I did, and also incidentally gave them all a tot of neat whisky each on the quiet. It is highly skilled labour and a test on the nerves, so I thought a little whisky (a thing which they never get at all) would not come amiss !

All ranks of my Coy. are working awfully well, and by dint of constant organizing and drill when in billets, and heavy discipline, the whole machine is working really well now. It is a very different thing from two months ago, and makes it far easier, of course, for me.

We have just had a draft of 2 officers and 200 men, so that we now have 11 officers (1 on leave), and over 600 for the trenches. We are hard at it this afternoon settling the draft into their places ; I come in for 34 of them only, but I get one of the officers, Jarvis, an ensign, and shall have a good deal of the smaller and more irksome items of work taken off me, such as taking parties of my Coy. up to the trenches from Brigade Reserve to dig at night, etc. It will make a big difference in the trenches, too, as we shall take it in turns to visit sentries by night, etc., all of which has been pretty hard, with no one but myself, hitherto. I shall introduce myself to them on parade to-morrow in a few "well chosens" and, I hope, to the point ! including a few gentle hints on that highly scientific and necessary part of soldiering, the Art of Sanitation. What I don't know about latrine-digging and "chloride of lime" is not worth the shovel which is so necessary an implement !

However, enough of this, or the picture may become too vivid.

Germany is really getting a bit worried now about the food question, and I hope we really do put the screw on to the best of our ability. We cannot hear anything definite or reliable about the Russian reverse, or about a rumoured counter-success by the Russians.

A good deal of mist and occasional frost now, and very damp, but with the water in the trenches well in hand, we are pretty comfortable. More work ;—am just off to dig this filthy country up.

With best love to you and O., and all.

Ever your loving

TED.

BILLETS,  
4.3.15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Many thanks congrats. Am now covered with "stars," and feel quite heavy about the shoulders from sheer weight of metal. I have been unable to write during last two days, as we have moved. I am writing a lengthy letter this evening, and it may catch the same post as this, but am writing this in case it misses. I enclose Board of Trade letter; I can't have signed receipt myself, but I got an intimation from Cox, to say that it had been paid into my account, and I have seen it in my Pass book.

Very best love.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—The bald pate becomes the rank of Captain better than that of Lieut. anyhow!

P.P.S.—Please tell Kathleen Crichton I have not yet received an answer from the 1st Battalion as to the man she was enquiring after, and that I will write.

E. H.

BILLETS,  
4.3.15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I think this will probably catch the same post as my other (short) letter dated to-day. The temporary rank has to appear as such, but is as good as the full rank, and it is only a matter of red tape and two more notices in the *Gazette* to get the full promotion. They may antedate me next time, and then after that confirm me in my rank, though that will probably not appear for a good long time. George, who has always dreaded being promoted "Major," has now got to it; he says it makes him feel a

hundred, and that it's a dirty old man's rank ! Of course, he ought to have been promoted temp. Lt.-Colonel, drawing Colonel's pay, as he has absolutely run the Battalion ever since Ypres, and pulled it together through very dirty and trying times. I have had the Coy. for three months now, and hope to be antedated some time, but one can never tell, as the way the *Army List*, *Gazettes* and promotions are being worked is beyond the ken of even the most astute and learned red-tapist that ever trod. Prisoners, interned officers, ensigns who have not been out, have done no duty at all at home, and every sort of person has been promoted ; however, we do feel out here that we have deserved ours and worked a bit for it !

Before I forget, please tell Uncle Mi that George and I think very little of him for not answering our respective letters of about a month ago. (As a matter of fact, George's way of putting it was considerably stronger and more laconic.) Now for news, confidential ; we have been relieved by the Canadians.

We have moved to billets a bit further South and about ten miles behind the firing-line ; great comfort, nice people, an excellent family in this farm who have *eight* kids, all of whom parade up and down, all day long, with pitch-forks, saws, hoes and axes, shouting "Allemands ! Pooff ! " and accompany the above remarks with a fierce lunge ; how they have not had a sad accident with the improvised weapons, I do not know, as the two axes are considerably larger than the young French patriots who carry them !

We cannot say for certain what they are going to do with us, but I should think probably a few days' rest, perhaps a long one, even, and keep us in readiness to move to any threatened point. On the other hand, we may be going to take over trenches again, further down, and at a more important point ; our last place was neither strategical nor tactical, and the Huns would never make a big offensive there.

After I had been relieved and had got my Coy. together (now close on 200 men) I was held up for ten minutes by such a crowd as you never saw ; they came down the road, officers and men cursing alike, some in threes, some in pairs, and others in single file ; one officer as he passed me

and I cautioned him to tell his men to keep their mouths shut, if he didn't want to get shelled, said "Say, this is the most Gawd d—d locality I ever did see!" Another bright man as he passed said "Glory be to Gawd, this is no d—d picnic." In fact, I have seen many school-treats infinitely better managed and disciplined. However, be it said on the other side, that the Canadian Highlanders are a very fine lot and well set up. But you cannot get away from the fact that discipline cannot be grafted on to men who have been brought up to regard no one but themselves as master, and that every man is as good as another. They will fight like demons, no doubt, hand to hand, and in the excitement of a charge; but given the filthy conditions without any of the glamour, or excitement, it is very questionable whether the machine, without iron discipline, will not go to pieces. But they are keen, excellent at scouting, nothing they don't know about taking care of themselves, and practical common sense, and have a large percentage, I believe, of country-bred men, which means a great deal out here. They can shoot, and one and all mean business. May the Good Lord so order the councils of our higher commanders that the Canadians get on to German soil, well in the front line, and I think we shall be able to show the Huns what *Louvain*, *Rheims* and *Malines* really mean!

We have had yet another draft (2 officers and 50 men) which means an addition during the last ten days of 4 officers, and 370 men. We have now got quite a smart Battalion, and 14 officers, counting Doctor and Quartermaster. Jarvis, the ensign whom I have got, is in Joe Whitburn's business, age 24, and was at Warren Hill with me. He is a very good fellow, I think, and promises well; I am getting a little discipline into him, which is all he wants, as he is full of common-sense—a very necessary item out here. They have sent us one very moderate young fellow, who is quite incapable, but luckily Pip has got the arduous task of training him, and not I!

I believe the two new arrivals are both good, and I hope to get one of them. They only arrived to-day. We are hard at work cleaning up, drilling and lecturing, etc. We had a concert before we left the old



place, and found some perfectly astounding talent in the new drafts. R.F. Coy. has most of it, but I have the best of the whole lot, one Jamieson, a private, who has joined for the war. He is the nearest thing to a gentleman possible, and has one of the best tenor voices I have ever heard, and plays the piano the very best! The general tone and level of our concerts rises, as we get more fresh men, recruited from higher circles, and the mixture of the better class song, with a few efforts of the very small minority of old serving-soldiers and rough and tough nuts, whom we have left, is very curious.

We were really quite sorry to leave the old trenches; they had become much as a home, and after all the work put into them, they had changed rapidly from a position of extreme and acute discomfort, into a very passably comfortable and clean line.

The Dardanelles business is capital, and the old Turks, from what I know of them, I should think must be panicoing well and will shortly have internal strife.

Do you think we mean to carry the business through properly with land forces co-operating with the Navy on the northern shores of the Straits? We might even find Sir John Maxwell leading his army along the Hellespont! Mr. Leo is grand, and the January Nat. priceless. Why the —— do we let Von Bissing go, just after we have, with extreme difficulty, and 6 months too late, gingered ourselves up into arresting him? For sheer folly and short-sighted bungling, we do win it! If I have the good fortune to see this business through, there are quite a large number of people who will never “criss my threshold” if I know it. It is a very sweet notion, our gay proletariat striking for ¼d. extra at this juncture, and endangering the department with which we have most difficulty, namely, supplies in general, and clothing and equipment in particular; the military ought to have stepped in at the beginning, but our Government has always consulted the feelings of trades unions, and such like dirty organizations, to such an extent, that it will be difficult for them to deal with the matter shortly and sharply, as they should.

Please give my very best love to all the family, and thank Giggles Douglas Gordon for his wire of congrats.

Ever your loving

TED.

4.3.15.

P.S.—Enclosed is a curious item ; the enemy 7 nights ago put up 5 little posts with dirty bits of rag, as flags, on top half-way between their trenches and mine.

We investigated the matter the night after, having noticed them by day ; we did so extremely carefully and gingerly, as I thought a wire might be attached, or explosive. However, we found each had a little bag tied on the post with the enclosed inside.<sup>1</sup> I take it that the enemy were opposite the Indians, some of whom they captured, and they wanted to show up the result. Perhaps you can get enclosed translated.

E. H.

---

BILLETS,

8.3.15.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Very short and hasty letter, as busy beyond words ; we have moved again. Owing to possible hasty moves, do not expect regular correspondence ; in fact, Field Service Postcard is the form it will probably take, and posts may be very irregular from here. Please thank Aunt May and Bina for kind letters of congrats. ; also Uncle Baa, and say that I will write when possible.

<sup>1</sup> *Facsimiles of the enclosed slips of paper appear on the opposite leaf. They were German proclamations to our Indian troops, written in Hindustani, Urdu, and a Punjabi dialect, and have been thus translated by the kindness of Mr. W. Barclay Squire of the British Museum :—*

*“Do not believe that the Germans are your enemies. On the contrary they are your friends. Those Sepoys who will be captured will be sent back to India and will not be put in gaol. Those who say that the Germans are your enemies are liars.”*

सिपाहियो! जर्मन लोग तुमसे दुश्मनी नहीं रखते बल्की तुम्हारे दोस्त हैं। जो सिपाही हमारे पास हैं उनकी जातुधम्म के मुताबिक परवरिश करते हैं और उनको सुल्हे के बकत हिन्दुस्तान को वापस भेजेंगे। खाना पीना कमी जर्मन मुल्क में नहीं छेड़ेगा। जो कोई दूसरी बात तुम्हें बोलता है सो

झूठा है ॥ राम राम ॥

سپاہیوں! جرمن لوگ تم سے دشمنی نہیں رکھتے بلکہ تمہارے دوست ہیں جو سپاہی ہمارے پاس ہیں ان کی ذات دھرم کے مطابق پرورش کرتے ہیں

اور اُن کو صلح کے وقت ہندوستان کو واپس بھیج دے گا  
 پسنا کبھی جرم تک میں نہیں گھسیٹا گا جو کوئی دوسری بات تمہیں بولتا ہے  
 سوجھتا ہے x آداب x آداب x آداب x

[illegible]

Lady Hall, too, sent me a most useful little measure in centimètres, up to a mètre ; please convey best thanks, and say that letter will follow on first opportunity.

After foul rain it cleared up this morning early and looked like being a perfect day, though very cold. But it was too much to ask of it, and at the present moment (2 p.m.) it is snowing, with a young gale behind it.

Very best love to you and O.

Ever your loving

TED.

P.S.—Have just heard of big Russian success, so big that I cannot believe it, but hope that it will mature.

E. H.

---



March 15th, 1915.

Monday.

Dear Lady Hulse,

*I am taking upon myself the sad duty of writing you a few lines to express my deepest sympathy for the great loss you have suffered in the death of your son. I will try and give you an outline of the occurrence as far as I have been able to obtain it from men who saw it.*

*We were attacking a position held by the enemy and had to cross some open plough to get into some support trenches, and while doing so the Commanding Officer, Major Paynter, who was directing the operations, was badly wounded and lay in the open. Slightly before he was struck, your son had gained cover behind a shallow trench, and upon learning that the Commanding Officer was hit, without hesitation went to see if he could render him any assistance, and in so doing was killed. He died instantly and suffered no pain whatever.*

*Of course under the circumstances I feel it my duty to write to you, owing to the Commanding Officer being wounded; otherwise you would have heard from him personally.*

*Yours very sincerely,*

ARCHIBALD JARVIS,  
2nd Lieut.

---

No. 7 Stationary Hospital,  
Boulogne,  
Wednesday.

Dear Lady Hulse,

*He was a grand fellow that son of yours, and I can realize a bit by my own feelings how awful his loss must be to you. He was with me trying to help me when he was hit. There was no finer soldier in the battalion, and his men would do anything for him.*

*Forgive this scrawl. Wish could write more.*

*Yours sincerely,*

GEORGE PAYNTER.





MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE RETREAT OF THE 2ND BATTN. OF THE SCOTS GUARDS FROM  
MONS TO ROZOY AND THEIR ADVANCE TO THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE

(From Route drawn by Sir Edward Hulse, Oct. 1914)



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