

1 8 AM Aug 16/15

My Dear Mother.

In the front line once more, my chum is occupying the dug-out with me not quite as good as the one we had before, stood to all night no sleep at all, lots of sniping and few heavy guns also few trench guns standing on our left and right, did not know what minute they might try the range on our trench, but they didn't or haven't yet at any rate, we got stand down which means leave so many men to watch and the remaining try and get a little rest and sleep until it comes their turn to watch, it comes just after daylight which is about 4 AM. the nights are getting quite a little longer also a little colder. My chum and I have the same sentry post, it is on three corners, we take turns of two hours all night, stopping everyone coming out or going in, finding out what their business is about etc, if anyone cannot give satisfactory answers or explain we send them to an officer, the Germans are very clever, they will put on any of our uniforms so we have to be quite alert so they won't get by us.

Made a little fire, fried our little piece of bacon, two little cans of tea, dipped our bread in the bacon fat for butter and had our little breakfast, it was fine, especially the tea it makes you brace up after being awake all night.

It was an awful long march in here from where I last wrote you, was very near all in, in one place the water was half way up to our knees in the trench, and the night, especially early morning hours were quite cool, felt tired, sleepy, cold, disagreeable and my back hurt my feet a little to keep matters along, when we arrived in one of the fellows that was coming out gave my chum some sugar, loaf of bread and two cans of jam partly full, Apricot and Gooseberry this will help us out fine, received a long stick of tobacco from Gay just before we started in, thought he was at home before this, he told me he would be the last of July, Received a letter from Clarrie at

at the same time but did not  
have time to read it until arrived  
in the trench, she said Guy wrote  
home that I was wounded. I only  
got an almighty thump at the  
back of my head from a big lump  
of clay flying after a shell exploded  
guess I was a little nutty for  
a while but have been alright  
for a long time, have had one  
or two other thumps but nothing  
serious. If I remember right I told  
him to keep quiet about it, also said the  
children was well and Helen scribbled  
a letter to me, wanting to know when  
I was coming home, would like to see  
the little imp, have a picture of the  
boy but none of her wish I could  
have one

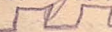
7 P.M

Everything about the same have  
had a little sleep enough so I  
wont go to sleep on my post tonight  
made a little fire and made supplies  
usual amount of rifle and big guns

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all day, the snipers are awful plenty  
have to keep your head well down.

10.30 AM Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Last night the same old story, no sleep,  
taking turns with my chum, the nights  
seem awful long and chilly, lots of sniping  
and flare lights as usual and a few  
big guns that went high overhead.  
into a village behind us, made  
breakfast as usual, have to walk a long  
way through the trenches for water,  
if you could straight across the fields  
it wouldn't take three minutes, but  
the trenches twist and turn so you  
walk about three miles just going a  
short distance, we walk a lot but don't  
get anywhere, this is the way they  
go . There have been lots  
of fatigue or working parties carrying  
rations and all descriptions of stuff but  
I so far have been lucky enough to  
get out of them by keeping quiet.

6 P.M

Everything quite well, heavy sniping  
on both sides, rats very thick and  
big ones too, squealing all the time  
and fighting among themselves, we  
are going to put some food on top

of the trench tonight and try and spear them with our bayonets, had some sleep today but feel awful tired and sleepy just the same, cannot get right down to it and have a good sleep, anyone speaks you are awake in a second, and the guns wake you about every time, repairing the trench in places, especially where the bullets come right through and we have to be very careful, we have what they call enfiladed fire, the Germans can fire on us from three directions it happens to be our trench this time, now and then a little dirt goes down your neck when a snipers bullet rips open a sand bag.

8.30 AM Aug 18

It rained hard last night, wet, tired and sleepy this morning, everything muddy, slippery and trench in places full of water, will have to work to help drain it off, it will not take long to get rid of the water but the mud will stay until the sunshine dries it up, and it looks like more rain, perhaps the rainy season has started in, if so it will be very uncomfortable. The Russians seem to be getting it rubbed into them but my idea is and has been that

she will give Germany an awful  
slap in the face one of these days.  
there was not as much sniping as  
usual last night kept in out of the  
rain I guess.

7 P.M Aug 18<sup>th</sup>

One of our boys a sergeant got killed  
this noon, one of the German snipers  
got him going through a trench, they  
missed him for half an hour, one fellow  
found him as he was coming through,  
he was very careless a number of times  
before this, he was just back from  
seven days vacation to England where  
his home is I think, am glad he had  
a little enjoyment before he went, he  
was a very nice fellow. Another fellow  
got a slight wound in the head from  
a piece of shrapnel, and two other  
fellows got shot through the shoulders  
not serious wounds but will lay  
them up for a while, they were going  
for water, I crept low when I went  
by that place after water. Been  
raining a lot more, water just as  
bad as before, another disagreeable  
night before us!

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I watch the big dipper every night  
that is clear kind of passes the time away,  
there must be a difference of time of four or  
five hours between here and U. S. A.

9 A.M. Aug 19<sup>th</sup>

Rained quite hard in the night, quite chilly,  
usual amount of sniping on both sides,  
had a little experience last night, Chum and  
I was on sentry about one o'clock dark as  
pitch, heard something sound like a man  
falling into the trench, we spoke out  
sharp. Halt. Who goes there. and got no  
answer, we both had our rifles ready either  
to shoot or bayonet, we moved up on him  
until we could see a big black object stretched  
out in the trench, I stood ready to kill  
him (sounds nice) if he moved and my Chum  
gave it a gentle dab with his bayonet and  
the point struck against a little rock,  
we knew what it was then, the water  
had undermined one side of the trench  
and it had caved in, clay and bags of sand  
We thought we was going to make a  
capture but was disappointed.

8  
It was so rainy the rats did not put in appearance, heard we are to go behind a little way for four days, going out tonight. Had a crazy spell and shared myself and Chum this morning, it is the first time I have shared when in the firing line, all sorts of remarks thrown at me by the boys, for I must always have whiskers on in the trench, am getting things ship-shape ready to move out tonight.

8 A.M Aug 20<sup>th</sup>

We was all ready to move at 3 P.M but was kept waiting and waiting, don't know what for, it was tiresome, lots of other troops coming in, the Germans dropped a high explosive shell, back of where I am, into a trench full of our boys, by good luck it did not explode, if it had it would have got a great number, blown them sky high, then they began dropping a little nearer each time to the firing line following a trench we are to go in and out of, and my post was on the end of this trench, we had just moved up a little way, and two officers belonging to

other troops were standing where we just left, another shell dropped right there and killed the both them. Broke them up quite bad. We got started shortly afterwards, then two of us was called back <sup>first</sup> to carry the two out to a cemetery, but changed their minds and said could not be done until after dark, I was glad for was tired and they both were big men would have been an awful tiresome job. we moved out three hours after we was ready, if had gone on time everything would have been O.K.

The shells are terrible to our nerves, they come whistling and sound as if right straight for you, your flesh shivers up ready for the shock and you watch the sky just before they drop, you can see the shell plain as day. Your parcel come in handy I tell you, cook kitchen was there to meet us, so I went to work on that, the other cooks were worried because I had not shown up before had hot tea, bread and butter jam and cheese waiting for me and your parcel, had a wash and put on

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the clean shirt and socks you sent  
then went to bed feeling fine,  
9 AM Aug 24<sup>th</sup>

Same as usual on the wagon peeling  
potatoes, cutting meat etc. yesterday  
afternoon quite a few shrapnel shells  
come quite near us, had to keep ducking  
behind trees and under the wagon from  
the pieces flying, some are small but  
heavy and ragged edges, the boys have  
a lot of pieces for souvenirs. we are  
only a little way behind the firing  
line on a side hill, everything quiet  
last night except our own artillery  
sending over a few.

8.30 PM Aug 25<sup>th</sup>

In bed, had plenty of excitement this  
forenoon, shrapnel shells galore, pieces  
flying all about, just get started doing  
something then you have duck under  
the wagon must have jumped under  
fifteen or twenty times, one piece you  
could hear it humming struck the  
place where we sleep, it was very

slender but about six inches long  
that would cut some hole in anybody,  
it was hitting all around us got one little  
piece that struck four feet behind me  
am saving it, they are all most red  
hot when they land, we learned our  
lesson long ago not to pick them up  
to quick. They brought the two officers  
down the next morning and buried  
them below here somewhere, there was  
one fellow buried here today but not  
of our bunch, there are little grave  
yards everywhere with a wooden cross  
giving his name, number, what he  
belonged to etc. this little yard just above  
us has the mens hats thrown on  
top of the grave and one has a  
lot of beautiful flowers of all descriptions.

There is a big rat overhead, no matter  
how much I pound does not frighten  
him. heard we are to go back in  
the front line tomorrow night. kind  
of dread it, hope it isn't so.

7 PM 12 Aug 73<sup>rd</sup>

Everything the same, our guns sending over a few, have heard we are to go in tomorrow morning now, quicker we get in and have it over quicker we go back for a much needed rest, it is now about 3.30 P.M. had to do a little work just as I got started to write, water is boiling for tea at 4.30 P.M., the other two cooks are away somewhere, it is very pleasant this P.M. have shared, oiled my boots, cleaned my rifle, washed the muddy stockings had on when I come out, one outside shirt and one undershirt, did I tell you had parcel from Mattie with two great snert rags and chocolate, the chocolate was great and the other comes in mighty handy. I see the German fleet got a nice little snack up in the Baltic sea, would like to have been there.

Aug 24<sup>th</sup>

13 (Evening)

Well! we are in once more, pretty well tired tonight, brought in a great bag of kindling wood for the fire, nobody thought about helping me carry it in, but they never forget to bounce the wood off of you after it is in and steal it away from you besides, we are in the same trench as before only just a bit up the line more, there are four of us in this dugout this time, myself and Chum, a fellow that talks all the time and a fellow that is scared all the time. the only drawback we had coming in was a german shell killed two and wounded five in the rear of us, the shells went over us when we was in the trench.

Aug 25 (Forenoon)

Done one hours guard last night early in the night, then went away back the way we came in to get the boys rations. there was eight or ten of us, and went to work soon as we was back, digging with a shovel and filling sand bags, strengthening the trench and making dugouts this lasted until morning, the Germans was doing the same, could hear them pounding stakes and throwing what sounded like old iron around.

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When we got through we all gave the Germans a few shots so they would know we was alive, ~~not~~ shots fired on either side all night as we was working in front of our trench and they was doing the same so if they fired on us we would fire on them. Kind of an understanding if they kept quiet we would, but on the right and left of our trench they was going it strong, there was a monster of a fire behind the German lines last night, had about two hours sleep this morning then they woke me up to do an hour sentry, just off few minutes ago, have had breakfast of hot tea, little bacon and some onions I brought in with me, would like to have a great plate of baked beans and a big junk of brown bread and some coffee once more, haven't had a taste of coffee for months and months just tea, tea, tea all the whole time.

15 6 P.M

Have had a little more sleep but not enough, been cleaning up the trenches and done another sentry when it was my turn, been digging and filling more sand bags for tonight, pretty tired and will have to work all night besides.

P.M

Aug 26

Worked about all night, digging and filling more sand bags, nice bright moonlight, night see almost as plain as in day, the German was working like time, could hear them driving more stakes and team after team drive up and unload then get out of the way or the been jump an awful racket, they were afraid we might send over a shell I suppose, no firing on either side again until daylight, have to watch them close when we are working outside the trench, for they are apt to call in their men then open up on us, you can't trust them a second, had breakfast same without onions and a couple hard tacks, they are as hard as

iron, everybody working but the sentries  
digging and filling more sand bags,  
had to move out of our dug-out so  
some wires could be run in there  
have got a smaller one this trip only  
three of us. I never have seen so many  
rats as there are in this trench, fighting  
among themselves all the time, four or  
five big ones will get going through  
the bushes almost scare the wits out of  
us at night, our artillery keeps dropping  
a few on their trench to upset their  
work, but they always get even some  
way, and going to lay down for two or  
three hours, if they don't pull me out  
and get ready for tonight's work, it is  
work all the time this trip I don't  
quite understand it.

Aug 27 P.M.

17 Sept 9.

Have skipped a few days have been busy, the second cook is in the hospital and the first cook is taking a Sergeants place so I am head cook for my company, of course my chum took second cooks place.

You would be surprised to what I can do in the cooking line, roasts, steaks, stews, "Bully Beef" hash etc etc "Yankee fluff" I guess, there are 160 men in my company at present not quite full strength yet, although we received reinforcements the other day mostly Nova Scotia boys.

The second day they were in the firing line a shell got five of them mostly wounds.

I have received everything that you have sent up to date got the diary today, made me remember I had not done any writing lately, haven't heard from Cassie for some time perhaps it has gone astray, she might write so I would get one every few days if she wanted, perhaps she wishes I would get a stray one but I don't intend to, issued with blankets today looks like another winter.

Signed my name to a long list yesterday asking pardon for a soldier who went home for vacation, his wife was raising the devil and staying with another man, he killed his little child, I don't see what good that was, he ought to have given her a hell of a licking then take the child and gone, it asked for a full pardon for him.

Well! will close pretty soon, got a letter from Harry, D - liar said he had written 3 or 4 he is up to my stunts when he says that. Well! Good Bye and Good night.

Lots of love

Orville  
am writing classic tomorrow.  
Louise, Jim, Harry, Ralph somewhere  
in the near future