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Dear Mother

I had no time to write you a letter to go away to-day, so I sent you a post-card to say that you are all right, which I dare say you will get before this. How do you enjoy Christmas at home? Not so well as if we were with you I suspect, I should indeed to have been home with you, as I think it is the first Christmas for me to spend away from home. I did not think last year that I would spend it under such circumstances did I, but you are no doubt gratified to hear that I am alive and well and still going strong.

We were not in the trenches on that day, coming out into reserve billets on the 24th, we managed to have a good dinner, being day, with the aid of a few parcels from home. One of my pals had a roast chicken and some pudding sent him, another some roast pork, and I had a box of Cigars from M^{rs} M^{rs} San (Guemay), which opportunely reached me Christmas night. We took the lot to a house where the lady kindly warmed them in the oven for us and made us some chipped potatoes, so we managed to have a good feed after all. We went back to the trenches that evening, and came out last night. I felt better coming out this time than I have ever done before, due no doubt to the fact that I managed to get some sleep, a thing which I can very seldom do in the trenches. We go back in

again to-morrow night, where we will spend a couple of days, before coming out for a six days rest. We will then have the Christmas dinner which was promised us last time we were back in rest billets.

I have not seen Jack yet but may do so when going back from the line, it depends on where his battalion is. I have written to him asking him to keep a look out for me. When we came up the line I heard that his lot had gone back for a rest. Have you heard much from him yet, I hope he writes to you pretty often.

Things are pretty quiet in this part of the line, and I have nothing much to write about. One of our patrols got caught up against the German barbed wire, and came in for a warm time, we could not do any-

thing of course, as we might hit them, and the Germans were putting them with bombs, and turning machine guns on them, but they managed to come back to our trench safely, and without loss.

The first man out of our Company went on leave the night before last, so they have made a start at last. His name is Croker, and when the man from headquarters came to warn him, he was fast asleep in a dug-out about 12 o'clock in the night, he went off straight away and just as he was, dirty and covered with mud. He has a wife and two kiddies to welcome him home, and I bet he will be glad to see them again.

I was disappointed last night when two days past came, and there was nothing for me, as I remember you said that you had sent some of your Xmas pudding to me, but perhaps you