

Dec. 17th 1915

Dear Mother

I know you are anxiously awaiting to hear from me, & I am not able to post this to day, so I sent you a post-card this morning, to say that I am alright and in the best of health.

We have come out of the trenches for a few days rest back to the same place as we were on the last occasion. There is a very decent Soldiers Club here, where I am writing this, hence the ink. It is the first time for me to have a pen in my hand since we have been in France, and I feel it rather awkward. It is very comfortable and warm in here, there is everything for our convenience, books, games and coffee bar, I intend spending a lot of my time here, while our rest lasts.

I received Dads letter last night, and your parcel two ^{or three} days previously, I wrote to you acknowledging its arrival, and I dare say that by now you have had the letter.

Jack is out here, and whats more, we are

very near one another, and I am going to make every effort to try and see him. I heard, when we were in reserve, that his Battalion had come up to this part of the line, and was quite suppressed, not to say delighted when I heard that they were going to mix up with us in the trenches, I made certain that I would come across him, but unfortunately, it was "C" company, and not his, that came with us, and although I knew his whereabouts, I was unable to get to him. I made lots of enquiries among the boys of "C" company to see if anyone knew him, but could not find anyone.

When we went to the front line trenches, I found out that his Company was somewhere on our right, I did not think they would be very far away, so I determined to take a walk along the line to see if I would come across him, but he was too far away, being with the Grenadiers, and, as I could not very well wander too far from my post, I had to give it up, and am waiting for another chance.

I think that they were mixed with us so that they may learn trench discipline, that being the first time for them to be in the trenches. The majority of them are very young, and looked very small alongside the chaps of the Guards. They were very badly off for food also, but we put that allright for them, and made them "muck" in with us. I hoped that Jack was better off.

He must have been making enquiries too, probably knowing that the Welsh Guards were in the vicinity. I intended dropping him a line to keep a look out for me, unfortunately they did not come back with us, I was hoping that such would be the case, as we could then spend a lot of time together. I hope for better luck next time, as I should very much like to see him.

I have not heard from Tom yet, I suppose I must write to him, I note in Dad's letter that he is getting along alright. I had the post-card photo-graph of the group from your parcel, by the way, that bit of cake you made for me, was "bon", as we say out here, it reminds me of home. I had a parcel from Letty the same time, she keeps on sending them regularly, and I have had every one so far. I have already written to her. I managed to change your note into French money, and as we were paid 10 Francs the day before yesterday, I am pretty well off for money, and am having a good time on the strength of it. Although it goes very quick here, as these French us try to make as much out of us as possible, I don't like them at all and consider them a lot of "twisters". This morning, we had a route march, and when having a ten minutes halt on the road by some houses, I went to lean on one of the window sills to ease the weight of my pack. I however leaned too much, and broke the window. Out comes the old woman jabbering away, and calling for the officer, and wanting me to

pay her for the damage. I owned up to the officer that I was the culprit, and he told me that I had better square up with her. I asked her how much she wanted, she says 1 frank, it was only a small pane about 10" x 8." I gave her a two franc piece and she gave me [#] 1/2 a franc back instead of a franc, and then bumped inside, that's just the sort of people they are. The Sergt. Major told me to smash the rest of the window in, and have my money's worth, but I let the matter rest where it was, and called her a few things instead.

I had a fine dinner to day. I and my pal, Llew. Rowlands, went into a butcher shop, and bought some steak and fry, and took it to a house where we could have it cooked, some chips, coffee and Bread and Butter made the feed a great success, it is the best I have had since I left old England.

How is Dad getting on with his duties as special Constable? I suppose he thinks no end of himself now. I had the "Merthyr Express", and saw his name along with several other of the nobility of Dowlais, in connection with some Corps, Jack Craig is getting up. I read it all through last night. Before going to sleep, it's good to see all the old familiar names. I should be pleased if you sent it to me every week.

How is Billy and Win, looking forward to Christmas I expect. I have bought some pretty post-cards for them and shall send them on with this. I have also managed to get

some English Xmas Cards out here, which I will send in due course.

You say you saw Windsor Jones, I shall endeavour to write to him soon, remember me to him when you next see him. I feel like kicking myself when I heard that all the chaps in our Office have been put on Government work, I could have been the same if I had waited long enough, but I couldn't, so that ends it, and I am quite content to take things as they come now.

I expect that there is a lot of fuss about Lord Derby's scheme at home, I read all about it in the papers.

I have no news to tell, things are pretty quiet on this part of the front. The only thing that worries me in the trenches is that I can't sleep, but I make up for it later on. We talk to each other across the trenches, in the morning at (about) (one hour before sunrise), some of the German speak English, and call us "Tommy", and have you had your rum yet, or have you got a cigarett. Many have been coming over in the night and gang themselves up, properly feel up I expect.

It is awfully good of the girls of J. S. Davies to think of sending me to-bacco, I think Dad said something about it in his last letter. We get tons of to-bacco and cigarett dashed out to us. Don't forget to write soon Mother, and don't forget the pipe. I was 24 the day before yesterday. So good bye for the present. Your Loving Son
David