

April 9. 1917

My dearest Ruth,

First let me reassure you as to my probable fate. Sentence has not yet been passed, but practically remains to be decided at what hour; I'm inclined to think dusk, not dawn. There still exists the remotest conceivable chance that the secret document will be found - but I have only the last flickering hope.

We received news this morning - which you will have to-morrow - that the 1st, 2nd & 5th armies had gained their first objectives & so the next great chapter in this world-drama - I ought to have said act I suppose - has begun. This time I have only to watch like you - I'm sorry; I would much rather be in the thick of it. It seems to me that all the world depends on the next few days or weeks.

I am at present sitting in a tent - waiting for Hutchinson who has gone up to the other half to eat dinner & is coming back here to sleep. It's a cold night, blowing hard from north-west but quite clear. Fine weather we must

have for real success. I have spent two
sedentary days nursing my ankle. I hate
enforced inactivity - but it won't be for long.

I've just now heard fresh news of the
offensive - that we gained the 3rd objectives
without difficulty & captured many guns
& 7000 prisoners. That looks well -
especially the guns, because that means
surprise. On the Somme we got very few
guns & in the early days very few prisoners.
Toss doesn't seem to be a large number -
I don't know what the length of the front
is - I suppose not less than 30 kilometres
& we captured that number in the
Blancmont-Hamel stunt - the French about
the same at Fort Douaumont on a front
of 5 kilometres - but still it's only a first
count & the news is good for the first
day. I wonder if the French are
attacking in Champagne; we've heard
nothing of that.
The parcel of clothes arrived yesterday

with the other map - six deficits - many thanks; and the tent arrived too. My only want now that I can think off is a new tube of tooth-paste.

I had an unpleasant experience yesterday dealing with three drunk men; the reporter sick when they had to parade to go on duty & I went & saw them & felt pretty certain that these was something wrong. I'm afraid two of them will be in the soup. I shall have to give evidence before the Colonel tomorrow morning. It's a pretty serious offence out here & I dislike the whole business very much. One of them is a particularly nice young fellow. I have had no letters from you these last two days - the ration's (the mail comes with them) haven't yet appeared to-day. But I ought to get some tomorrow all right. I feel very sleepy & don't want to write any more to-night. I shall have your image very near me in bed. Dear love Good Night
Yours loving George.