

July 10 1916

My dearest Ruth, I wonder if you are up in the garden writing to me this lovely morning. This time is not so much for me the beginning of the day as the end of a night's watch - so that you seem to come out to me in the garden rather than I to you; and you may find me on the seat that looks over the golden valley - the seat where your father found me making love to you. The wind is rustling the leaves just enough to give full freshness to the morning air. We have resolved to quit that seat a few minutes before breakfast time & the day will have a certain 'cachet' from the fact that we ate strawberries before our omelette.

Which thought leads me to one or two requests omitted yesterday. Firstly - we want fresh butter. A sudden nausea has come upon all of us at the sight of the tinned stuff we get. Will you send out a pound as an experiment? I believe that if wrapped well in paper & packed in a tin or wooden box it might arrive quite fresh. Parcels have come quite swiftly of late - Yours last one reached me the day before yesterday - thank you very much - I was waiting to say so till we should have tasted the cakes;

we shall do that to-day. I can get chocolate all right
so don't bother to send that. Our other great need
is vegetables - especially potatoes; they are exceedingly
difficult to procure out here & very poor when we do
get them. I think it would be quite worth while to get
a large quantity sent out by rail; 5 stone of new
potatoes would make us happy for a month or more
& I could charge the cost to the mess account. Please
try & do this my dear. I know nothing about the
transport arrangements, but I believe that they will
find their way to us in a fortnight with luck.
The railway people will tell you the best way -
address to O.C. 40 Siege Battery, B.E.F. France.
By the by you still address letters to 1st Echelon in
spite of the fact that the two halves joined up long ago.
I suppose you didn't understand that my sketch was
term; and you can leave out the Group & Corps now
- they will only lead to confusion if ever we are moved.
Yesterday was a peaceful day & to-day at present
is another - and both sunny too. If only those
field guns would at intervals kick up such an
imperial racket.

I was very glad to hear of your visit to the Holt.
Have you broken it to Mrs G. that she will lose

her piano? I don't often think of the Holt -
I hardly know why - I connect you rather with
Westbrooke - because you are there I suppose -
because after all thoughts of the Holt are bitter.

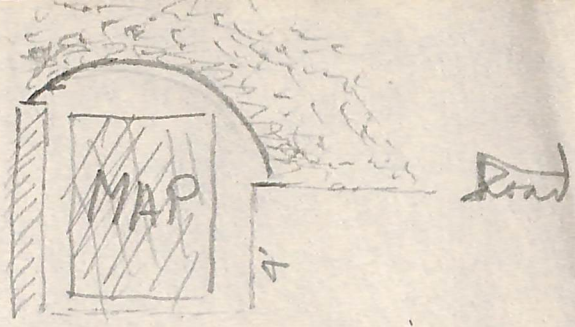
I wonder if you saw Mrs Reade the other day.
I must really try & write some scraps to some
of my friends in the hope of getting some good
letters out of them. By the by what happens
to the parts you copy out; some other folk beside
my family might like to see them - David for
instance. To him I really shall write.

I heard from Mr Allen a few days back; he writes
happily of a prospect of coming out here as a
Chaplain. I hope he will I think it would be a
useful experience for him.

I have never explained to you as I meant exactly
where I live - here is a map - No, or 2nd
thoughts it would be unwise even to give a rough
sketch: - the main facts are these (1) We have an
office; the entrance is about 6 ft back from the road
& its length is parallel with the road; you go down 4 little
wooden steps, a light streams in from that end from
under a corrugated iron awning. The main roof is a

1 'Cupola' - thus in section

2 Covered with 36 ft of chalk
on earth. The further edge from
the road is supported by four



'pit-props' which are not flush
with the ground, as it was hollowed out to some extent;
in some places canvas hangs between the props; in others
we have rigged up shelves. The map as you see occupies
nearly the whole of one end; it is fixed on plain deal
boarding. Along the side near the road we have boarding
& a narrow shelf above. The end from which the
picture was made is a very unstable & soft
bank of chalk & earth. The furniture is one small
table, 3 'sitting up' chairs of which one can boast of a
rush seat or my camp chair. This last I use for
my night watches & with a blanket & air cushion &
the loan of Lithgow's oil lamp make myself pretty
comfortable.

My dug-out is a much smaller place than the office
& is in the top of the bank. The roof again is cupola
so that I have a shiny-black ribbed ceiling, which
I regret to say has the unpleasant habit of dripping
- dripping I need hardly say with generous drops
from the superabundance it has of the same shiny-black
The dimensions of the floor are 6'3" x 5'. It is obvious

that the bed can have but one position; and the only 3
problem is on which end to lay one's head - I lay mine
as far as possible from the entrance - so as to refuse a
little further from the noise - but also so that I can
have my table near my head; and a fine table it is, a
Cartridge box laid on end & boards laid across that to the
~~ground~~^{Earth} forming thus a hollow space to accommodate
in part my valise. My suit case which is the home of
all my treasured volumes except the little book, ~~the~~ the
most precious, with Romeo & Juliet, Lear, Hamlet, Goethe,
all ~~within~~ inside its compact form, which is generally in
my pocket, - this case full of treasures stands along
the wall opposite the bed; there is just room for it between
the valise jutting out from under the table & the entrance.
I have boards for my floor, a string, a clothes line, I ought
to call it for towels etc & sundry pegs. Washing is all
done outside my bedchamber & when I have a bath, about
once in three days it is put out in the meadow some yard
back from the edge of the bank. I am quite well-
protected in my little hole & it is a the greatest
comfort of life that I have such a sanctum. The other
officers likewise have each a dug-out.

You were surprised that I mentioned tents: but many
tents are used out here - only you don't put them in
the open. We have a group of trees here which provide
cover for a small number of tents & we keep the number
as small as conveniently we can; before we made all
our personal dug-outs, the number was larger; at
present we still base one for the mess. We should

have to make quite a large dug-out for the same
accommodation, & the material is not available.

I must finish this off now for the post. One
more requirement - some pencils, the nearest
approximation you can to Koh-T Noor H-B, and
india rubber - that makes two.

Give Clare a kiss from me unless she has too many
already, from you. Great love to you dearest.

It sounds as if the enemy is making a counter-
attack & the field guns are busy splashing
our heads; perhaps our turn will come in a
few minutes.

Yours lovingly,

Roger.

We have heard nothing here about letters
being stopped. The cake is excellent &
very popular.

