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My dearest Ruth, I had a horrible experience yesterday - two of my party killed by a shell on the way back from the trenches. They were walking a little way behind the rest of us carrying a reel of wire between them on a stick. No doubt this burden prevented them diving into the communication trench beside which they were walking when they heard the shell coming. The rest of us - i.e. two others with one were just reaching one of our 2 signalling stations & jumped into the trench, we must have been about 70 yds ahead of them. I had ^{clear} no idea where the shell exploded (what we know as H.E. Shrapnel) but looked back to see if the two were alright & saw the reel of wire by the side of the trench - but as I saw no sign of them I supposed they were safe. After that during the next 2 or three minutes about half-a-dozen '50's' came over into the same area, quite uncomfortably near us, so that we remained crouching in the trench. Then one of the signallers whistled for the two left behind. There was no response for a minute or so, I became anxious & leaving the trench walked back in their direction. I had not gone many paces when I saw that they were both lying face down wards. They seemed to be dead when we got to them but we got stretchers at once & with

the aid & advice of a R.A.M.C. sergeant carried them down to the nearest dressing station. They were very nice fellows, one of them quite particularly so, he had been with me up in the front line all day & proved the most agreeable of companions - altogether quite the best of our signallers.

Dear one, I'm afraid this will make you very anxious. You must try to think of it this way: - The enemy always spends a certain amount of ammunition bombarding communications, & a certain number of men get hit: but considering the amount one can do by circumspection & circumvention to avoid unhealthy spots, the chances that any particular person will get caught that way are quite small; & this event though it may make them more present to your mind can't make them any greater. Of course this forward observation is not a safe job. We have to face that. But you ought not to permit yourself more than a moderate degree of anxiety - far far less than the wife of any infantry officer.

I have heard nothing more of the aeroplane. We are having hot sunny days here now. I hope this spell of fine weather will come your way too. I don't feel like writing any more decent now, anyway it's time I went on a mission to the field cashier - other folk - on a motor bike. Ever so much love & thanks
Your loving George