

May 16 1916

Officers' Mess  
Red Shum.

You sweet dear Ruth - can you imagine that I haven't yet received a letter from you? I can't think why it should take so long. You did write to No. 1 G.B.D I suppose? To-day is Tuesday & we posted on a Thursday. What an age it seems! I didn't know then that it would take nearly a fortnight to get a letter from you. I want to know all about you, what you've been doing & thinking. Have you got any further about letting Violet go to munitions? You wouldn't do anything about that before your next period any way would you? I wonder, I wonder, I wonder about the old war. . . . If Fritz (I've acquired that manner of referring to the enemy) is really going to be so short of food next year & it seems certain he will be much shorter than he is now it will be so pointless for him to fight through another winter. The French evidently are ~~hoping~~ <sup>expecting</sup> & have been hoping & expecting the war to end this summer or autumn. Casual talk to folks in Rouen quite opened my eyes to this view - they seemed so surprised that there should be any question about

it. I've seen or heard nothing out here to make me either hope or despair - still I feel there is more cause for expecting a fairly speedy end. I hope most fervently that the end will come before we make a push out here if ever we are to push.

This is not giving you much of my news. Things have been fairly lively these two days. Yesterday was wet & we fit no shooting; but there was plenty going on & we took care to keep out of the way of them whiplangs (the term then by the by is used not in any wise reproachfully but merely for short). This morning I was awake fairly early by a terrific din - neighbouring anti-aircraft batteries pounding away like anything; - it was a lovely bright morning & there were any number of aeroplanes about. We shirk about in shadow for the most part or take cover when there's a chance of being seen however remote. We were shooting both morning & afternoon to-day - rather slow & unsatisfactory with aeroplane observation; but I had nothing to do with it; - our system is that first one or then the other is on duty for a week. Next week I shall do all the shooting for the 'left half' - i.e. I shall take command at the guns. So far as I can see there is very little chance of observing work coming

my way get awhile. I had an amusement this afternoon - a long & dirty descent of a factory chimney & a very good view of the country round. My work at present is simply to get to know how things work - & chiefly to know the men.

I shall have a lot to say about that before long. By the way I haven't told you anything about our garden. I noticed when I arrived here a vase of glorious single red peonies on the table; I tasted it one of my first meals here spring gooseberries. I won't pretend that it's a very well ordered garden but these samples of what it can produce indicate that it has possibilities. The men have diligently & very wisely planted a variety of vegetables - spinach, lettuce, beans of various kinds, peas, onions, leeks & all looking very healthy. I told you that we have plenty of space for flowers. At the present moment, besides the peonies & a few lilies & flowering shrubs, we have quite a show of pansies & a border-edge of white pinks I should judge by now long is just coming out into flower. We shall do quite well for fruit - plenty of gooseberries, a few currants & raspberries, some apples & plums; and last but

most abundant strawberries. I hope we shall be here at least six weeks - I quite expect so.

I shan't tell you any more now; it is getting late & I must write another note or two - one to Arthur Benson whose sister I see has recently died, & to Mother

Now dear love Good Night

Ever your loving George

What of the photos? Mind you send me some proofs.

