

Jan 11. 1917

My dearest Ruth, I had your first letter ed & saved here today - what a long time my letters must have been in reaching you! Yes this is what you may call a drowsy place & you may feel easy about the sort of night visitation which was a feature of life at the battery - which by the way seems to have stopped now. I shall probably make it my business to visit now & then possible O.P. & generally keep in touch with that side of the battery work - all the batteries I mean. But in the ordinary way there is no need to run great dangers over that - it has this advantage over ordinary observation work that if you dislike a place you are perfectly free to leave it.

I was up last night getting my O.P. job finished it was not completed without laughter. Sossins before dusk shortly after the men to find a peculiar fox den group peering into the uninviting slinky depths of a half dug hole. It wasn't very difficult to get the water out but serious trouble began when we tried to throw up a less liquid kind of mud - because

it stuck resolutely to the shovels. I resorted to a bucket to draw out the mud as one draws water from a well. Then we struck a sort of toffee (I'm thinking of it half masticated state). It stuck not only to the shovels but to the bucket; and it stuck tenaciously to the men & the men stuck to it - quite kummys up to their calves like helpless animals. That was the end of digging. We just sooted in the hole & left it there was nothing more to be done - except make a floor & that was done by sliding logs & packing boards across them. I got back quite early soon after nine - not at all an enjoyable stunt. The usual flashes were going up all about in a half comic way like a great baby's bubbles; at one time a great number of guns were going off - about 3 flashes a second I should think & I saw a great number of the bursts too - & all that in the stillness of night dimly lit by an unvaried moon - We keep late hours here; - orders don't come in too early & there's always a good chance

of orders any time up to midnight so one usually sits up till late at night - by way of compensation stays in bed till 9 a.m. I like the Colonel very much: but oh dear! what a handicap deafness is to talk - screwing oneself up to it each time before one makes a remark; we all do talk to him a good deal & I must say he's responsive to our efforts; but deafness apart it isn't in him I expect to be anything of a talker; he's full of quiet smiles & deep summations about his job.

I'm afraid I'm not a very good eating officer; I haven't yet acquired the habit of offering people drinks - not even the Colonel; & I invariably let out the fire (I am O.C. fire, so they tell me), which it does with astounding rapidity since it is fed with wood when it's simply rubbing its tumbling fire coal; & one eats coal with a comparatively small mouth so that the bites of wood are really not large enough ever to give a proper feeling of satiety. The weather is enough to cause a saint

to expostulate - damp snout!

I'm interested by what you say about Wanda. She didn't look to me lived in London; but it comes over one sometimes like a great dim soothing shadow that one just wants to sleep. I don't see why Mildred should be hostile. She's rather a difficult person; she takes some impregnable obtuse positions & the bombardment of her boxes is quite a futile proceeding, nor a store is stirred. She lives more out of the world than any of you & as a family guide peculiar for that. I wonder if any other boxes in London are without any form of the kind papered in these days?

Mc Leed has just come in wet from a big party (it rained most midnight); he left here about 8.30. I did 20 mins work. Some 250 men to be seen soon out.

Good Night - respect Ruth. Great love
to you.

Your loving George

