

CU5417/21.27

Dec. 29, 1916

From Battalion Hqt. S. Stafford

Dear Dad -

I never had a chance yesterday of opening your letters until this afternoon, though I have carried them both in my pocket since they arrived. I was sent for unexpectedly yesterday morning early to do a 48-hour liaison with this battallion. I started off immediately, and had a long walk across the frozen ground with my two signallers. I found that I knew the adjutant here, and they welcomed me most cordially, gave me a bunk near the telephone dug-outs, and were as nice as could be. We are in a most magnificent dugout, 30 feet underground - below the ruins of a church. There are rooms and passages branching from two main corridors at right angles to each other, and in each passage are bunks and an occasional separate room, one of them with a four-post bed. The mess is very comfortable. It has wall-paper on the walls, electric light, which does not burn now, an oval table, chairs and stove, looking glass and pictures on the wall. Five weeks ago a German Colonel was captured, sitting at the table, eating his breakfast, which he refused to leave until he had finished. I have had two very interesting days. The Col. put me under the charge of the intelligence officer, and he has taken me round every inch of their trenches, to all the company headquarters, and the posts in the front line. I do my best to find out the artillery requirements of the infantry, and to gather any information that may prove useful to the brigade in finding targets. All short shooting by our own guns is reported to me, and I have to try and have the offending battery identified, and the shooting stopped.

We saw a party of Germans this morning evidently at work on a new dugout in their front line, and we think now from what has been reported

by scouts that we have blown in their work successfully. I am relieved tomorrow at 10 A.M., and go back to the battery.

I cannot help thinking that at this time next year, we will all be together again. I hope L.G.(Lloyd George) doesn't stop us buying books! I am very happy, considering it is my birthday! I have no regrets, except for my own short-comings, only endless love and gratitude for you both.

Dec. 30th

After dinner

Dear Muz -

Back again safely at the battery to find three letters from you and two from Dad, one from each of you for me written on Christmas Day. I got back in time for lunch, and had only just had time to shave and get clean, as we were busy all this afternoon. So glad Dad is better - - - -