

Letters Home from the Trenches

My dearest Annie,

You have no idea of the treacherous things I have had to go through. Alfred's been acting like a baby ever since we arrived. I am alright but no man's land is just littered with corpses and a sea of blood.

Yesterday we had already received a heavy bombardment when I had been alarmed. The Jerries have been attacking non-stop and I had been forced to fight. I have had the most awful time and experience. I shall never forget. There was open rapid fire in the morning, followed by another shelling, which we ended with our guns. They were dropping like flies: thirty-five killed and one hundred and thirty eight wounded.

I shall be relieved to get a letter from you, it's the only thing that keeps me from running away. The conditions are a living hell: the biscuits are as hard as granite and have a grubby taste. Oh, how much I miss your delicious roast. Although I must admit I'm only anxious to receive your letters, I'm just hoping that we'll be together again. The fighting spirit of the soldiers has dwindled, my only friend, he has served me well now, a horse. He's alright, a friend for life. He's an eight horse power machine; jumps like a hunter, goes like a racer.

I have regained jocular spirit again ever since the parcel you sent me. I wish I could give you more information about life here but the censor would just cross it out. It's oozing mud, water and blood, enough to say you could drown in it. Please write to me about the children, and if I don't come back, tell them I love them and make sure our cat gets fed.

Frightened, worried, exhausted, I have heard that soldiers have been burnt from a fire, barely survived they did. Of course, they were dead – they were roasted, there is absolutely no other word for it. They were brown, like the outside of roast beef.

Send my best love to everyone at home. I know that God will take care of you. I've prayed for this every second of my life. We're going over the top this afternoon: most of us Tommies think it's going to be the final battle, but also the most treacherous. I can't stand it here. I'm just wishing to be at home with you.

Please don't be alarmed. All is well that ends well (and this did for us). We are all quite safe.

Yours truly with fondest love and kisses,

Matthew xxx

P.S. Did you receive the money I sent you? I will send you a bit more. I have only one wish, send my gratitude and thanks to family and friends.

By Paulina, Year 6