

# LETTERS HOME

There was a regular postal service delivering correspondence back and forth between the troops on the front line and their friends and relations back home. In addition to the silk postcards here displayed, a number of letters from the trenches have come to light.



On Christmas Day 1915 Private THOMAS HARRY COLLING (Northumberland Fusiliers) wrote to his friend Jefferson Walton of Huntshildford. Six months later Harry was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

On 10th January 1917 Private ARTHUR RAINE (D.L.I.) of Eastgate wrote a letter to his uncle. Three months later (9th April 1917) he was killed in action.

On 2nd November 1917 Private CHARLIE CRAGGS (King's Own Royal Lancashire Regiment), of Thrush Nest Farm, Eastgate, wrote to his friend and employer Mrs Sarah Raine. Just a month later he was killed in action.

France. Dec 25th

Dear Friend Jeff.

I am spending my Christmas Day in the trenches, and a chap generally thinks of his best friends at Christmas time, so I was thinking of you last night, and some of the good old times we had together on Christmas Eve, as last night I was on sentry all night, 2hrs on and 3 off and I got my tea cold and some bread and dates for my tea and no beer this Christmas Eve but I got a good drink of rum this morning but we get that every morning, and you would likely have a good night of it, but it wouldn't be the same even in England as it used to be as there is so many chaps away now there is no truce here this time with the Germans though it is fairly quiet today so far, but it was lively enough last night, and we are the nearest to the Germans this time in that we have been as our dugout is just about 70 or 80 yds away from them and a bit further on the left they are just about 20 yds off but I have never seen one yet, we get plenty of work in the trenches, as we are on sentry every night, and working above the trenches during the day, and you just get your sleep the best way you can sitting down often as the dugout we are in now is all water and mud, and if it wasn't for the mud what is sticking on me you would think I was a fisherman, as we have big leg boots on and leather coats, so we are allright for wading about among the water, and I can tell you there is plenty of it to wade in, but I have never been to dig out yet as some chaps have. I expect we come out for a rest this next Tuesday and we came in last Monday so we will be out for the New Year and hope to have a decent time. I have just seen Alf Johnstone about twice since we came out, but he is allright on the transport and I am allright and keeping fit myself and it is not so terrible in the trenches as you might think, though it is bad enough when they are shelling us, but our chaps can beat them with shells now, well I hope you write soon Jeff and send me the Christmas news, and give my best respects to Jos and the rest of the lads if there is any of them left so I will close wishing you a Happy New Year from your old friend Tom H. C.



Pte A. Raine 43137  
YSJ 6 Company  
9 Platoon R/EF  
France  
10/1/17

Dear Uncle,

It is a pleasure for me to sit down and write you these few lines just to let you know I am in the best of health.

Well you will have to excuse me for being so long in writing to you but to tell you the truth with being in the trenches I have never had time but we are out of the trenches for two or three days rest now so I will have a bit time now for writing this is only ten letters I have writ to day I do not know what sort of weather you are having at your place but it is awfull out here it has rained nearly all the time we have been in the trenches we have been standing up to the knees in water.



Well I had the pleasure of having a letter from home yesterday morning and I was very pleased to hear that they were all in the best of health.

Well what sort of Christmas have you had I suppose it will have been very quiet it has not been anything like Christmas out here but I have to enjoy my self the best way I could.

Well I will have to close hoping theses few lines finds you all in the best of health.

With best wishes to all  
From Arthur

Dear Sarah,

2-11-17

Just a few lines hoping to find you in the best of health as it leaves me at present. I received the letter alright glad to hear you are all keeping well. Well I have lost hope of seeing you at xmas as we have got some more men to the battery but I'll land some time that's if I don't get a land owner. Well we are on a fortnights rest and then some more trench fighting for us. Well I think I will draw to a close now as I have not much to say at present. Tell Tom I was asking after him I think he will be thinking about living retired (bow wow). Let me know how you are keeping.



Your Effect Friend  
Charlie    xxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxx

Pte C. Craggs 28009  
1/4 H.6.B.J. 164 J.M.B.    don't keep all these your  
B.E.F.    self give the bairns some  
France

Pte T. H. Colling 1124  
D. Compy 16 Batt. N.F.  
96th Brigade  
32nd Division  
B. E. F. France