

" You will notice by the heading that I am no longer in the old regiment. When they left England I was quarantined with the measles, and as a result was transferred to the 46th Battalion, and came over with them about six weeks ago. We have a pretty good time of it in France. I have been in the trenches a number of times, and it is part of our regular routine now. I have slept in tents, barns, holes in the ground, sandbag dug-outs and all sorts of places. I have even slept sitting on a trench step in the pouring rain. One gets used to it though, and it really is immaterial where we sleep. One little experience I would like to relate, though. Six of the other sergeants and myself were put into a deserted hen house for a few days, and we called it home for the time being. We got nicely asleep the first night when the rats started in. They chewed up our clothes and everything in general. We did not mind that so much, but when they started walking over our faces we immediately raised an objection. We got busy and rustled a few candles, and the light succeeded in keeping the rats quiet. We got nicely sleeping again, and were enjoying wonderful dreams of beating up Heine, when we were awakened by the old reliable rooster. He couldn't be driven from his old home. To wind up the experience, the next day we started by casting sidelong glances at each other. The end of it was that we all beat it back to our hen house to read our shirts. The news we found was very interesting and provided us with a half-hour's sport.

"As for 'eats,' we do not do so badly. Of course, it is mostly canned stuff, but we manage very nicely. I have been dubbed 'Tickler' by the other boys, on account of my propensity for getting away with jam. Tickler is the maker of most of the jam we get, hence the name. So much for the 'social' side of life. Coming down to the actual fighting is where we get our real excitement and hard work. Of course, you will know what the trenches are like in appearance, but they are quite different when one actually has to live and fight in them. We are down in them and Heine is the same in his, hence we do not see much of each other.

"I was sent out in 'No Man's Land' one night, putting up some wire along with about twelve others. Heine got wind of our party some way, and opened up his machine guns at about ten minute intervals. We were out for three hours, and, believe me, he kept us ducking, but we finished the work we went out to do.

"We see some great sights in the trenches, though, when the artillery opens up. They sure blow the Fritz & Co. trenches into an awful mess. One hears the screaming of the big shells and then the explosion, and tons of dirt going up in the air. The last time I was in we saw a Hun blown about thirty feet in the air, together with a few yards of his trench. Of course, he comes back at us with shells of all descriptions, and then we have to do some ducking and dodging. The ones we can see are O.K., but the ones we don't see are what get on our nerves. His rum-jars, sausages, and fish-tails (all high explosive and shrapnel shells) can easily be seen, and provide a lot of sport dodging them, but the other that cannot be seen, well, we just stand tight and take a chance. We give him about twenty to one, though, so we know we provide him with a whole lot more fun than he gives us.