

# Journal entry journey's end essay



As I write this, I cannot help but feel dreadfully alone. I no longer have an officer to rely on and I feel as though I have lost my best friend.

Before I go any further I sadly have to note the fact that Osborne was hit in the hand by a grenade which sadly resulted in his death. I have to realize the fact that this is all a new experience and soon incidents, like Osborne's death, will soon be a part of my everyday life. Despite this I think it has been hard on some of the more experienced officers also. Many soldiers talk of the raid as a standard procedure with an inevitable but "normal" outcome. However I saw it differently. Because I am still so unaware it seems that I am the only one to notice the fact that during the raid, many of our men were lost.

Even when I was talking to the men earlier they did not seem able to acknowledge the fact that their fellow soldiers were no longer with them. They had seemed expressionless; using only simple vocabulary that had made them seem so withdrawn and far away. It was obvious that they were dreadfully upset but did not appear to want to show it for fear of spilling their sadness on the others around them. The strength in these soldiers is astonishing; it is hard to believe that I will ever have the ability to just carry on like they do. I do not know if I could ever be able to shield how sad I feel and carry on undeterred.

I guess as it was a significant event, with a significant outcome I should do the duty to the men by noting down the raid. It was ...

difficult should I say, to begin with , to carry out and also to have to deal with ending it left us to accept. A few hours before the raid Osborne and I were a

wreck, although he was too proud to admit it. It was obvious; he had the same giveaways as I had. When we were about to go over the top, he wished me luck, too nervous I could not find my voice to say the same back, but now I truly wished that I had.

As we made our way over No Mans Land, I could not help but feel that we were trespassing. Although as it is “no mans land” and does not belong to anyone, it seems stupid to even let this thought pass through my mind. However it seemed easier to get our hands on one of the Boche than I first had thought. We spied into their trenches (which might I add looked a lot more solidly built than ours as they were deeper and reinforced with concrete) and eyed out our target.

He was crouched in the trench cleaning his rifle and humming along to a small radio which appeared to be playing a German war song. Osborne managed to place the gag in his mouth whilst Sterling and I managed to grab him by both arms and drag him over the top. It was very lucky really as I thought that I saw another one weaving his way through the maze of trenches towards us. On our way out of the German trenches however we were suddenly under attack. As we retreated, the Germans open fired and one of our men was shot in the chest by a rifle bullet, I tried to go back for him but would have been caught in the barbed wire.

I ventured my way back under a spray of bullets, trying to make sense of the shapes in front of me which were leading me back to the Trench. Everything seemed to freeze as I made a frantic dash back into the safety of the C company trench. It's odd how I managed to land myself in the exact same

spot of the trench that I left of from this morning. On your hands and knees in No Mans Land the front line looks the same from one end to the other (it there is an end, it seems to go on forever). It was only until I returned to our trenches that I realized the true extent of our casualties.

We were 6 men down and 1 officer. At that point despite what others thought, as far as I was concerned the raid had been anything but a success. Sure, we had managed to catch one of the Boche, but was it really worth the lives of 7 men? I felt from participating in the raid that I should be with the other men in our company so we could share the weight of losing our friends. They asked me to join them for dinner; even though Stanhope had a celebratory feast lined up for me and the other officers.

I just felt that it was right to pass my condolences with the men who were acting like they actually cared. Dennis however was very distraught about the fact that I had decided to eat with the men or "feeding" as he had called it. I can't really understand why he disliked it so terribly much; I mean it wasn't as if I had to go to dinner with him and the other officers. When he told me this I couldn't help but notice the stench of whisky on his breath and the empty glasses and bottles that littered the table amongst the remnants of their feast. Although nowadays it seems that Dennis is never sober I felt that this time he really had drank too much and was well over his limit. It was really rather unbelievable the way that he was demanding answers from me, raving on about how I had disobeyed him.

Quite frankly I was shocked, I thought he would understand. He didn't seem able to accept the fact that I had socialized with the men in an informal way

and now apparently I had lost my respect from them, or that's the excuse Dennis had used. I could tell however that there was something wrong about this, the way he was yelling at me I mean. You could see the sadness shining in his eyes and I could tell that he wasn't really angry nor did he want to be, but he was in a desperate sense of dismay and mentally wounded.

When he asked me why I had not eaten with them I found it very difficult to answer because I knew it would hurt both of us. I said that it was because I could not stand the fact that they were celebrating after we had just lost Osborne and 6 of our fellow men. Dennis at this point completely broke down saying to me that I thought there was no limit to what a man could bear. This took me aback because I thought he would like the others insist that we have to put it behind us and carry on but then it made perfect sense. It was obvious now how much Dennis had really been struggling and had therefore taken to drowning his sorrows in drink.

He had clearly been expressing his sadness in anger towards me as he did not think that I had even bothered to come and pass my condolences to Osborne, or as they had appeared to have been willing his death away, with them at dinner. Osborne's death must have been the final blow for him. I had really wanted for us to be able to help each other through this difficult time but instead Dennis sent me away, evidently embarrassed by how much emotion he had shown. And now here I am, having to do as many have and try to put the reality of difficult situations behind me and to move on.

I now have to focus on the next challenge the war is going to throw at us, or in my case, the German attack. I'll be honest; I don't think that we will

survive this. Our retreat plan will not allow us to escape the death that to soldiers is inevitable. There is no point in saying that we have a chance because we are completely outnumbered. But I have to say, when it does come, I know that every man along the line will be on their best performance, carrying out their duty, and ready for the inevitable ending.