

Raleigh's diary essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Well, I'm finally here I arrived two days ago, on Monday evening, Luckily my request worked and my uncle sent me to Dennis's company but I don't think anyone has twigged how I got here. They all think it's a coincidence! These trenches aren't like I thought they would be, I thought guns would be blazing all the time, it's so quiet up here, every now and then you hear some rifle fire, a bit like the range at Bisley. There is some sort of rumble coming from up North, Osborne told me it was up at Wipers way; apparently the guns never stop up there! Not like down here in these trenches it's uncannily quiet, it's nothing like I imagined when I was at school.

It's amazing to think that the Germans are only about 60 yards from our position, that about the breadth of a rugby field! I came in to our position by trench and what a strange trench it was, it began in a ruined village, then we went down into a cellar of a house and right under the house, passed this huge ruined factory, and into a vast plain along which the trench went along turning and twisting. Even from this great distance I could see the Very lights. What surprised me was the number of them hundreds went over when I was watching. We have this cook called Mason, he's just a private but he looks after us, he once got really worried when he got us a tin of apricots instead of pineapple chunks! The food ok it's nothing like what we got at school, but we can live off it.

Trotter even enjoys it! Each officer has to do duty, that involves patrolling for two hours at a time and then all officers patrol at stand-to that at dusk and dawn. Duty is real quite boring although you have to keep your wit about you to get ready to run in case a Minnie comes over and you have to run away. Mainly you just shoot rats, there isn't much else to do. This war is much

more boring than I expected it would be, I thought it would be all excitement and constant gun battles and defending the line, I came out here ready to do my bit for the country like Dennis came out here for. The conditions in the trenches are pretty bad like I have already mentioned there are rats.

The dugouts smell horrible the nearest equivalent I can think off is a cesspit! There are rusty bombs and rifle grenades lying all over the trenches. The trenches are really thick with mud ankle deep in places and apparently No-Man's land is even worse. I was told that we don't take our clothes off while in the line, that six days without a change of clothes or washing, it quite horrible, but being out here is what I came for: doing my bit for the country. Osborne once told me that trench life consists of extremely long periods of boredom and short periods of extreme fear and so far all I've faced is the boredom. Apparently outside the newspapers the German's are really quite decent! I was told that one time a man was shot down in No-Man's land during a night raid, close to the German front line and they had to leave him out there throughout the next day.

The next night several soldiers crawled out to him and started hauling him back, they could have been picked off one by one by the German soldiers. Then a German officer stood up and shouted, " Carry him" and he sent up some flares so they could see, and they got back safely! The next day they blew each other trenches to bits. It kind of makes the war seem rather silly! Well tomorrow our company's got to do a raid on the Germany front-line and Dennis has chosen me to do it! I rather excited that Dennis has chosen me, all though I starting to fell nervous and I'm wondering if I'll come back. If I do it well the Colonel says I'll get the MC!