

Dear Mother,

Life in The Royal Engineers Regiment is getting tiring, dig a trench, lay some wire, and dig another trench and so on. But it's not always that bad, there are some good things. This Christmas for example there was not a single shot fired, not from the cannons, not from the rifles, it was all silence from both sides. Then from across no man's land we heard a noise, a voice in fact. It was the Germans, the voice said "Hey Tommy", "Happy Christmas". One of the guys, Jim, said "What d'you know? Their sending us Christmas Greetings" and another said "Well don't be a sour puss Jim, send 'em back".

"Hey Fritz, can you hear me?" "I can hear you Tommy" "Good!" shouted Jim "Merry Christmas from all of us here". Then some more conversation went on and Jack got a turn to talk. Then something flew toward us from the German trenches "Grenade!" someone yelled. Nothing happened, Jim picked it up and it was a bag of twenty cigarettes. Jim passed them around. A German yelled "Happy Christmas Tommy" "a present from us to you". We discussed what we would send back, someone suggested tobacco, and another suggested some bully beef. Billy replied to that suggestion "What and poison them for Christmas?" we all laughed. Then someone suggested rum. I decided I could give up my rum, so I gave it to Jack who went up the ladder and said that he couldn't toss it that far. Billy piped up and said that he would do it, it landed right in the trench. He yelled "Merry Christmas Fritz, have a drink on us". We heard something, something faint and quiet, it was singing but in German. The Germans were singing Silent Night, one of the guys started singing along and then we all joined in. The next day the guns opened fire again and we had to shoot the very people we spent Christmas evening with. I can't wait till this bloody war is over.

Love your son, Shorty

**Comment [DW1]:** Good identification of a real unit of the British Army

**Comment [DW2]:** Recognition of tedious work

**Comment [DW3]:** Good – Intriguing real incident described

**Comment [DW4]:** Good use of authentic terms

**Comment [DW5]:** Identifies various rations: tobacco, bully beef, rum

**Comment [DW6]:** Describes real life conflicting emotions