

## LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

### Dearest Ma

Not even sure of the date today or even what day it is. If you ever receive this note I trust my letter finds you all keeping well. Please try not to worry but I imagine any snippet of news to you all back home is scarce but welcome too.

You know me, I'm not really good at writing but will try and stay in touch when I can. Me and the lads try to stay positive, but dear Ma the things we see and hear ... well no man should endure. Until next time, fondest love to you all from your Billy.

**Dear Mother....** Just a short note this time, don't think of me too harshly but I do find this hard. I feel such a long way from home but know even a few words from me are welcome to you. I believe it could be Sunday today. I picture you on the way to Church with my baby sisters. Please remember us all in your prayers for I think we'll need help from the Lord above very soon. Much love from your Billy

**Hello Ma,** it brings me courage and hope knowing we can stay in touch, my dearest wish is that you receive what little news I am able to convey. We are so very cold and morale isn't always good. I long to sit in our front room and dry my feet on the fender, make pictures in our coal fire and listen to the sound of your voice. Such simple wishes for me but I need to cling on to something. Bye for now, your Billy

**Dear Ma,** it seems too long since I was able to write and much has happened. Yesterday we came under attack. I have no idea where we are but this sodden, dank trench has been home for way too long. I've lost my closest pal and help took an age in coming. The vermin are drawn to us and the rotting stench is stomach wrenching. I miss you all and send my fondest best wishes from your Billy.

**Dearest Ma,** we've had mail from home and there is so much joy from the lads to hear news from our families in England. We have been cold and hungry and my parcel from you was eagerly received. Your kindness has melted my heart, you've no idea how much our spirits have been lifted. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Take good care please from Your Billy

**Hello Ma,** I've been so very cold and we all huddle together at night trying to stay warm. I look to the skies and wonder if you see the same moon and stars that I do. I imagine the twinkling stars are your eyes looking down on me. I long for home but no-one knows what tomorrow will bring. Keep safe for me, your Billy

**Ma,** as you can see this is not my hand. I have lost track of how many days and nights I have been in this field hospital. A kind nurse called Margaret has penned these few words for me. She is caring for me and I tell her tales from home, she is so patient with me. I am away from the front for now and not too badly hurt, so please try not to worry. Your Billy

**Dearest Ma,** I'm now back with the lads. Nurse Margaret with her healing hands has put me back together. Am feeling very homesick but we've been told the end is surely near and god willing I'll be on my way home very soon. We are all very tired but keep going as best we can, I look at your faces each night on my very worn photograph of you all, but it gives me great comfort to see you. Love from your Billy

**Ma,** We haven't been allowed to write for weeks and I worry that you will worry more. I have much to tell but this may not arrive. Nurse Margaret and her team have arrived which is a joy but also a great worry. We are told that tomorrow is THE day and I pray that these are not my last words for you and that the sands of time have not run down for me. I hold you in my heart dearest mama and long for home. Love always from your Billy

**TELEGRAM TO: Mrs A Grimshaw STOP**

***It is with deep regret we advise that your son, William Grimshaw, is missing in action STOP***

***Further news to follow STOP***

Agnes Grimshaw thumbed through her memory box of treasures, each carefully stored keepsake evoking those raw emotions of ten years ago. How proud she was of her darling Billy and his precious words hiding from her the true horrors of war. She had tried not to read between the lines of his short but poignant letters and the memory of her anxiety was still etched on her soul.

She recalled it was many months before she had heard more news and information of the heroics of her Billy. He had taken the full force of a blast which had rendered him temporarily deaf and he had been unable to hear the instructions from the Commanding Officer to stay put. Bravely he'd run from cover to offer assistance to a wounded soldier and had dragged him to safety, almost certainly saving his life. It had been carnage and confusion everywhere and the men had fled in every direction into the unknown.

She'd been told that it was a suicidal act of bravery and that her Billy was a hero.

As she eagerly awaited the arrival of her family for lunch, she hastily placed the precious letters into the dresser drawer. Her eyes were drawn to Billy's war medals which had been framed and held pride of place on the side table and would forever be his legacy of the unselfish service to his country.

Her Billy, his devoted wife, Nurse Margaret and her 2 darling grandchildren were on their way and would soon be here. Billy and Margaret had remarkably survived and escaped, unlike so many others and for that she thanked the Lord. He'd arrived home many months later almost a broken man still in the care of his nursing angel. The scars of war were borne with honour and he would always be her hero despite the haunted look that often swept over his wearied face. Bravery knew no end and her heart swelled with pride anticipating the arrival of her Billy and his family.

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