

11 February 1915

Dear Mummie

At last I've got a moment to write to you as I've been inoculated today (*for typhoid*) & so have to lie down for a bit. I believe I told you I was going to Wendover, but my Company & station were altered at the last moment, and I am now in the 98th Company at Chesham for about a month when we go to Henley for pontooning and afterwards to Wendover where my own permanent camp will be in huts.

We are in billets here, officers & men alike, and the billet where the officers of my Co. are is the above address. There are Major Coffin our OC Company, four other subalterns besides myself the Adjutant, Medical Officer and of course our Host and Hostess Squire and Mrs Lowndes. It is a most priceless place with about 230 acres of grounds, so I seem to be rather lucky in my billets, don't I ?. There are two little kiddies, girls about 7 and 10, who seem to regard us subalterns as big brothers for playing with, with the result that our behaviour at times is hardly as dignified as one would expect from Officers of the British Army. There are two other children, the son & heir about 17 at Eton and another girl about 14. I suspect the boy is a ?? reglar ??nut.

The youngest kiddie is Joane and the other Cicelie. They are awfully nice people but everything is done in such style that one doesn't feel always exactly at home. Perhaps it is because I've been away from civilisation too long.

Mrs Lowndes showed me their genealogical tree last Sunday. It is a most enormous scroll of parchment and goes right back to William the Conqueror through all sorts of royalty, so I suppose we ought to be frightfully impressed. It was a very interesting example of Heraldic art. At present being the 5th Subaltern in our Coy, I'm acting as Supernumerary but the Major tells me he wants me to look after the horses and drivers when we get them. I think there are about 70 horses in a Field Coy so there are exciting times ahead teaching people to ride and breaking horses in etc, to say nothing of being a sort of rest. I shall have to cultivate a horsey expression. Have you any suggestions ?

In addition to this I am supposed to know all the Infantry work, and of course building, trenching so, if I don't get swelled head, I ought to. The worst of it is I get so little time to write of you and Mouse, but I know you'll forgive me. Now I've really got to my Coy. I shall have to stick to it like the Dickens or I shall be getting ticked off.

We were inspected by the General Commanding ?? our Division [*section eaten*]. It was most awful - we stood stock still for an hour while he came round. The General and his staff came to our place for lunch, but owing to the limitations of table room four of us junior subalterns had to partake of grub in the sitting room with the kiddies for which we were very thankful. It was much nicer.

Isn't it promising being under an OC of the name of Coffin & then to be billeted in The "Bury". He's an awfully decent sort, rather quiet, but very sound I think. I expect I shall feel pretty rotten tomorrow, but of course have a have a day off. I'm going to write Mousie a nice long letter having neglected her for so long. I feel an awful brute but blame it on Kaiser Bill.

Write to me as soon as you can & tell me how you're going on in the new house.
Heaps of love to all,
Chief (*family nickname*)