

WW1

Dear mom, I am still alive. I had a couple of close calls but I am fine. This is the first letter I am writing to you, so I will tell you how my training was and what daily life was for me. First we were put through three months of basic training. The aim was to build up our physical fitness, confidence; instil discipline and obedience and also teach the fundamental military skills necessary to function in the army. The next stage took several weeks or even months of specialist training, to be a machine gunner, a signal, or a cook. British men under 19 years old, and still not eligible to go overseas, will have their training topped up this way until they are old enough to go overseas.

This is my daily life. I get like three hours of sleep, then shave and brush my teeth. Then we would go to the trench. There would be nowhere to sit and you would be getting pounded by artillery from the Germans. We get hard biscuits, tea and apple or plum jam for lunch. We stay in the dugout for hours waiting for a break in shelling so we could attack. While we are waiting we sleep or play cards. Then the Germans will throw poison gas at us. Then we put our gas mask on. When the poison gas clears we try and go to sleep and then it happens all over again.

Love: Matthew