

CUS417/21.22

December 1st, 1916.

Dear Muz:

The torch and box of cake and sweets came last night. Thank you very much for all you are sending

I am alone at the battery today as Taraner is observing officer, Lawrence is at the waggon lines, and the Major is away somewhere. We had a little bombardment this morning, lasting half an hour, and I being the only officer here, commanded the battery. We have the coordinates of the target given us on the map, and from that we work out the angles for each gun, so that we fire away without being able to see what we are hitting or knowing the result. It is very cold now and has been freezing for the last 36 hours. The men must be feeling it, for they have really very little shelter and wood is so scarce. Each sub-section, that is the men of each gun, keep a fire burning in their gun-pit, and they all sit and sleep around that, and become so accustomed to that, that even the noise of firing does not wake them.

I myself never wake in the night now, although the guns are not more than twenty yards away from our dug-out. I fear we will still be in action at Christmas time. I had hoped to be back in some nice quiet place, but I don't see any hope of it now. The infantry are really very lucky for they are only four days in the trenches and then have the next ten days behind the lines, while we are in continuous action week after week, without a day's rest. Today we sent a man off to the field ambulance, and I gave him Cousin Norman's and Bell's address in case he was sent to one of their hospitals. I told him to be sure and let them know where the battery is so they can communicate it to you. We are just behind the remains of a farm

whose name is famous.

The Canadian Mounted Rifles must have suffered heavy losses on the site of our battery, for we buried several of their dead near by, and there are still a heap of their rifles lying in the chalk-pit