

WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION, LANCASHIRE NORTH BRANCH

DESPATCH: November 2018 - Supplementary Information

HENRY (HARRY) LUKE GORDON SAGE, 1892-1943

HARRY SAGE'S LETTER TO HIS COUSIN WALTER KEMP

10/4/15

No 8027 Pte H Sage

D Coy 2nd Norfolk

Indian Expeditionary Force ..

c/o Indian Office

Dear Cousin Walter

I was very pleased to receive your letter under date 29th December. It was very thoughtful of you. I am (*not readable*). It is a sort of invigorator when one receives a letter from the unexpected. I did not expect to hear from you. I knew you were in Erith but I never knew you were in the Maxim sheds. It must be very interesting now the war is on. Lets hope you are making as many as you possibly can for they are teasers those maxims. They play a little hell with these Turks here. They don't like them at all, and they call them spitfires. Of course they have them but they are not patch on ours. There is one thing about these Turks they are very well equipped. When they have got all their equipment on it only weighs half ours. One thing in our favour is our arms they are far superior to the Turks. Of course the Arabs are hardly equipped at all and the bullets they fire are rotters. They are solid lead, no plating at all. When they strike they double up and make an awful gash. You heard I was on my way to France, well I was and I got to Marseilles but went back again as I was wireless operator on a boat. Now I am at the Persian Gulf. I might as well say I am absolutely fed up. It is work from break of the day till night. Same old thing every day Guards catch (*unreadable*)...It is a treat to be on guard out of the way. It is not the hardness of their work but it is the messing about. We came off one job and have hardly got back before we are hooked for another. All our chaps are longing to be under fire again so these fatigues will be finished. Of course it is funny being under fire for the first hour or so but then you get settled to it and take no notice. It is pretty bad when you hear your chums going down though, You hear just one shout "Oh" and then you know someone has someone has stopped some Turkish direct hit. Another thing is the shells they whistle when they are coming and they finish with a sound similar to a ginger beer bottle being

opened. I can assure we duck our nuts pretty quick. When the enemy retire and we go collect our wounded and bury our dead we have got to be careful for these Arabs if they can get their rifles they will shoot after you bandaged them up. We put a stop to that though because we take their rifle and smash it first now. These people wont let a native of India take them prisoners but they don't mind us. We had one and (*unreadable*) to hand him over to the native escort he howled and shouted because he didn't want to leave us . It is a very good army when they are captured for they feed on the best and nice spring bed to lay on. God knows what they would do to one of us if they took us prisoner. I'll bet we would be mutilated. Things are not very brisk now for the place is flooded to a depth of three feet. It will keep the same until August they say so if we want to fight we have to swim for it. Our boats are doing some splendid work here. By gum they are some fine shots and they don't waste no more than two rounds getting the range. This place is very difficult indeed to judge distance in, I used to be very good at judging distance and am not too bad now, but the other day I was five hundred yards out in 1500 yards. Never before have I been over 100 yards so you can guess what things are like. Dear Walter I have posted my mother's letter and forgotten to tell her to send me a pocketknife. If you are writing please let her know, as I would like it as soon as possible. Tell mother to get me a very strong and big one. They are very handy thing for doing trench work. Well Walter what do you think of my girl, don't you think she is a beauty. Never again will I be pestered with a girl they are like our group shooting very bad, I have been wondering if Percy (*Walter's brother*) and uncle Charlie (*Charles Luke Burgan*) has gone to France yet. Lets hope they don't stop a Jack Johnson nor a coal box. I wish it was all over again, don't you. What regiments are my two relations in should very much like to know. Well please give my kind regards to your Mother, Father and all at home. Must close now hoping to hear from you again shortly.

I am

Yours affectionate

Cousin

Harry

PS write soon