

Outside the Box

Transcript

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Camp before Sebastopol
Dec^r 16th 1854

My dear Father,

As the mail goes out tomorrow, I will write today. There has been very little going on lately except that we are almost continually on Piquet as our Division [h]as harder work than any other. Sometimes we have only twelve hours off duty so it comes very hard upon one. We have only [?]5 officers besides the Colonel & Adjutant doing duty now. I can say now that I have been under fire. Not in a regular engagement but on piquet for I was on piquet one day & 2 Russian officers were seen a longish distance off on horseback. So the General ordered me to send on about half a dozen men

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with their rifles to drive them off so the men soon made [them] retreat by a few shots however, some [of] their sentries popped away at us and as I was standing on the left of the battery I had one or two bullets about me & one hit the ground about 10 yards short of me but in the right direction so I got under cover of the parapet. Another day I was taking a walk across a hill between two ravines when whiz came a shell but I c^d only hear it & c^d not see where it was coming however it hit the ground about 20y^{ds} in front of me so I stooped

down & it burst safely[.] None of the pieces hit me although <I saw> some bits flying along the ground[,] in less than a minute whiz came anothe[r] shell

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about the same distance off but in another direction & with no better effect & it had hardly burst when I saw a round shot flying through the air over my head with a noise just like an express train. Near some of the batteries the ground is literally paved with roundshot of every size[.] The other night we were all turned out & marched off to the Intrenchment about a mile in front of our camp & lay there for about an hour & half but it turned out to be a false alarm so we all came back again. We had snow last night & a tent is not much protection for my pillow was wet through from the water dropping upon it through the tent. As it is getting near Christmas we are

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going to try an[d] get a goose or turkey or some animal of the sort & a plum Pudding & I hope we shall be able to get it together [-] it is about 8 miles from our camp to Balaklava & as the roads are very bad it is very hard to get things up from thence We have a very romantic candlestick in the shape of a Russian bayonet from the battlefield of the Inkermann {sketch of } I had a very kind letter from {candlestick} Lord Napier a few days ago {with candle} offering to do anything for me. Pray thank sisters for their letters to me of course I cannot answer them but they will always find all they want in my letters to you. My money matters are all right & I find that I have field allowance here to the amount

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of almost £3 [&] if I want money I can always get it
from the Paymaster & I have got an account as near
right as I can make it & that I know what I have
got. I suppose when this letter reaches you, you will
be in the midst of Christmas gaities of every des[-]
cription I wish I c^d be there to have my share, but
I shall most likely be on duty in the trenches. Every
one who gets away from here either sick or wounded is looked
upon as one of the luckiest dogs in existence I must
now finish with best love to all at home Believe
me to remain Y^r very affec^{tionate} Son
GHWaller.

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P.S. if you see anyone coming out here recommend
to get good long waterproof Boots to go over trousers
and all & they cannot be too warmly clad even
if they brought furs. I do not want anything that
way myself so you neednt make yourself uneasy
about it.

G H Waller