Dear Cathrine,

It has been a long time since I have seen you smiling face. I miss you so much and it makes me sad that I’m not sure when I will be coming home to you and the kids, but I hope it is soon. I would like to ask how Richard, Arthur and Louise are doing? Richard must be turning into a fine young man. How is Arthur doing in school, is he working hard to keep his grades up? And has baby Louise learned how to walk yet? And is the rationing at home crazy, you haven’t been starving, have you?

I am fighting in the battle of Ypres at the moment. The Germans are using Chlorine Gas which is a yellow-green colour and toxic if inhaled. A temporary solution for this is we put a cloth that we urinated on to our face and breath through it like a gas mask, the Canadians discovered this and it is working. This may seem disgusting to do and I agree it is but I either do this or suffer and die.

Life in the trenches here in Ypres are horrible. I sit in the rain, mud and cold and listen to people cry and suffer. Some people are wounded and others are getting sick from all the bad things in the trenches, like the rats and other rodents and bugs here, as well as sleeping in the dirt, not changing out clothes and having no sanitation. I was a little sick last week but I must have caught a bug but it surpassed and am glad because getting ill is the last thing I want to happen here because I can’t rest and try and get over it, I am doing better now though. Our food is decent, we have a lot of bread and will sometimes get some jam or cheese to go with it. We get some vegetables that aren’t very fresh every so often but are a good change, and I still get my smokes as well. Our uniforms are dirty and I sleep, fight and eat in the same outfit day in and day out. It keeps me warm during the day but at night it cools down quite a bit. I don’t sleep much, maybe a few hours in the afternoon if I have the chance and I try to get one or two at night but I just can’t sleep, along with everyone else or I must stay up and watch over the trench for hours, it can get very boring.

I am so damn lucky that my only injuries so far have been mostly minor. The biggest one so far though was that I was stabbed on the side of the leg by a German’s bayonet but I kept fighting and after I got it fixed up. It still does hurt a lot and I change my gauze whenever I can but the wound is covered by my pants so no one would know that I was hurt there because if someone seen it I think they would try and go for it because it would be a sensitive part of my body and a spot of weakness. Our neighbour William Harkell and his son Charles were killed within a matter of seconds from one another and I seen it out of the corner of my eye, it was devastating. A young man with such great potential. Your brother is here and a doing well. Lots of people I met and remembered from the training at Valcartier are still her but lots are wounded. Others are missing, and lots were poisoned, shot or stabbed to death. One man that I ate my dinner with at the training center was one of the first to go, he ran right into the gas and breathed it in, I watched him and it poisoned his entire body and I won’t get to into detail but he died right there in the middle of the gas in the middle of No Mans Land.

There are not any positives to being here except for the fact that I am helping and supporting my country and I hope I am making a difference. Being here, I have learned not to take anything of what is at home because everything may not seem like it is but it is a luxury compared to what I’m living in at the moment. Don’t worry about me too much, the war will be over soon but keep me in your prayers and I miss you and look forward to hearing from you in the next few weeks.

Love, Peter