

Extracts from the letter of Thomas Hope Floyd, Worsley Hall Hospital to his Mother.

3 August 1917

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'My Darling Mother,

...

'Could you imagine what it was like? Shells were bursting everywhere. It was useless to take any notice of where they were falling, because they were falling all round; they could not be dodged; one had to take ones chance: merely go forward and leave one's fate to destiny. Thus we advanced, amidst shot and shell, over ground, trenches, wire, fortifications, roads, ditches streams, which were simply churned out of all recognition by shells and shell holes – strewn with wreckage, with the mangled remains of men and horses lying all round in a most ghastly fashion, just like any other battlefield I suppose....It was hell and slaughter.' (p. 14)

Floyd is shot in the leg but manages to take cover in a shell hole:

'I decided that I might just as well be blown to bits in the open trying to get back to safety as lying in this shell hole; so I made a dash for it, and got out of the barrage.' (p.18)

Behind the lines he comes across German prisoners of war:

'They are most sociable people- many of them bright eyed boys of seventeen and eighteen. They are only too glad to carry our wounded men back...we got on very well indeed with them...No one would never had imagined that we had so recently been enemies; now we were friends; one of them asked for "water to drinken", so I let him have a drink from my water bottle.' (p. 19)

Floyd arrives by train in Manchester:

'I and seven others were immediately motored to Worsley. So here I now am in a bed in the splendid mansion of the Egertons of Ellesmere, Worsley Hall! What vicissitudes one has to go through!

The officer next to me says that travelling in the same carriage as himself to Manchester was a very agreeable gentleman with whom he got into conversation. He told him he was coming to Worsley Hall. The gentleman replied "Oh! How curious; that's my brother in law's place!" "Oh really?" "Yes: I'll call and see you while you are there: by the way my name's Rochdale!!!"