

# Food, War and the Stophers of Sweffling

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University of Essex



CULTURAL HISTORY OF MODERN WAR

Rachel Duffett



## THE STOMACH FOR FIGHTING

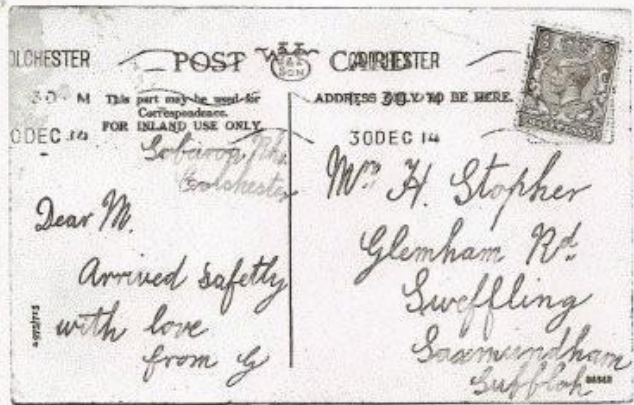
FOOD AND THE SOLDIERS  
OF THE GREAT WAR



George Stopher



Albert Stopher



Postcard from George to his father





Ethel and Gladys Stopher

‘Have heard a good deal about German atrocities, but in some respects the British are quite as bad and cruel, for weeks together we have not had a second vegetable, often none at all...’

S.T. Eachus, *IWM 01/51/1*  
*diary entry dated 16.8.1916*



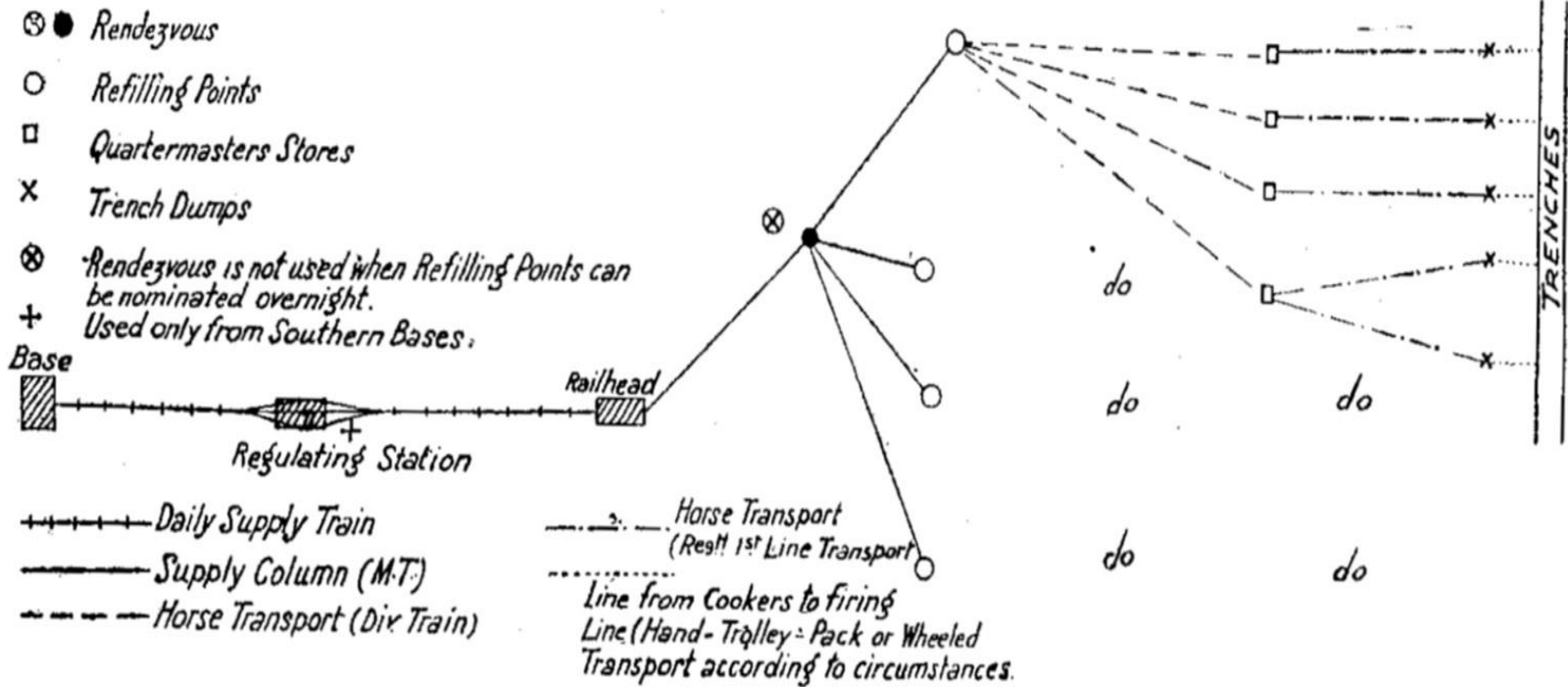
# British Army Frontline Ration Scale (4,193 per day)

1917

Meat (fresh or frozen)	1 lb
<i>or</i>	
Meat (preserved)	9 oz
Bread	1 lb
<i>or</i>	
Biscuit	10 oz
Bacon	4 oz
Cheese	2 oz
Fresh Vegetables	8 oz
Tea	5/8 oz
Jam	3 oz
Sugar	3 oz



# DIAGRAM SHOWING SYSTEM OF SUPPLY FROM BASE TO TROOPS.





Picture frame carved from hardtack biscuit

# Fish Paste

8 tins of Bully Beef

4 tins of sardines

Pepper

Pass the meat and sardines through mincer twice, and add pepper. Press well down into a kettle lid, smooth over and pour a little melted fat over the top to give a face.

# Writing home





*'I have not seen any dead. I have done worse. In the dank air I have perceived it, and in the darkness, felt... No Man's Land under snow is like the face of the moon chaotic, crater-ridden, uninhabitable, awful, the abode of madness.'*

Wilfred Owen in a letter to his mother, 19 January 1917

*'I do not like writing here nothing to talk about and nobody to see only fresh green fields.'*

George Stopher to his mother, 20 May 1916

The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the lower half, there are several faint, concentric circular ripples, resembling water droplets hitting a surface, which are lighter in color than the background.

*‘It’s hard when I cannot write what is happening but remember what I told you when you saw me in hospital.’*

George Stopher to his sister Ethel, 1 May 1916

# 'Green Envelope'

2F.V. 5573. [Crown Copyright Reserved.]

**ON ACTIVE SERVICE.**

COIN OR ARTICLES OF VALUE SHOULD NOT BE SENT IN THIS ENVELOPE.  
THIS ENVELOPE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR REGISTRATION.

**NOTE.—**  
Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The Contents are liable to examination at the Base.  
The following Certificate must be signed by the writer:  
*I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.*

Signature |  
(Name only) |  
*A. H. Robison.*

Address—  
*H. S. Robison Esq.,  
Bank of N. S. W.,  
Nelson,  
New Zealand.*

FIELD POST OFFICE  
L. I. G.  
+  
L. I. G.  
FIELD POST OFFICE



# Field service postcard

NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

*I am quite well.*

*I have been admitted into hospital*

*{ sick } and am going on well.*  
*{ wounded } and hope to be discharged soon.*

*I am being sent down to the base.*

*I have received your { letter dated Nov. }  
{ telegram ,, }  
{ parcel ,, }*

*Letter follows at first opportunity.*

*~~I have received no letter from you~~*

*{ lately }  
{ for a long time. }*

*Signature } Harold W. Merrill*  
*only }*

*Date Nov. 8/17*

[Postage must be prepaid on any letter or post card addressed to the sender of this card.]



Ada Wearing



George Stopher



Bessie Johnson?



Albert Stopher

Law Street  
St. Clement  
Sassandham  
July 8<sup>th</sup> 1916

My dear Albert,

I thank you very much for the letter which I received safely this afternoon. I was quite pleased to hear that you were progressing favourably. I cannot tell you how pleased I was to hear that you were in England out of the way of the shells at any rate although not out of danger. At last there is a little more sign of getting back to Sweffling now, for it is a great blessing to think that you are in England. I hope you will have a long leave when you do come for I think you have earned it, for it is a year ago next Thursday since I saw you. Just think of being absent a whole long year. How I do miss you, even more and more; but I trust it will not be long now before you can come. I wish the time away very often so that I can see you. I sent a letter last Tuesday to the hospital <sup>in France</sup>, but of course you will not get it. (I hope you will not think my writing bad but I am sitting in my brother's room and he keeps interrupting me to get him things, so I almost forget what I write.) I am not afraid of telling you everything for I know when you come home near, we shall find something to talk about. If not it will be a pity what it now?

The anniversary was held at Rendham Chapel last Sunday, but I was too tired so I did not go with father this year. Next Thursday evening there was a concert at the Rendham Chapel in aid of the Red Cross fund. The Glamorganshire Male-Vocal & Choir is giving it, but as my Oxford Exam starts on that day I shall not be able to go. I have only 5 more weeks to go to school before the holidays and I hope you will be at home some part of them so that we can enjoy ourselves.

I do not know what else to tell you except to hurry up and get well so that you can come home to see us all.

With much love and kisses I will close this short letter with hopes that you will soon be well from

Ever your loving sweetheart

Beattie

Pt Stephen St  
St Suffolk Regt  
No 15 Jt Base Depot  
A P O 814  
B F Y  
Aug 2 1916

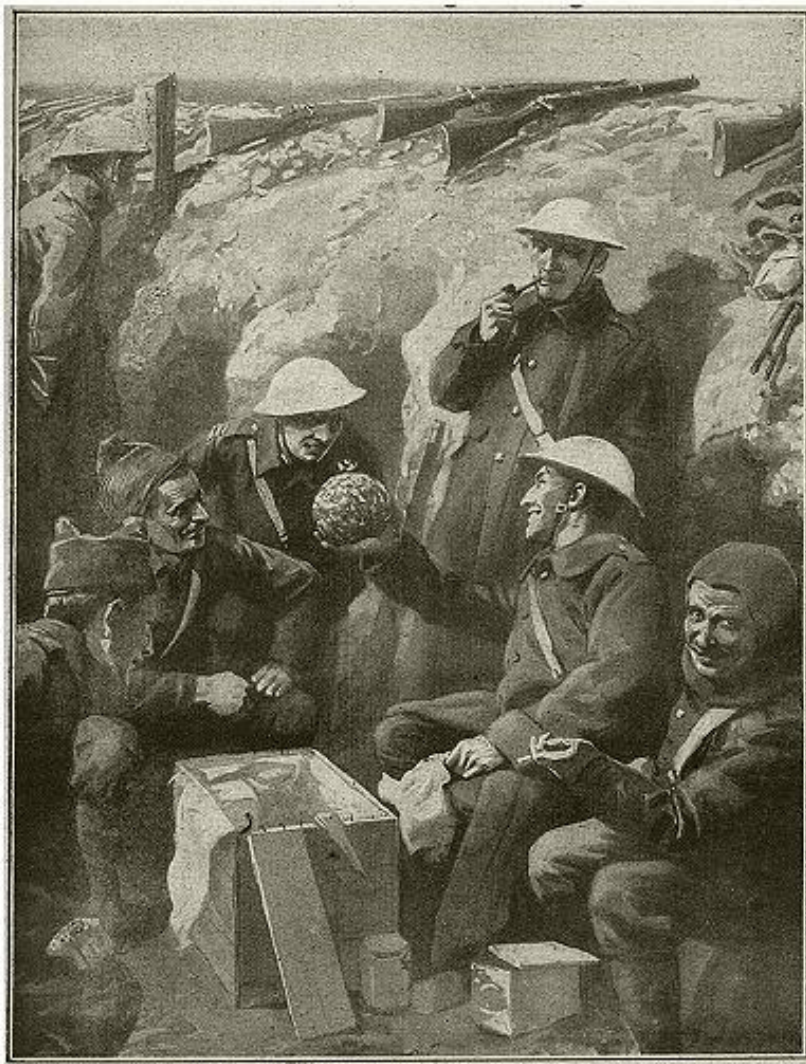
Dear Mother

I am not very pleased with the letter I received last night but am glad you all are keeping well the same out here everything at its best and the weather quite a treat Albert I heard is at Oxford Hospital not the one you said in letter he may be coming home to see you I may to before very long I dont feel very much like a fighting man now Ive had enough of it I feel sure if they take me up the line it would be not me because it would be like taking a rat to kill a dog you cannot think of the times he had nor how glad am to be alive I cannot speak and now going to send me back again It is like working a man on a dead horse I hope to see you again but if things carry on I shall be like all mates Now I will close with love from your ever loving Son

Things like this are not to be spoken keep a good heart and send a good letter to cheer me

1282/5/2884

## Home Stirred and Stirring Thoughts of Home



"Home made, my lads!" Apart from its symbolism as a British institution, Christmas pudding is mighty good stuff which will be helped with delight in the trenches. It is good to know that arrangements have been made whereby every man on active service will receive his share of pudding this Christmas Day.

Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty  
Pte George Alfred Stopher  
Died age 21 on 19 May 1917



Arras Memorial at Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery  
Pte Albert Edward Stopher  
Died age 19 on 10 April 1917





# Sweffling Church



# Roll of Honour

