

Statue of the unknown soldier at London's Paddington Station

The site, which is creating 'a new kind of war memorial made entirely of words' to mark the First World War's centenary year. 14-18 NOW are asking as many people as possible to send a personal message to the unknown soldier, whose statue at London's Paddington Station is seen reading a letter.

So far more than 16,000 letters from schoolchildren, community groups, the Prime Minister, MPs, serving soldiers and many others have been published on the site. It's not too late to write your own letter: the website will stay open until 11pm on 4 August - the centenary of the moment when the then-Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith announced to MPs that Britain had joined the war. Afterwards all of the letters sent to the unknown soldier will be archived in the British Library, where they will remain permanently accessible online.

Carole's Letter to the Unknown Soldier is below:

Dear Brother,

I hope this finds you well and reaches you before you are sent to France.

I thought you would want some news from home before you go.

The girls are well and send their love. Ethel has been making up clothing packages for the Red Cross and Eva has been helping Father with the pigs now that you are gone. I'm enclosing notes from them. I think Ethel's might be a

handkerchief – she has been stitching away every evening with great determination!

You would have laughed to see Eva trying to get Mr James's cow into the bottom field the other day. It had its calf at foot and I think it was worried that she would try to separate them: it kept blowing down its nose and stamping at her and she really didn't know which way to turn to get it to move. In the end she just made a little run at it, flapping her apron, and the calf went through the gate with a great leap with the cow behind it.

Mother is keeping those of us at home busy, with you and Fred and Harold all away. I haven't been doing too much digging because of my back, but Father has got the potatoes in – although they are a bit late - and I have been sowing the beans and keeping an eye on the early peas.

The lanes look lovely at the moment: the primroses are out and the smell is wonderful when I'm out on the bike with the post. It's hard to believe that such terrible things are happening on the other side of the Channel when in our piece of Cornwall everything is as it always was.

The Post Office is busier than ever with many letters going backwards and forwards to and from soldiers like yourselves, as you can imagine. We have not yet had many sad telegrams to deliver. Long may it be so – I know that Mother fears the worst every time a message comes through.

She does not say very much, but she does miss you all, and is keeping your beds made up and fresh flowers in the room in case you get some leave and turn up on the doorstep one day.

I don't suppose you will see Fred or Harold, but if you do, let us know how they are. Mother is worried that she hasn't heard from them for a few weeks now. I know it must be difficult to find time to write, and perhaps they aren't allowed to tell us what is happening.

Everyone at Chapel asks after you and the others, and I know that you are in all of their prayers. After Father's Bible reading on Sunday morning we have a quiet time to offer up our own thoughts and prayers. We hope you will soon be back with us to share those moments.

Well that's probably enough for now. God Bless.

Your loving brother

Steve