

# One Silent Voice

## Marie Herbert

A compilation of prose poems taken from a selection of envelopes and letters written by a Welsh Guardsman serving in World War Two, to his wife.

### Field Service Postcard—If anything else is added the postcard will be destroyed

I am quite well. Letter follows at first opportunity. Signature only

### On Active Service

I'm sorry about the fingerprints, but you can imagine how it is we had some stiff fighting but we got through it alright yes we sleep in our trenches we make a roof over one part and get plenty of straw and it's not too bad we keep dry somehow well the lights have gone out and I'm trying to write this letter by striking matches I'm afraid I'll have to park it as I can hardly see what I'm doing you would not want anyone to point at me and call me a coward—I will put my trust in God to see it through I'm somewhere in Holland, the other day we were in positions, the yanks were with us—anyway Jerry shot the place on fire when he knew we were so near to him but it was awful to see women and children crying and carrying what belongings they could one woman was pregnant and crying and I was thinking what I would do if that had been you that's the sort of thing we see every day at night we manage to keep dry some how, what I would give to be getting into bed at home, how I envy you having those sheets and blankets at night you know how much I appreciate the cigarettes it's our only pleasure while we are up front because we can't do any writing because we are on the move all the time we are in Germany the weather is worse than ever we have had nothing but rain and the mud is up to your knees

**The contents are liable to examination at the Base**

I read your letters when I came off sentry as Jerry left us in peace on Saturday night the people here have been grand to us, they opened their arms to us and their homes, we spend our spare time in their homes writing and reading

**EXAMINER 6376**

I felt a bit upset the other day because I was told my mate had been killed I don't know how his wife will take it because she thinks the world of him still it can't be undone, all I can say is I've lost a pal the weather is good and the boys are sat by their trenches counting the bombers going over and do you know I've lost count, there must have been 500 gone over our lines I should not like to be in Jerry's boots when they drop that lot

**I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelop refer to nothing but private and family affairs.**

I wish it was all over and I was at home with you for good when it's all over we will make up for all we have lost how I'm longing for the day to come when I can be with you all forever won't it be grand you say it will be the happiest day of your life well you can imagine what I will feel one day we will make up for what we lost don't ask me if I'm well I could tear the place down I can imagine how you feel without a fire I've had a taste of it down here and it's not pleasant looking at an empty grate five years wasted when I should have been happy with you one day we will have our own little home and we will be so happy there I never thought I would miss anyone as much as I miss you I must close now as this is the last of my pad until I get a new one

## Post Office Telegram—No Charge for delivery

In two weeks I will be home and I'm expecting to see you at the station.

I.W.A.L.Y

S.W.A.L.K

XXXXX

**Marie Herbert** "found" this prose poem from letters written by her grandad to his fiancé and then wife throughout World War II when he served with the Welsh Guards 2nd Battalion. The poem represents the other side of the coin from poetry she has written exploring the impact of women's oppression in Ireland at the same time explored through the experiences of her grandmother, her sister and Herbert's mother, published in *Poetry Ireland Review*. Her grandad's voice was mostly silent as she grew up and she wanted to pay tribute to his experiences and the reason for his silence.

## Field Service Post Card

Imperial War Museum, Digital Archives  
Production Date Unknown

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<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1502018494>



Field Service Post cards were used in various forms by major combatants during WWI and WWII. Soldiers could easily inform loved ones of their status (quite well, sick or wounded) in a lightweight, easy to process, and pre-censored format. British Commonwealth forces used the card depicted, along with other variants, during both world wars.

