



TBB1/1/1/1/2

A letter from Thomas Baker Brown to his mother from a training camp in York, *8 December 1915*.

After he signed up to join the army in November 1915, 19 year old Thomas was sent to the Scarcroft Schools Training Camp, York. Although he didn't like it at first, he soon settled in to life at the camp.

In this letter Thomas describes his day-to-day life including getting his washing done, and listening to lectures on musketry.

"...One of the officers in this Batt [battalion] is Lt. [lieutenant] Haswell the former cricketer for Tynemouth. One cannot praise our officers too much. There is one of our co. [company] called 2nd Lt. [lieutenant] Brown. He's absolutely great and I am trying to stick in a bit in his direction. We've had a rather easy time today. The snow was on the ground this morning so we recvd. [received] a lecture on musketry instead of the usual morning drill. The same this afternoon. We are all getting on champion now and liking the life a lot better. We weren't so very keen on it at first but now that we've got to know the chaps we are simply enjoying it. "

Key words:

Battalion – a large group of about 1000 foot-soldiers (infantry)

Lieutenant – an officer in the British army (below a captain)

Thomas Baker Brown: The story of a First World War soldier from North Tyneside

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Lecture – a type of lesson where the teacher stands at the front of the room and talks about a topic to the students.

Musketry -firing a musket (a type of gun)

Drill – practising and following orders about how to march and use weapons.

Questions:

What does Thomas think of his officers?

Why did Thomas and the others have a lecture on musketry instead of the usual morning drill?

What reasons does Thomas give to explain why he is enjoying life at the training camp more now than he did when he first arrived?