June 15, 1915

Dear Mother,

I’ve been at the Western Front for almost a year now. Can you believe that time has gone by this fast? I know you were worried for me when I first left home, and you probably still are, but it’s been this long and I’m just fine. You don’t need to waste your energy on me.

Life is pretty good here, actually. We spend most of our times in the trenches dug out here on the front. Most of us play games, play harmonicas, write home, and sleep. It’s calm and peaceful. Of course, life is no where near as wonderful as it was when I was home with you, but as you can imagine, it could be a lot worse out here. I don’t have my bed, and your food, but I’m alive. I’ve made friends with a lot of the other soldiers as well. They’re very nice and all about my age, too. Our commander is a good guy as well, and he is very understanding and knowledgeable.

You’ve probably heard the same stories that I have: about the horrors experienced on other areas of the battlefield. People getting exposed to poison gas, the bayonets, rifles, machine guns, flamethrowers, the list can go on and on. Even the mentally scarred people that come home from this war. Do you see them around town? Is what others say true? Never mind. If you trust me, you’ll know that I can take care of myself and will stay safe. I won’t leave you alone for the rest of your life.

Some of the guys here with me say such awful things about our opponents. Being the way you raised me, I guess I could never really hate anyone or anything. I believe that the war is between countries and beliefs, not between people, so I don’t really have any resentment about anyone out here. Guess that makes me a bad soldier, huh?

I have a strong feeling my future here is bright. It’s a lot better than I ever imagined. I do miss you, but I know that I will come home safe and happy and with wonderful stories to tell you. Stay safe and strong.

I’ll be home soon,