Speilburg Farm,

Morpurgo Lane,

Dartmoor,

Devonshire,

England,

PL20 1WH

Captain James Nicholls,

British Army Base,

Waregem,

Belgium,

8710

1st November 1914

Dear Captain Nicholls,

I am writing to you with deep concern regarding the safety and well-being of my horse, Joey, in the Great War against Germany. He was sold to you without my knowledge or consent before being taken to Belgium. I fully appreciate the co-operation and sacrifice that everyone must make for the war however I find the use of these horses unacceptable.

My first concern is that these domestic animals have been carefully trained for farm work in our quiet country sides: they are not accustomed to the loud, harsh environment that war is sure to bring. The unfamiliar whistling of shells falling and deafening explosions are sure to startle any untrained horse; this could be incredibly dangerous to the rider and the horse itself.

Furthermore, these intelligent creatures are being made to work in perilous circumstances without the proper care. I have no doubt that horses such as Joey possess the impressive stamina to assist soldiers in their travels, however the relentless journeys they are being forced to make are cruel and detrimental to their health. They are being driven to the brink of exhaustion by walking and running without sufficient rests, food or even water. Without access to adequate veterinary attention, I fear for the lives of these animals. Whilst I understand that our brave soldiers have to fight in these terrible conditions too, they have volunteered for this service – horses have not.

Ultimately, my deepest distress in the matter is the likelihood of these magnificent beasts being killed in action. Riding into battle against the rapid fire of machine guns and heavy artillery makes it unlikely for even the swiftest of horses to escape with their lives. Even those fortunate enough to survive this danger could be left with no rider, leaving them to be captured by our enemy, lost in foreign territory or put down due to their ill health. This rapid decline in horses is not only distressing to me personally but is able to cause a crisis at home in Britain: if, at the end of the war, our work horses are not returned to us, what will happen to our agricultural trade? Without horses to plough the fields, there will be food shortages in an already unsettling time.

While I am grateful for your dedication to the war and know that you are doing everything within your power to keep our soldiers and horses safe, I request that my horse be returned to me immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Albert Narracott