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Saturday 8.15 PM
1st April 1916

My dearest Mother

I will start my diary letter tonight as I fear I may be otherwise occupied tomorrow and not get the necessary time. Thank you so much for offer of daily or weekly paper. It is so good of you to think of me. Father is so good about sending local papers that I hardly think it necessary.

We get "English papers" free every day for the day previous and they give all current news. Outside of items of local interest the London papers are very out of date when they come. If you want to send something a standard magazine or periodical would be most acceptable. Cosmopolitan, McClures or some such paper but really I hardly seem to get time, or perhaps I should try to settle down to read even what I do get.

Please thank Father for 2 copies of "Life", Saturday Eve Post and pictures of advertisers with nice pictures of you and Alice. I sent it on to Wood also Saturday night about Munitions Board. What a nice looking group of women? London should feel proud of such work as I saw some all Londoners over here are. Tell Father I forwarded

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his business letter of 21st Feb with clipping and enclosures on to Wood and will discuss it with him at first opportunity. It only confirms the rumors we had both heard.

We have had a most interesting week in this beautiful bit of country and the last few days have been ideal. It has really been a very pleasant change from the front although I am very sorry to have missed the little show (mules) etc which has just been carried out and in which our people participated.

McEwen rode down to the coast tonight with Alex so I am alone as the others after sitting around an hour after mess have departed to their own billets. It is so nice to be all together once again.

Monday 27th March, Rev. at 5.00 AM as we must get away by 8.00 AM and I find we can not "do double" (I never always) have breakfast & a shave and wash and saddle up in less than 3 hours. The three squadrons that are back for training had a route march under the direction of General CHETWODE himself. Each squadron commander riding with him for a third of the time. He lectured all the officers first on "march discipline" and gave us some very good pointers

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He was most kind although he has the name of being rather a fiery old chap and told me some of his experiences in the famous retreat from MONS which he helped to cover and how he felt when he first saw the Huns streaming out of a wood like bees.

Rain and sleet overtook us but we put on our mackintoshes and did not suffer very much. Had a lecture on tomahawks etc in the afternoon in the school house of the village at 4:00. I had previously arranged with school master for the use of it. Little French children are much the same as Canadian but are more polite and little boys always lift their caps and salute me and little girls say "Bon jour monsieur". Some of them are very blonde and attractive. All went to bed early and I had my first good sleep. We all have real beds in these billets but I still prefer my sleeping bag on top of it.

Tuesday 28th March. Had a good bath. Officers of H.C.O.'s only out on a staff ride about new out under Thomas for an exercise ride. Covered some beautiful country and overlooked some wonderful valleys from the hills. It must be ideal here in summer time. Very windy

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however and quite cold. I suppose part of the storm
 they are having in England. Lecture again in
 afternoon on tomorrow's work. A returning
 officer visited us in the afternoon from
 one of the Cavalry Brigades. We all
 played poker in the evening, my second
 game since the war started. Spencer
 & Clemens cleared up about 50 francs between
 them. I lost 12 myself. It was very
 enjoyable however and a nice break.

Wednesday 29th March 5.00 AM start ^{as} all
 ranks to take part in advance guard scheme
 of today. Found a little slackness at stables
 which I had to correct rather sharply. General
 PITMAN of one of the Cavalry Brigades spent
 the morning with us and addressed us
 afterwards. Most of these cavalry officers
 seem to be the real kind of Englishmen
 and I must say I am very much impressed
 with what I have seen of them so far.
 Did not get back to billets until about
 2.00 PM. Had Spencer with me. Lecture
 at 4.00 PM. Still cold. Ice on ponds in
 morning. Bishop circled over us in
 a plane for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour doing all
 kinds of fancy stunts for our edification
 and to show off, I suppose, his skill.
 wrote letters in the evening and planned
 tomorrow's scheme. Had a fine sleep.

Wednesday 30th March 5.00 AM start but let me know it out early today. Allowed Capt Humphry of cyclists to handle the scheme and he did it very well indeed. Capt Chance, the staff officer attached to us addressed us after midday and Major Seymour of "Scots Greys" lectured in the afternoon on tomorrow's work. Cockshutt returned from leave at noon looking very well. He has shaved off his moustache. Just a mail including a letter from Sarah saying she had seen Wood on Sunday and Monday which I was so glad to hear as I did not know whether he had gotten his long postponed leave or not. Home Crayth had also looked Sarah up at Uxford and Wood in London. I suppose they are over seeing their own boys. Lecture again in afternoon. Weather milder. Chatted around fire in evening and wrote Wood a few lines.

Friday 31st March is going out like a lamb as a beautiful springlike day. Saw violets under the hedges as we rode out this morning. Officers of M.C.O.s only so men had an exercise ride. Major Seymour & Capt Chance both out with us. In earlier and had a dismounted parade for the men in the afternoon. Campbell a little under the weather. Made air plans

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Napier

for tomorrow's flank guard scheme.
Reads while McEwen writes letters in
the evening.

Saturday 1st April. 5:00 AM start. Cold but
soon warmed up as the sun arose.
Various parties rode to their posts for
billets. Quite warm about noon. We
touched a couple of fair sized tawns.
I allowed Major Hupfedy to handle the
situation. Had our few cows in the
church yard as the day was so mild.
The men spent the afternoon on their
saddles and harness. McEwen & Spencer
I whilled to the coast. I sat a while with
Campbell who is in bed still but better
and then attended to some correspondence.
Will add a few lines in the morning.
Sunday 2nd April as this is supposed to be
a holiday we start at 6:30. McEwen & Spencer
must have spent the night at the coast as
they have not turned up yet (5:15 PM). It has
been a beautiful restful quiet day. I had
my hot bath this AM and called on
Campbell who was better and later got
up for lunch. I thought I should have
conducted a service of my own but did
not. Had a saddlery inspection at noon
and awarded the prize 10 francs to the
first troop and cleanest saddle 5 francs.

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to Sgt Faulkner. Two officers from the yeomanry Squadron in the next village were over for lunch, very decent chaps but one very quiet. I spent the morning at Marsliary and the afternoon laying out a scheme for tomorrow and have just now returned from going around stables. One horse got at the oats last night and I am afraid has foundered himself. A very good horse too.

A letter from Sarah today and London papers Feb 3rd from Father and Feb 23rd from Mother. Very many thanks as most welcome even if a little old. Possibly some of the Canadian mail that were quarantined.

It is has been so summerlike that I have had both windows open here all afternoon. We are to carry out a rear guard scheme tomorrow and I am going to give my own people a short talk on it at 6.0 P.M. Will close tonight as I will be very busy in the morning. I intended writing both Alice and Estelle today but fear I will not manage it. We are really quite charmed with the surroundings here. With much love to Father and Alice not forgetting your dear self ever your loving son J.H.