

From the holdings of
Western Archives, Western University

17 Jan 1916

My dearest Mother

Sorry I did not write you in the middle of the week but wrote Etelle and Elaine as well as a number of other Xmas letters which I wanted to get off my mind.

Did not feel very much like writing yesterday as our guests (two Vancouver chaps one an ex coast) did not leave until quite late. Only one Canadian letter all week from dear Alice written on Xmas day. It must have been a lonely day for Father and her at Lakewood. It has a contrast to last year when we were all together except Wood.

I spent Saturday afternoon and evening with him most pleasantly and I showed me two letters from Father dated 28th about things at the Works. He discussed them very fully and Wood is answering them and I am ^{sending} a "deferred letter". I enclose a clipping about Wood which perhaps you have already. I congratulated him on Saturday on his O.S.O. which he jolly well deserves and has waited a long time for. He will doubtless tell you more about it. Received a nice card from little Sumner the jeweller which I must acknowledge. His son is doing much better and is becoming more of a man all the time. Beautiful weather here since my return just like

II

April at home. I hope it keeps up and if so we will have little to complain of so far as they say spring is very early. Roads are already drying up as days lengthen and we get more sun.

Monday 10th January Rode down to see Geo Mansitt at 10 P.M. but unfortunately missed him. On my way back passed a very large gun being dragged along the road by a huge (American) Cathpillar. It is wonderful what soft wet ground these machines go over. I remember Inghis was building some when I was in his shop once. The Ewen down after dinner as he is alone until Clemens (of St Catharines, formerly 2nd Dragoons) arrives. We expect heavy snow now. Leave has started in the museum (now 4 months over) and I have been allotted 4 men for mounted troops per week, which is 1%. At this rate it will take 2 years to go all around, and they say on all sides leave is to be cancelled everywhere about end of February. Write one letter in evening.

Tuesday 11th January. Did not go on ride as attended a special 2 day bombing or grenade course at 6th Infantry Brigade for Field Officers

III

17 Jan

starting at 9.00 A.M. Found it most interesting as there are many and named types of grenades both to throw by hand and to fire out of a rifle. In the former case the range is about 30 yds and in the latter up to 350 yards while the trench mortars shoot about 500 yds. They are all used to reach "dead" ground and trenches which cannot be covered by direct rifle or artillery fire. The Officer in charge is an expert Capt Taylor of Vancouver who was most kind to me. There is one of these schools in connection with each Infantry Brigade, and every Officer in Co and man has to take the course and know the different kinds of grenades, English, French & German and how to throw them. They say new infantry battalions will be half grenadiers at least. Back to 100 years ago again. Finished a map we were making for General Staff and took it over personally. We slept down again in evening.

Wednesday 12th Jan. at bombing school again all day. Threw quite a few and forgot to duck once. Guys so interested in watching the bomb explode there is a parapet to duck behind after

II

17 Jan

gun throw. a man is fairly safe 10 yds
away if he flops at once but pieces go
as far as 200 yds. Clemens arrived
in evening and we are all very favorably
impressed. He seems a nice quiet level
headed kind of chap. The Evew took him
in hand. Had lunch (while at school) with
Major Cross of 28th Btn, a very nice chap
who was also attending it.

Thursday 13th January. Continued my
court of enquiry from 9.30 until 6.15
PM and did not finish. Had lunch with
Lt Col Burns & Alexander of 24th who were
very nice. They are in best spirits this
week and taking things easily. Hill has
gone to the Divisional Staff as I think I
told you. Was tired at night so read
and retired early.

Friday 14th January. Continued my Court of
enquiry at 11.00. Salvage Co desks
had lunch and we finished about 3.00 PM.
There is a Salvage Co in each Division
who search the country and farm houses
and vacated trenches & quarters for wasted
or discarded government property. In three
months they have salvaged (as the stew)
72,000 tons (pounds) of "bulky beef". Other
things correspond. Went for a walk
before dinner and called on White who

V

17 Jan

is taking a subalterns bombing course all week. He is quite well again. They accidentally killed a civilian. A puff of wind blew a rifle grenade across the range and practically into the farm house door.

Alex Spencer down for dinner and about his position as paymaster. We are trying to keep him a combatant if possible by requesting his position to be designated "Adjutant and Paymaster."

Saturday 15th Jan. Out on ride. Attended to office work all A.M. Wire from Jones stating that our request to be known as "Service Squadron First Hussars" has been approved. We are all very glad and the Regiment should be paid to be directly represented over here. Had a "gas alert" practice and rode over and spent afternoon and evening with Wood. Harry Greenless is attached to him for a month. The good news of his D.S.O. came in while I was here. He is very pleased and it should help his advancement which should follow and I hope will. Saw E. Green also. Had a long talk over "shell contracts" and Father's letter and I have just sent the enclosed cable. Did not leave until 10:00 P.M. No letters all week and none since Monday from Sarah. Slept well.

17 Jan

Sunday 16th Jan. Have done away with ride
on Sunday to make a change for the year, so
left until nearly 8.00 and had a hot bath
followed by a cold "bucket" and changed my
clothes. Church parade at 11.00, nearly
all officers attending. Capt Taylor (of
boarding school) his Assistant Merton up
for dinner and stayed very pleasantly until
5.00 P.M. wrote, read and listened to
Campbell playing hymns on his mouth organ.

It is a great pleasure to be naturally
musical and have a good ear. I am passionately fond
of it but can never pick out an air like to ear.
(Can hear the old farmer thrashing with a
"flail" as I write). Wrote Sarah a long letter.

Monday 17th Jan Out on ride and witnessed
a beautiful sunrise. The days are perceptibly
longer. Rode over to C.R.A. about commissaries
for two of my men, Cochrane & Perkins, He
appraised them for me. Have just had
lunch (mail goes late now) and mail has
just come in so will look it over
before closing. Had such a nice letter from
Hub Jack yesterday addressed to both Wood
and me.

Later. Thanks dearest Mother for letter
from Ottawa and will await the longer
one you sent to Sarah with great interest.
How nice it was for you to be with Estelle

III

17 Jan

and suppose that by this time she will be able to go home with the dear boy. You can imagine how relieved we were to get the cable (even if a week late). Will know more about the event in a few days.

Please thank Innes for cable when you write or see him. It was awfully kind of him to send it and a great satisfaction to me (about Hussars).

Please thank Father for Sat. Eve Post and Free Press which have just come in today.

Must close now, dear Mother with ever so much love.

Your devoted son
Dbb.