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30 Jan 1916

Dearest Mother

Sunday evening once again and time for me to chronicle a few happenings of a very uneventful week. The only Canadian letter either Wood or I have received was your letter forwarded by Sarah and which I acknowledged when I wrote Father last Wednesday and his nice letter to Sarah, which she has since mentioned. Some say that a batch of Canadian mails has been burnt, but I really think that a lot of troops are being brought across just now which always seems to paralyze the mail service to some extent. It now takes me practically a week to get a letter from Sarah.

Monday 24th Jan. Was riding roads from 2:00 PM until nearly 6:00 to the north of us and found it very interesting as the day was beautiful and mild. I had no coat on and my new horse gives me a very pleasant ride.

Several times crossed the C.P.R. a branch railroad that is being built by the Canadian railroad section at a marvellously rapid rate. Aside from its use for strategic purposes it will bring our headhead and consequent "dump" very much closer and save our A.B.C. and motor lanes a good many miles. The rails look like our Canadian ones and the ties are certainly

II

american. I believe this R.R. section is 30 Jan  
making quite a name for itself and everybody  
knows the road as the K.P.R. Enjoyed my  
dinner when I returned and spent the usual  
quiet evening with Campbell.

Tuesday 25th Jan Out on ride in morning. We  
all wear our gas helmets now on the ride  
after our last experience. Don't like  
leaving the billet in the morning as a rule  
in case something important should come in  
but try to get a good ride in the afternoon  
and this "road job" gave me a good excuse  
to try my other new horse on a long ride  
but it was hardly as satisfactory as the one  
I rode yesterday. Was near the front line  
today and passed another town  $\frac{2}{3}$  in ruins.  
Old shattered homes are rapidly levelled,  
as there is a great demand for brick stuff for  
horse stappings. Read a little of "Hambury  
Cross" the English hunting classic, which a  
Mr Morrison of Cuffard kindly sent me  
through Sarah. He has bought horses from  
Sir Adam. Sent Clemens out on a new  
guard we have to furnish temporarily.

Wednesday 26th Jan. Spent the day almost  
exactly same as yesterday, only met Morrison  
of Divisional Staff and had rather a nice  
ride with him. Came home by 1st Lymington  
Hqts and had to see F. Ware but missed him.

30 Jan

III

Weather still so mild that a coat unnecessary.  
Thursday 27 Jan. Out on ride as Mr Egan still  
on leave and accompanied Campbell over a  
couple of roads in front before it got too light  
as they are "in view of enemy" according to  
signs up on them in day time, although a  
long way off. Attended to office matters in  
the A. M. and made a tour of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of my  
various posts and billets and inspected  
horses, saddlery, cookhouses, and sanitary  
arrangements. Have to be constantly  
vigilant about the last mentioned. Did  
not get in until nearly dinner time.  
Clemens down and we spent a pleasant eve.  
with him.

Friday 28th Jan Major Kennedy of Cyclists on  
leave this week. We alternated (in officers)  
with them. Had to furnish a man with a  
clean conduct sheet for giving some of our  
solid nickel bits [the Imperials only have  
steel which rusts] away for some time I  
think. Gave him 14 days F.P. with  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr in  
irons each day. He of course loses all pay for  
the period of the punishment also. I might  
say that I have not drawn an issue of  
rations for my men yet as they are so scattered  
and not being in trenches do not get as wet  
as the infantry. I would do so at once  
however if I think conditions warranted it.

Rode over to see Wood about 3.00 PM and stayed until 9.30 PM taking dinner. He pulls out for a rest in about a week and the officers who take over from him were with him and crumpled them up considerably. I think he would prefer to stay as they will likely move into more mud than they have here where they have made things more comfortable. Found him very cheerful and had a nice chat after the others had gone. He expects his 3rd leave in about 2 weeks. A very dark night riding back so I took no cross country tracks and stuck to main roads. Campbell had taken dinner with Clemens and just came in as I did. Slept very well.

Saturday 29th Jan Half expected Mc Embury but he did not turn up. Had a call from Cloud Hill in the morning very gay in his staff taps. He wants me to put out a horse for him from the next lot that come up. Capt Taylor of the Ammunition Column next to us was also in to ask us all to a concert his men were putting on tonight. Got some of our Lee E. rifles to some of the infantry to use for a "cutting out trip" they intend making. They all dislike the Ross very much. There is no doubt about it and it will not stand as much hard usage as the Lee Enfield. Went far out in the late afternoon to get up an appetite. Opened

30 Jan

V

the delicious box of "Boomers" and Campbell and I had a feast. Sent Clemens to the concert which was a great success. Had a very nice personal talk with him today, now that he has settled down and think we understand each other.

Sunday 30th Jan. Miserable foggy day. Had my weekly hot bath and a change. No church parade, and in any case I only have half a dozen men now on some duty. McEwen back, bright and cheerful. He had visited relatives near Glasgow and seen Sarah for day coming and going in London and brought me a letter from her.

I think he enjoyed his leave and am glad to have him back. Spencer goes this week. Went for a walk before lunch. Megann of Woods battery up and we had a very pleasant meal and he remained until nearly 5.00. Have been reading an old Saturday night and writing this ever since as Campbell out for tea. Will add a few lines in the morning.

Monday 31st Jan Another foggy miserable day. Did not sleep very well and just as I was dozing at 2.55 AM a tremendous bombardment of commenced. Heavies. Howlers and Field; an almost continuous roar which lasted  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour and made the glass

in our old farm house rattle steadily. As we received no word to "stand to" I concluded we were merely supporting a slight offensive on the part of some of our men, as it stopped us suddenly and commenced. I did not go out on tide as usual and am just now waiting breakfast (8.00 AM)

We are hoping for some Canadian mail this week and a letter from Father about the shell situation and some questions Wood and I had asked him to answer. I read the long article in the Saturday Night about Sir Alex. Bertram which seems to clear him very well of any crookedness in the matter.

This is the end of the month and I have my war diary to write up so will draw to close.

I hope Mother dear, the collar arrived safely. It was mailed a little after the others as it was not quite ready at first.

Tell dear Estelle that she is very often in my thoughts and her little cow and I hope they are both doing well.

Will close now with very love and apologies for what I fear is rather a dry letter.

your devoted son

J.H.