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20 May  
5:30 PM

Dearest Mother

As I have a few minutes now I will start my letter to you, the first from our new billet where we arrived yesterday and are now comfortably ensconced.

Your dear letter of about 2 May (?) arrived yesterday in which you ask me if we are short of funds. I put it on to Wood this morning together with one from Estelle written about the same time and one from Elaine dated May 1st. Why they should have taken so long to come is more than I can understand but they are all nevertheless very welcome also Fathers which came earlier in the week and which I have already answered. Letters mean so much to us over here and I have missed Sarah's very much the last two weeks and expect it will be another week before I get any more. You say something about coming over this summer and it would be a great treat for Wood and I to see you you might be able to come back when Sarah does in July or August (unless her plans change) I fear however that there won't be very much leave this summer. There are rumors now that it will soon be curtailed although we

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are still getting our usual small (very) allotment of 3 or 4 new per week. My own expects to go on Tuesday next for his second turn

I might say that my pay was cut to that of major when numerous other reductions were made last January and the reduction antedated to 1st Dec so I have been rather hard up and my last leave left me a little in debt. I took it up however and I believe it is to be adjusted and that the arrears will be refunded for which I am very glad. Wood Knopf has

recently sent over several remittances although he says he intends investing his next in exchequer bonds over here. I would like to save more and had intended to but fear that it is out of the question.

What a happy time you must be having with the three girls and the grandsons around you at Oakwood. I can picture the dear old place in its spring garb and envy you although things over here are wonderfully beautiful and growing so fast. Hops are 6 or 7 feet high already. There are a great many grasses all around us as beer takes the place of wine in this part

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of Belgium and France. The water is so bad that they have to use something. We have to draw our water every day, about 13 miles and then chlorinate it. I sent Sarah a deferred letter last Thursday and imagine she will find word on to you. Received several bundles of newspapers during the week, all most welcome. I have brought the literature you sent over up with me as the distance was not very great.

~~Monday~~ Tuesday 16th May. Rode over the new area with the linn in the afternoon and looked at about a dozen possible farms for our new billet and finally selected one where the horses can go and two adjacent ones where we can get billets although we would all prefer to sleep outside if we could get hold of some huts or tents but this seems out of the question officially, although we may be able to park it on the side a little later on. My J. M. S. White (Alice knows his wife) is a wonder and can do a tremendous day's work and then go out at night and come back with lumber, galvanized sheets, tarpaulins and other material. He is a wonder in that way. I have never seen him stumped yet. Called on Col Smith of 3rd Div Cavalry but he knows nothing yet about host-

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we stand. It is very trying. Played a  
small game of poker in evening. Col Jamison  
called in evening and we talked matters over.  
He feels very badly at not getting the command  
but expects a brigade or some staff work  
in Canada. He leaves tomorrow and will  
spend a couple of weeks in England before  
he sails. Sent a bundle of winter clothes  
and surplus articles back to Mrs Lancelfield in  
England with a bundle Campbell was  
sending over. Things accumulate and have  
to be kept down or left behind (never to  
be seen again) when we move. I see I have  
skipped a day or rather read the wrong notes  
out of my pocket diary so will have to go back to  
Monday 15th. Tried to get in touch with Insley  
in the morning without success so rode over  
to 1st Division and called on him after lunch.  
He did not say very much but took me out  
in his motor to look over the back country  
where we are to move for reorganization.  
He said he did not know whether Smith or  
I were seniors and that the Corps did not seem  
to know so evidently the matter has been  
referred to record office in England. If it  
comes before Col Frank Reid I feel sure  
he will see that I get a square deal.  
Heard more particulars about poor  
George Vansittart. He was a direct hit

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on his telephone dugout in which he and  
two of his officers were sitting. One was  
slightly wounded (Genelli) another seriously  
wounded and poor George struck with a  
flying sand bag in the small of the back  
which broke his pelvis bone and I suppose  
his spine. He lived 3 hours and was  
conscious part of that time but did not have  
a chance. I am going to see his grave  
which is not far from here and will  
write his mother and sister a line at  
first opportunity as I spent half an hour  
with him the Friday before. I believe that  
Frankall of Woods brigade is still missing,  
but he has likely told you about it.

Wednesday 17th May Quite warm today  
Rode up to new billets again with mother  
and Cochshutt and arranged the distribution  
of the squadron. As we were coming back  
a Bosh plane which was either so high  
up or screened by white clouds so  
effectively that we could not see it dropped  
3 bombs on the town occupied as  
Corps Headquarters. One hit some  
huts just by the road another hit the  
middle of the main street just in front of  
the A.P.M. S office and the third fell in a  
garden and did not explode. One was  
killed and five or six injured. He

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passed through a few moments later and  
 the G.O.C and Corps staff were out  
 looking at the damage. It was pretty good  
 shooting when you consider that the plane  
 must have been 8 to 10,000 feet up at  
 least. They are getting it down to a  
 science all right. Tried to get a hut  
 and tent in afternoon but could not  
 as they are required for areas nearer the  
 front where there are fewer billets  
 available, however we can manage  
 without during the nice weather.

Called on Johnson in the evening to  
 say good bye. Read in bed a little before  
 going to sleep. Rather hate grunting up  
 our comfortable billets and which we  
 have put a good deal of work.

Thursday 18th May. Rode down to  
 Dunsrow. Hqts to straighten out a  
 few matters and had quite a talk  
 with Schmiedlin of the Engineers who  
 was a recruit under me at the College  
 signed up the last proceedings of our  
 Compensation Board and handed over  
 to my successor. I am very sorry to  
 be leaving the Division. Went to Corps  
 Hqts in P.M. to see Panet who is taking  
 A.A. & G.M.G. in 4th Dunsrow but he  
 was out. Decided to move tomorrow

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The maine of the town called at night and I settled any claims he had against us.

Friday 19th May made a 4.30 AM start as we have a lot to do and left the billets cleaned swept and garnished at 10.00. It is no trouble now as every man knows what is expected of him and does it without even being told. Much less driven. We had a beautiful day and were pretty well settled here by 5.00 PM with box lines up and a fine well dug in the bed of a tiny trickle which I think will give us ample water unless it gets very dry. The men are in two barns but most of them prefer to sleep out under little shelters or "bivies" as they call them made out of a few poles and canvas or sacking. The women are in a farm about 10 minutes walk away and we have ~~another~~ a mess room in another farm half way over to the horses. The other officers at present are sleeping out under a tarpaulin near the mess room. We may be able to scare up a few tents later on. Chesley called in the afternoon and I understand his own appointment is not yet confirmed. He was very nice but vouchsafed no

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information. Slept very well in my bed but will get out as soon as I can get a shelter of some kind.

Saturday 20th May Went out on the ride with Campbell in the morning. The country back here is beautiful and everything growing so fast. There have been traps here a year ago last winter and the beautiful trees are "girdled" by the borses in a good <sup>many</sup> farms. Some are green but it kills them eventually. That was a hard winter and forage was scarce. Last winter must have been luxurious comparatively speaking. Weather very warm but nice for a change. Encountered one of the "Guards" Regiments on the march. They were a sight. Not a man out of step and well closed up, no stragglers. Transport clean and harness shining. Several officers with monocles and that "indifferent air". They went fraternize with other units.

Empley called in the afternoon with a partial list of those he had selected for his staff. He has taken Everett from 3rd as adjutant and only Casson as orderly room sergt and Bennett as sergt +umpeter from me. Quite a warm day and I allow the men to



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go without their jackets on the ride  
provided they are uniform in  
appearance. Smith of 3rd called again  
in the morning but has heard nothing  
further yet. He feels disgusted the  
same as myself. Read in the evening  
until rather late and then turned in  
Sunday 21st May Had my bath at 7:00  
but did not turn out for stables. Sent  
half my men away for inoculation  
with White, there will be some sick  
boys tonight I fear as it seems to  
hit some of them very hard. Went all  
over the billets and looked over our  
new arrangements and suggested a few  
alterations. My well is working fine  
and the men have dammed the same  
trickle up a little lower down and  
made a bathing pool for themselves.  
Rode over to Camp Hqts after lunch to  
see about a hut and sub-leon (Major)  
Hodgins. I then tried to find the  
officers cemetery where poor George  
Kear is buried but must have had  
the wrong map location as I did  
not get it although I was riding  
until 5:00 P.M. I have just now come  
back from the mess room where I  
have been listening to Cuckshutt's

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gramophone. They are a great  
diversion. As I came back across the  
fields I could hear Sarah's over by  
the horse lines and some of the men  
whistling with it. It has been very  
warm and I have had a round of  
sleep outside tonight. The even is  
going to.

I thank Father very much for his  
interesting letter dated May 5th which  
came at noon today. I described his  
trip to Ottawa. I will answer it later  
on but don't altogether like the idea  
of tackling the larger shells. I will  
try and look Wood up early in the week  
and have a talk with him about it.

I was hoping that the past week  
would get matters settled as far as I am  
concerned and now wonder what will  
crop up the coming week. As I have  
one or two other letters to write tonight  
I will get on with them and add a  
few lines tomorrow. Good night  
Father dearest with many thanks  
again for your sweet letter. I will  
bear your Bleuthner in mind but  
am not after near the C.M.R. Bde  
and don't like wandering around too  
much out of our area as they are

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very strict about it. If an officer gets  
wounded or killed by unnecessarily  
exposing himself when not on duty  
and right seeming "misting" he runs  
a great chance of having his pension  
stopped. It is only right too when  
you come to think of it.

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Monday 22nd May. Got up for stables  
and got quite warm walking over and feel  
that it is going to be a very warm day!  
Have just finished breakfast and as our mail  
goes earlier now will only add a line. I  
am sending your letter 21st April on to Sarah  
as I know she would like to see it. So you  
meant to say that J.E.S. and Alexander  
are doing something. They have good  
safe jobs at any rate. I wonder where  
Tomlin is. I have not heard of him for  
a long time. I have a man framed  
O. Cornell but not Mc Cornell. Hard  
lines for poor old Jane but suppose  
it will work out all right.

I suppose you will have heard from  
Sarah by this time. It is a nice time  
of the year for her to be at Carnley.

Kiss both the nephews for me  
also their respective "mothers" and  
Aunt. With very much love  
your devoted Son.

Jbb.