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BELGIUM
25th Sept

Dearest Mother

Having a few moments while awaiting orders will pick up my thread again.

22nd Sept Wed. Spent balance of day getting settled in our billets and cleaning up after Surrey Yeomanry's hasty departure. I think we will be very comfortable. Planned out a reconnaissance of 2nd line trenches which we are to do to enable us to act as guides if occasion arises. Slept on tiled floor of large room in Farm house; will have a cot made as floor harder than the boards in my tent and much harder than the ground on which I have slept the last week. Cackshut is my companion and we take alternate mornings at the bath as we have 3 line, one for each party.

Thursday 23rd left a week ago we left England.

Sent out about 12 reconnoitering patrols to familiarize men with roads and four 2nd line trench parties who left their horses at the "barrier" and proceeded on foot meeting them later at prearranged points. Accompanied Whiti and had first initiation to shell fire as about 10 8" Krumps dropped about 50 yards away. We flopped at first, but suppose we will get used to it. Rust went up 100 feet and the holes were about 10 feet (at least) in dia x 4 to 5 deep in a soft field. We could hear them 100 or 150 sec (perhaps more) before they struck so had

II

25 Sept

ample time. They were armed at a digging party near us, which shows how closely the Germans follow our movements. Returned in late afternoon and compared notes with other officers who had been out on other sections. Did a little writing in evening and retired on a very good cot my servant has made.

Friday 24th Sept Estelle's birthday. Thought of her several times. Hope she will have many many happy returns. Spent the day with Spencer in his section and were very close to a brigade of our artillery who were being cutting and kept it up all night. We were in first line for a short time. Drizzled all day. About 30 "thumps" landed all around the 15th (New) Battery while we were near it but no damage although some were not more than 15 feet away. The accuracy seems wonderful when one considers how far off they must be; the report of discharge cannot be heard. Missed our horses at dusk but had dinner with 5th F.A. (Col Farmer) who sent us home in a motor ambulance about 8:00 PM. Heard that 3rd Brigade is in LOCKE quite near us and will try and locate Wood tomorrow; sorry I did not know sooner. Saw Arthur Carbyle, Billy F. Mitchell & H. & Hodgins. 18th and other Infantry of 2nd Div have been in trenches about 6 days. Saw Claude Hill also.

III

25th Sept

Saturday 25th Sept. Orders to stand ready at 9.00 AM so cancelled all patrols and arranged to move in as soon as necessary. Drizzle all day. Called at Div Hqs where I heard there was a general and apparently successful advance of Allied Line over a very long front. Hope they can hold it. Heavy continuous bombardment all night.

Was given command of 2nd Divisional Cyclists as well as my Squadron, about 200 men & officers. A little extra responsibility but think I can handle it. Heard Wood had moved north of Y - again so my note missed him. Very sorry as we must have been very close on Mon Tues & Wed of this week; however may be able to go and see him when things quiet down a little, although I believe the whole Division is ready for an advance.

4.30 PM. Mail just in so will open and acknowledge before closing my letter. First mail since 3 days before leaving England, practically 2 weeks yours dear Mother (30 Aug) most interesting. So sorry for all your worries about James and Estelle; you will indeed miss them both and hope they will benefit financially by change. Can picture you rocking cradle in your room as you write; it is not a new experience for you. Am sending to Wood who will forward to Sarah at 319 Woodstock Road. OXFORD

Have just heard this ^{IV}P.M. that the advance ^{25th Sept}
today has been successful all along the line
and with very little loss. I only hope it is
true and that they can hold on to it and
keep it up. We have been ready to move at an
hour's notice all day. I enclose an address
which I think would be better if the word
"Canadian" were used instead of C.E.F. which is
similar to B.E.F. and if omitted matter goes
2nd Division [which is British of course]. My
stamp Lt. Col. gives it correctly.
2nd Canadian Divisional Cavalry.

Further notice "London War Office"; the
London is superfluous.

Many thanks Father for your two of 2nd & 3rd
of Sept and for attention to Sally & Colt, I mean
did H & E. Hope to send some surplus of my
pay [am still getting Lt Col] home shortly
but nothing as handsome as Wood. Hardly
know what to do about colt but think they
both could be wintered around a hay stack with
stable at night for \$5 to \$6. Would suggest
getting advice from Jack Smallman or Marshall
G. and then it will be for you & Alice to decide.
Whatever you do will be satisfactory and one
suppose one's sentiments must be sacrificed
under present circumstances. Too bad about
four crops in West. Ont. but the West will
make up to some extent. I must have to

25 Sept

Thank Alice for ^V camera which arrived with films this P.M., but fear I may have to send it to Sarah as orders most strict prohibiting them and I took one from one of my men today and sent it to England. However, will see what get Wood's opinion before doing so.

I have a wire from Sarah about electric torches which please forward with one spare battery each as soon as convenient.

Many thanks also Father for Fresno Press and Saturday night which I will read over tomorrow.

Must close now with very much love to all
ever
J.H.

8:20 PM

Enclose card of Henry Fred Reithinger my French interpreter who is a very decent little lawyer of Alsacian ancestry who messes with us although he is only a private. He speaks very good English. I find however that I can get along fairly well myself when I have to.

J.