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5th Oct
BELGIUM

Dearest Mother

Will finish diary up to date and then acknowledge a number of letters I have just received.

Sunday 3rd Oct Another beautiful fall day just like October at home, only leaves here are now just beginning to turn. Put on dyed breeches from Hill Bros which fit well if they will only hold their color. Inspected church parade [very small as so many men off guard] and sent it off under White Campbell & Cochrane to a nearby town where a few air service was conducted for our special benefit.

Rode down to see Wood about 11.00 with McEwen through another shell destroyed town, but where church spire still stood [although not in several places] but roof off church. Found him looking very well and comfortably settled in a hut near the dugouts with his men and gun emplacements. He was playing patience (takes after you mother) and gave us a game lunch (cold pheasants & tongue) they seemed to be well supplied with extras and amokas and he had just received a box of fruit from you Sarah.

He explained how the guns are laid (indirect fire) by the Registration of various targets behind enemy's trenches as well as being loaded and aimed at all times on the latter. It was very interesting.

III

5 Oct

Called on Bürgermeister with our weekly billeting certificates in P.M. Can get along fairly well with him without Interpreter, also called on Folger who is well and said Wood's gun wheel was sent to Wilson and acknowledged. Heavy firing most of night. I suppose due to some movements and changes in our traps along this front. A German battle plane hovered over our lines (only about 800 feet up) for a couple of hours in P.M. and was observed that apparently our aerial guns could not reach it although they fired almost incessantly. They seem to beat us out every time with new ideas.

Tuesday 5th Oct. Sent out another party of 30 men which leaves us with about 16 horses to look after per man in billets. Sat as president on a Field General Court Martial and gave a man 60 days Field Punishment (if confirmed) for drunkenness. Took a ride into new country and Division is taking over to left and back for lunch. Am staying in this P.M. and rather glad as quite wet.

Many thanks dear Mother for most interesting letter of Sept 9th to 13th about Aubrey's unit addressed to Sarah and which I am sending to Wood by wounded orderly. I don't think you could better. Your circular letter to the three

Woods received a letter from your mother (on back of Father's to Sarah) and one from Lane with snaps of Stephen while Duas there. Elbot Green (who was there as Woods Captain) also had some. Funny that you mentioned Anne Elliot in yours. Rode back about 4.30 after a very pleasant day. Will try and make a weekly call and have since heard that Wood's Brigade will be moved into our Division (protempore) tomorrow which will bring him comparatively close. Cocksutt of gave a dinner party to the other officers and Retinger at our billets at 6.30 for which our cook Hughes made great preparations borrowing 2 candlesticks and flowers from farmer. I enclose the menu which was on each cover. We quite enjoyed it and some sour wine Cocksutt had bought (but would not take any himself) as well as Belgian cigars (then some tobacco). It was quite a success and only cost us 45 francs each (two of us). Your side buy almost everything here less than 2 miles from German line and prices, all things considered, are very reasonable.

Monday 4th Oct. Took over a guard for Belgium & French frontier about 90 men from Cyclists & ourselves. Put ACS in charge who hits it off well with Major Jagers (late RNWMP) who is our Provost Marshall

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of us as all items of greatest interest to all
and we are only a few days or hours apart and
~~we~~ always forward at once. You have been
a very good friend to poor old P. Si in my absence
and I appreciate your interest as much.
Your descriptions of Lakewood most vivid and
interesting; am sure everything must be lovely and
Alice's Garden a great success. Your letters
are never ^{un}interesting, in fact I am sure you
would have made a good authoress had
opportunity arisen. How nice to have Aubrey for
a week; I expected he would like artillery
better than infantry. I can hear the guns as I
write and windows rattle incessantly.

Many thanks for attention to Mary's present.
Please do likewise, if not too much trouble,
for Jap & Betty Smart from Sarah & I;
cards enclosed. Father will give you a
cheque on my H & E Co. I should say about 50/6
each as times are hard and they overlooked us, but
that does not matter in any case.

Many thanks dear Alice for letter of 12th Sept
finished by Elaine ^{on 20th} who has written a wonderful
number of letters considering circumstances.
Did not quite understand about "we squirrel"
and "black one". Has the grey departed? I think
most of your most interesting letters have come
to hand eventually and I have tried to acknowledge
by date as well as by mentioning contents.
No one was pretty prompt Sept 20th to Oct 3rd.

V

5 Oct

Samples of Stephen are splendid and I think even better than the ones you sent Wood. He looks awfully big to me, but regret that I cannot see resemblance to self (except lack of hair) although I feel very much honored indeed.

Glad Aubrey appreciates his son but am a little surprised he is interested!!!

Tell him I don't think he will make much of a Father. I am sending snaps to Wood (and then Sarah (for album) except Mother & Stephen which I am keeping with me.

Glad to hear Mother & Alice are going to take a much needed trip. They have both worked like Trojans for over a year and certainly need a rest. Don't let the idea fall through. I know they both look up to you, Elome, so put it through. Orders are orders. Don't quite understand Mother's mention of Aunt Ella coming after Xmas. Is she to take Estelle's (or CWL's) house then?

Many thanks Sarah for letters of 29th & 2nd and am glad your eyes are not bothering you. You must not do too much of that writing ^{at} Ariel College; it seems funny to think of you being yarking there. I still think post would be better for parcels but will know better when first freight package arrives. Will try and write your dear Mother