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Dearest Mother

Sunday

a very uneventful week I fear 12 Nov 16
as things seem very quiet. Cal Strawbenzie's
absence (on leave) has given me a little more
to do and if I did not have my French now
I hardly know how I would put in the time
especially the long evenings as it is getting
dark so early now. Only one Canadian
mail has come so far this week containing
your letter on back of Estelle's and your letter of
Oct 19th with all enclosures of which poor
Mrs Ford's interested me most. Am so sorry she
is an invalid. am glad you liked the little cross.
It was not much but a souvenir of these times and
parts. So sorry to hear about Uncle Howard; poor
Aunt Tilly is having a hard time but her letter
sounded very brave. your circular letter of
16th also arrived via Sarah and was most
interesting. I know how glad you would be to
get back to dear old Oakwood. I'mt everthing on
to Wood this next. Elaine's nice letter of
Oct 20th came just after I had written her. It
was sweet of her to write in midst of her
move to Montreal and worry about infantile paralysis.
The letter was not finished which made me
wonder a little. I wish I had a lot of addresses
but as I have not will have to send also a
number of cards to forward for me, which I
feel sure she won't mind doing. Elaine
asked if Strawbenzie were my stier. He is

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of course in the regiment but not in the ^{12th Cav}
I.C.E.F as my appointment dates from
9th June 1915 (date of sailing) and his from
1st July 1915. I was also senior to him by some
years in the Militia before the war. I suppose
you find it hard to explain sometimes why I
have not command of the regiment as the
natural inference is that I had made a
mistake for not doing well.

I also had a nice note from Col Hobbs telling
me he had sent the new tobacco as he very
kindly did last year. I will answer when it
arrives.

Father's personal letters of 22nd and 23rd also
came but as nothing special in them I will
answer later on. I also have only now
received his personal letters of 1st & 8th Oct
via Wood who mailed them to me on Oct 26th.
They must have been side tracked somewhere
although mail is very slow going to ^{our} artillery
when they are away from the Corps. I have
not seen Wood for a month now but hear they
will soon be up with us. I will answer Father
about Round Robin later but as I want to try
and write Aunt Emma and Mrs Brinton I will
have to get a move on as this must be mailed
tonight if at all possible. It has been a lovely
day with fallen leaves everywhere just like
at home. This Chateau is in a little
wooded park full of large trees and has two

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very imposing gates. The bride and groom who
 were here are just going out in a motor which
 is at the door. I had a long ride this morning so
 will stay in this afternoon and write.

Sunday 5th November. Had my two French
 lessons in afternoon and evening and started
 old Sean off to the P.O. with my letters. It is
 three miles away.

Monday 6th Nov Had a hot bath as I missed it
 yesterday on account of early church. Do not find
 that clerical work in connection with regiment
 much heavier than with the Squadron. It
 only takes a small part of my time as the
 adjutant takes over most of the details.
 Rode to Corps Hqts in morning in rain but as
 wet and miserable did not go out again
 although I attended noon stables at all the
 squadrons which in this billet are all together
 and the horses in nice dry stables originally
 built by the French. No mail and feel very
 lonely sometimes especially as I have not
 been able to see Wood for so long. Read
 and studied in the evening.

Tuesday 7th Nov Intended going up in front
 to visit working party but it was too
 miserable. Rode to Corps with Col Smith to
 see if I could get leave for him over and
 above allotment on account of his rank.
 It is one of the privileges we used to have
 before regiment was formed and as our

rank entitles us to it and it would not deprive any one else one would think we could still enjoy it. The request however was later refused as I suppose mine will be when my 3 months come around and we will have to wait our turn or deprive someone else in the regiment which neither of us liked.

They make things very uncomfortable for both of us sometimes. I Cabled Father "build" on receipt of assenting letter from Wood. Swonder had quickly he got it. No mail from Canada or England again. French conversation from 6.00 to 7.00 and 8.15 to 9.15 and studied and read until bed time.

Wednesday 8th Nov. Forgot to say that Capt Tipton (Capt of "A" Sqdn under Col Garrison) got recalled to Canada as second in command of a Bn. He was badly used when the regiment was reorganized and I don't blame him a bit for going. "C" Squadron gave him a farewell dinner last night which was very pleasant. I was present but did not remain very late. — As the sun was out lunch I decided to go up in front and started on our 15 mile ride under favorable auspices with a few sandwiches in our pockets. About half way a storm blew up and it rained hard on and off the rest of the day. Was disappointed to find that my new 5½ guinea trench coat leaked and I found my rain breeches (which

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I had bought on leave to cover the knees) were a nuisance and doubt if I will bother with them again. We found the benches knee deep in many places and much knocked about by much mortar fire which had killed 2 of our men last week. The shell hit just beyond them and blew them both down to the soap head cutting one practically in two. All our sandwiches in the rain and started back about 4.00 walking as one saw only ride up at night. Wrote Alice and Elaine at night after my talk with Barber. The grate fire in my room makes it very easy and I use it freely as coal is easy to procure here and also very good. I suffocated again at no mail. Arranged for the Ewen who goes on leave in morning to take my letters over and so save about 3 days.

Thursday 9th Nov Rode to Corps in A.M. about 3 carts - martial which I have tomorrow attended now stables and held office. Rode to --- in P.M. as lovely afternoon and bought some envelopes and a bath and tried to get gold tie pin repaired without success. There are no jewellers left in France only women in the shops and impossible to get repairs done, almost as bad in England so will send it home. It is Elaine's wedding one. Had back my French lessons which I quite enjoy. Wrote Sarah a long letter and retired after midnight!!

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Friday 10 Nov Spend day dealing with three
poor chaps up for court martial letting one off
Had lunch with Camp Commandant Col
Gadson Gadson who said he was sorry about the
ruling on Smith's & my leave but of course it
came from General Farmer. Strawbenzie got
back about 5.00 and had seen Sarah for a few
minutes. He was shooting with one of his
brothers in Somerset and had seen Harry
Walburn who seemed quite well again.
His wife (Strawbenzie's) returned to Canada
last spring. French and wrote Sarah in
evening. I wish you could see my comfortable
room and nice bed and drop electric light.

Saturday 11th Nov We now get the French (Paris)
edition of (Daily Mail) at breakfast which keeps
one very well posted. Rode to a village
about 9 kilometers away and saw a farmer
about an old claim against "Armeé Britannique"
While waiting for him I chatted quite freely
with his daughter who gave me a glass of
their own homemade wine - very nice.
Did not go out in P.M. as I have given up taking
tea except occasionally as I do not need it and
don't want to get too fat. A plane fell just
beside us yesterday and the 2 aviators were
killed practically at our door. Their bodies
were ten inches in the ground (a soft field)
but not much disfigured, unfortunately. Old
Barber had a bad cold but we had our talk

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just the same. Home about 9.30 and read until nearly midnight as I get plenty of sleep not getting up as a rule until 7.30 AM Sunday 12 Nov. Nice hot bath and clean clothes which old Sean is washing and mending very nicely. He is better than Markham who I fear has been discharged as unfit on account of bad feet. They always troubled him. Nice morning so had to ~~go~~ and back about 18 kilometers passing a big cement factory and coal mine. The managers of these French factories (and often the owners) have beautiful houses contiguous to the works and the whole is often surrounded by a garden and then all wall or hedge. They are very pretty. Have just had my lunch and received two delayed letters from Sarah. She is much interested in presidential elections. I don't believe the attitude of the U.S. will be much changed no matter how it goes.

I hope I will be able to see Wood sometime this week but it is hard to say. He should be able to get Sean now and really deserves it. The motor is just back and the French jabber (they speak so fast) is under my window. She looks quite pretty but very shy; I have not had a good talk with her yet. Well Mother dear, I wish I was at Lakewood with you all today. You should be at church about now. Very much love
 Alf.