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Dearest Mother

Sunday 24th

Here we are up in front once again where we were a week ago but this time furnishing working parties of 300 every night and practically no prospect of breaking through like we had the last time. We have brought a few tubs with us and straw and I am sharing one and am very comfortable as our second line waggon has accompanied us this time. If the weather holds nice like this morning we will not suffer although the men and horses are all in the open.

I am writing on a couple of ammunition boxes one of which I see bears the Canadian symbol (↑) on it but is an 18 pr so not from E. Ltd.

This is Estelle's birthday. I wrote her some days ago or rather weeks and hope she will get it in time. The next will be yours on 14th Oct I will try and write again this week. We have had a very quiet week and I fear there is very little of interest to record.

Tuesday 19th left another miserable wet day visited horse lines at noon stables and found things very slippery. The mud is not as deep as in Belgium but much more greasy and movement is very hard for both man and beast. Cleared about 1 P. 30 A.M. and straw and I rode into — a town of nearly 100,000 and had an excellent lunch and a bottle of Burgundy.

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Pris were very steep as it cost us nearly 20 francs each but as we only are able to regale ourselves occasionally we did not begrudge it. We then walked around Town and after getting a "permission" from the Hotel de Ville visited this art gallery. It is closed to the general public but an exception is made for British officers. I have not seen so many beautiful pictures since the World's Fair, as the National gallery which I saw on last leave was not to be compared. I recognized several famous pictures that I know of by reputation. I was sorry to leave. I bought some shaving soap and Toilette having tea at a very nice tea room we rode back in 1 1/2 hrs. It is about 12 miles. The town was very busy and we saw a lot of very smartly dressed women although the majority were in black. There are practically no civilian men about, nothing but boys and women in the shops. I forgot to say that I ran into Harry Walker who is a subaltern in a R. E. field Co. He looked very well indeed and was cheerful as usual. Please tell Mr. Betts when you see him.

Wednesday 20th Sept Another miserable wet day. Equinoctial gales and change of weather I suppose. Attended noon stables and found things pretty bad. Wrote Father a long letter

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also Archie Mahem and several others. Got a DRLS note from Wood and prepared a cable for the morning. Feel very sorry for poor Brewster who is still under arrest awaiting the promulgation of his Court Martial. I was president of one in the afternoon on a private who was drunk on duty. He had been without anything to eat all day and had had a long march the day before but of course we could not do anything but find him guilty but made his punishment as light as possible. It took all afternoon. Our hut is now very snug and quite warm with a stove. We had a very good dinner.

Thursday 21st Sept Wet and miserable all day. Old Mathews has measles and has been evacuated so Leshe is looking after me for a few days. He dried out my tent by putting a brazier in it when I was out for a walk. Things get so damp in continued wet weather. Strawberridge and Dawson went down to — again. Played poker all evening and only lost one fr.

Friday 22nd Sept fairly dry so Smith and I rode down to — about 10.30 and loafed along as we went going over the fields partway as they are drying up again. Had a lobster lunch and 6 bottles of Pilsener and spent the afternoon in the cathedral.

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and art gallery. Smith is an architect and his knowledge helped me to appreciate the Gothic beauties of the cathedral. We had tea and an early dinner and returned in evening. We saw some Russian officers that impressed us very much.

Saturday 23rd Sept Broke camp in the morning and moved out here ^{in the} afternoon and got very comfortably settled. Working parties out all night preparing for pending operations. I suppose we are to remain up for a few days for this kind of work largely due to the losses our infantry have sustained. Slept very well on the ground.

Sunday 24th Sept Another nice day. Inspected Hotchkiss machine guns in A.M. as we expect to use them alone. Have been unwell this and in the sun and must close as I have a chance to mail with the lances that brought out our rations. Am going to look road up this P.M. Sorry to be so brief. Very much love

your devoted son

Shb