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Saturday

7th Sept

3.00 PM

My dearest Mother

Am back here again overnight as I have had a working party of 300 up in front all week and we are to go up early tomorrow again as a mounted unit, so I will seize this opportunity of writing a very hasty diary letter as I may not get a chance for some days.

I find it takes a good half day to write fully and keep my pocket diary posted up too so you will have to excuse a brief one this time.

Your note of 14th Sept and enclosures from Estelle and Elaine came yesterday and I sent them on to Wood via Leslie before I came in (in a lorry) this morning having left him and my horses up in front.

Sarah also sent me your very sweet letter to her and I also sent it on to Wood as I knew she would not mind. I fear your misdirected (or rather insufficiently directed) circular letter has gone astray as she has not forwarded it yet. I do miss them as all items of home news are so acceptable.

Father's business letter of Sept 18th was waiting for me this morning. He shall

Making business does not seem a bed of roses with hot weather, indifferent help, and difficult inspectors; I hope however that this fall will see an improvement in the conditions affecting the two farmers and that the least venturesome gentlemen will become more reasonable. They have to be contended with with white kid gloves as I said once before and as their say is supreme it is no use antagonizing them.

Our mail has been very delayed since coming down here and Sarah's letters which I used to get on third day do not reach me for a week or more. I received hers of 29th only today.

I am enclosing list of casualties to original 1st Hussar men. Poor Dunbar has since died. I had to leave in a hurry last week before I had time to make it up. Florence and Hudds are both back to duty.

I wonder if you could send me a tin of Hudson Bay tobacco (Imperial mixture) once a month or so. I am tired of smoking various brands and the issue is sometimes very strong. I smoke a pipe in the morning and try and restrain my use of cigarettes to after

lunch and in the evening. It is only a minor restriction as cigarettes are certainly soothing in times of stress.

I will be glad to get leave as my clothes are on their last legs. My pyjamas are in rags but I have your nice new ones in England to fall back on, when I can get over and dig them out.

I picture you now at DORVAL with Elaine or in OTTAWA with Estelle and am sure you will have lovely meals with the daughters not to mention the grandsons!! Give them all my dearest love.

Monday 2nd Oct Rani in evening also and after a walk before dinner I met Father and retired. About 10.00 a warrant came in for a working party of 300 to stay up in front and I offered to take it up as it was demanded and the three Squadron commanders will have their hands full looking after horses and the youth standings we are trying to prepare.

Tuesday 3rd Oct. We took the men up in waggons to Trade to - but could get no accommodation for them there so we had to go in the afternoon with 35 - 6x8 tarpolins for 300 men and men & 9 officers. Of course it poured all day so you may imagine

how the ground was and how comfortable the men were. The officers managed to get into an old building with a roof and so had a dry place to sleep. 100 men worked until 10.00 PM and 200 from 6.00 PM all night on roads near the front line.

Fortunately no casualties although shelling incessant. White was with me so congenial.

Wednesday 4th Oct I am sometimes glad to get away on these parties for a change and to my own boss for a time and besides it gives me something to do. Old Leslie looks after me well as well as two horses.

Markham is still in hospital with scarlet fever and I have not bathed with a servant in his place. Had a cold bath and a good breakfast and met the men who spent

rather a miserable night. Not a complaint and they are making the best of it and already improving huts and shelters.

They are well fed with good rations which means a lot. Called on town major of but still no accommodation and perhaps just as well as the town is shelled almost daily and 12 ACR got it the other day from one shell in a house 2 doors away from ours.

Spencer out on lorry with rations but no mail which is always a disappointment.

Took a walk in the afternoon and got orders for Friday walking party. Thank

goodness were left alone for tonight. Two  
 12" beams about 100 yards away in railway  
 cutting disturbed our slumbers a little  
 but I hope they disturbed some things more  
 seriously. Got a mess running and are  
 quite comfortable with fire in old grate  
 and table and chairs from ruined houses  
 help to make things more comfortable.  
 although the stone floor hard to sleep on  
 and nice seats very bold. Lestie got  
 near two nice trophies. The trouble will  
 be to get them home.

Thursday 5th Oct Calder but fine and  
 windy which tends to dry things up. Saw  
 Mr Guth (chaplain of household) who was  
 very loud in his praises of the work our  
 men did during last push as stretcher  
 bearers. Tried to see Major again  
 but for last time as he apparently  
 has no use for Canadians. Tried to  
 get some tents out from our camp  
 in rear but no allowed to be taken  
 to "forward area". Saw transport officer  
 of - Bty who was with us last July.  
 He says his Bty is going in again  
 with all new officers and NCO's  
 except the O.C. who was buried 3 times  
 the last time and one had to dig  
 himself out. The slaughter is really

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terrible but as long as we make gains and  
kill at least an equal number of Germans  
the men do not mind, although even  
three times are about all a man wants  
on this front if he is lucky enough to  
last that long. I think I will move the  
camp further forward as the walk  
to work is very long and hard on the  
men. Rode up with Leslie and picked out  
a likely spot. Had a very good dinner  
and read mail and papers in the evening.

Friday 6th Oct. Clear and bright. Sent  
200 men up to bury cable to the very front  
line after lunch and named the Camp,  
and got the "hives" up. We brought fair  
tents out secretly as I see lots of others  
up there and they will be a great boon.  
Had dinner at old place and rode up to  
new camp with Lockshutt about 7.00 P.M.  
The road working party are shovelling the  
mud (about 18" deep) off a sump road  
near          and worked so well (task  
work) that they were in two hours early.  
They found a corpse every few yards  
buried in the mud and so in addition  
had to do a lot of burying. A lot were so  
decomposed that it was out of the question  
to identify and get identity discs. I wonder  
how many thousand "missings" like that

there will be. They were mostly Canadians too. There are lots of trophies lying everywhere but sometimes one does not have the heart to pick them up. There is a certain amount of superstition too or, will we say reverence for the dead. Was disturbed at 3.00 AM on

Saturday 7th Oct with orders to move back to - at 6.15 AM in barries and come up as a mounted unit tomorrow. Cable buying party did not get in until 7.00 so were delayed and they were literally all in after having been out since 5.00 P.M. yesterday. We kept waiting 3 hours under heavy shell fire for the cable but suppose it could not be helped. Fortunately only one casualty although Rintow one of our officers was partially buried a couple of times. Got back here about noon and men have had a bath but won't have much chance to get things in shape with a 3.30 AM start tomorrow.

The Daily Chronicle of 6th Oct mentions our patrol work. Campbell and Cocksbutt were the 2 officers. I will ask Sarah to get half a dozen copies and send them over. Three of our men have got the Military Medal for the work they did; one CHALLONS is one of my old

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men. They well deserved it. My tent ablaze from a cigarette I had carelessly thrown on flap but I caught in just in time.

Walter dear Cosmopolitan and other magazines most acceptable. I can now pursue my continued stories. Very many thanks. Your selection always so good too. Will try and pay you my weekly visit tomorrow (Sunday) although he needs a calendar I know it. Is it not queer that most of our names are on Saturday or Sunday.

While asked to be remembered to all. He is such a fine chap. I am very fond of him. I am sorry I don't see more of my old officers now; I am very attached to them and miss chumming with them.

Must straighten a few things out now. I grudge my heavy mess bill but suppose the Hqs mess must put on a little style!!!

Very much love

