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Reed 10 Jan 17 Sunday 24 Dec

Dearest Mother

I think the magazines you send come through nearly always and I know I have received all the numbers of Cosmopolitan which I find generally has the best reading. Popular Mechanics for Dec and four bundles of newspapers came last night two of latter from Father.

Your letter of Monday (?) telling about four Uncle Howard and also with enclosures from Aunts Berdie & Lizzy came as well as nice notes from Aunt Mary and Gerald Fitzgerald.

Thank Alice for her very sweet letter of Nov 30th and I assure her that she is quite right in devoting her attention to work for Tommies rather than for affairs. The latter are generally very well looked after and fare very well, while the soldier has much to put up with. I quite approve and think she has sized matters up very accurately. I will write her more fully at first opportunity.

I also have Father's draty letter of Nov 28th to 30th and his personal letter to me of Dec 3rd both of which I will reply later.

Glad you had Mr Betts over. I always have liked him. I expect both Hyla and Fred were in England and able to see their mother

together which must have been very nice.

I hear some talk about all Canadians and outsiders being ordered out of England if the food situation becomes very much more serious but supposent refers to those that are doing nothing and buying extravagantly.

Uncle Hamaret's death although very sad yet was not altogether unexpected and was sure a happy release for Aunt Tilly. I will write her again at first opportunity.

I think Turner's move to England will likely only be of a temporary nature and that most likely he will be back in France again next summer.

I don't just know what you refer to as "Schop's advent in the paper". Has he been devoting some time to literary pursuits and writing for the press?

I don't think your letter bored Sarah at all in fact I am sure, and I think the arrangement was good and saved you writing an extra letter.

you ask me how are positions obtained over here now and I would say that seniority has very little to do with it now. The reverse of Hugh's regime in Canada now exists and unless an officer has been in the permanent force has chances of getting a staff or special appointment are even less just due (as in my case)

is very slim except in the infantry or engineers or the other branches where a permanent force officer's life would be in grave danger. I know I am embittered but the fact remains the same and I can give you any number of instances. If it were not that I were inspired by other motives than my advancement I would have been out of it last summer and sometimes cannot feel very discouraged when I see others whose ability I know faring ahead. If it were not that I would hate to be classed with those (like Sym) who have gone back to England or Canada with soft jobs I would try and get out and would not hesitate if there were any reason for my being really required at home but I would only go back as a civilian.

Now to answer your other question I do not think there is any real need amongst soldiers of such or other small comforts especially at this time of year. Clean underclothes such as a towel are issued to each man at the baths and in place of sold ones and they nearly always get a bath once a week. Besides most men keep a pair of socks saved for emergency. They are well clothed and well fed and get tobacco also weekly as an issue. Each man is getting $\frac{1}{2}$ lb plum pudding with his rations tomorrow which is pretty

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good considering. As far as I can see too the C.W.C.A. does excellent work and nearly always responds to any direct request and frequently solicits suggestions.

I am glad you are having a few visits on Sundays. I am sure it must do you all good. Keep it up. Almon told me Maywood had a good offer from the U.S. and was thinking of coming but as I have heard nothing from you I presume there is nothing in it. He advised me to urge him to stay. I thank a lot of Almon and also young Mr. Grier of Montreal. I am sending your letters on to Sarah who will see Wood likely this week in London as his leave extends over the new year, and I am sure he will enjoy it. Two more bundles of magazines and papers came in today, also Charlie's parcel and a book from Mrs. Betts.

Thank Father for address but I fear too late as I have already sent over 100 cards out and covered quite a few he mentioned. It will be useful next year if I again have to send them!!! His letter of Dec 3rd came by tonight's mail and the contents is very gratifying but he failed to tell me why Dec 1st is "Village Blacksmith Day" but perhaps I will hear later. I will answer his letter about Round Robin today.

We are only (in England & here) allowed to sign a cable with the surname hence

Leonard only on all cables. Well means I have heard of or from Wood recently but not seen him. "Both well" that I have seen him. He was to cable good wishes from the three of us this week from London so I did not send a message as usual.

Yes I know young Everett and think a lot of him, a very smart young chap. He was an adjutant before he took the staff job and we were sorry to lose him.

Thank Colfield for good wishes when next you see him. He was a recruit at R.M.C. in our time and a nice fellow. He was up for one of our R.M.C. dumps in London.

I am glad helmets arrived safely. I think there is no doubt the man was killed by the bullet and the rain and mud would easily have obliterated the blood & brains. It was off when picked up and covered with mud. It is a pity the officers are much more elaborately clothed. Mr. Spencer to show you the one I sent him. It was an officers and a beauty. They all have the double eagle and the color of the little disc on the side designates the state whether Saxons or Prussians or Württembergers etc etc.

They are now working a lot of their pyrameters in the mines here and these men have pass daily in busses to work near the front line. They are too well cared for

however in my opinion. The French do hate them and I must say that I feel the same myself and long for the day when they will pay up for all they have done.

Monday 18th Dec Uncollected and miserable so wrote and reading French novels most of the day. Wrote a letter about Sarah who was ill in bed when last she wrote and it now takes nearly a week to get the letter.

Tuesday 19th Dec Bright and sunny so rode to ~~the~~ to buy our officers 11 was dinner with Hazard and after making 2 hours at the E. F. Canteen got most of our order filled. We had to pay 70 francs for two moderate turkeys "on the hoof" so to speak.

Had lunch there and made a few more purchases at the French shops some of which are very good but prices very high. Looked at oysters but decided not to tackle them.

Had Robertson in for dinner and I think we gave them a very good meal with cocktail liqueur and chocolates and one of Miller Nicholson's cigars (a very welcome present) to finish off with. Said good bye to Wood as I won't see him again before he goes.

Our people pulled off a very successful raid capturing 2 officers and our 50 men with 4 killed & 10 wounded and doing a lot of damage as well. They were out

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90 minutes and expended dig outs and destroyed the benches, which was the object of the raid. Very strict orders are out about no fraternizing with the Hun on Thursday, but hardly necessary as the men now look on them from the right point of view.

Wednesday 20 Dec Rode to — for exercises in the morning alone and then attended stable. Got Sarah and sent letter over to Wood to take over also diary book previous to this for forwarding to Lakewood. Walked to — and interviewed the President of the mines about the house where we have our mess which they have bought and I think successfully arranged so that we can continue to eat. Strawberry Spencer & wife guests of the Corps supply column officers under Parmelee of Ottawa for dinner and had a nice evening. He used to go to R. du Laup; you may remember the name. They motored us to and fro which was quite a luxury.

Thursday 21st Dec Strawberry motored down to see the R.C.D.'s his old regiment about 60 miles away and did not get back until very late. Rode "Busch" in am and attended stables and in afternoon did some more work for the Corps on the bulleting proposition. Had my hair with Barber

and then wrote Sarah. Retired about midnight which is my usual hour now.

Friday 22 Dec. Met Andrew and spent morning in my room and the afternoon was out in rain until 6:00 in connection with belting and some changes in the arrangements.

Was glad to get in & changed. Heard Eaton has gone to Canada for three months so won't have any more trips in his motor.

Saturday 23rd Dec. Motored up to trenches in a side car (motor cycle) and inspected the machine gun emplacements near responsible for under the defence scheme. Went to a — which is just how I have been there and it made me heart sick to see another beautiful residential city which dates back to the Spanish times in ruins. There used to be 50,000 people but now about 1000 hang in cellars of what were once their homes. It is very close to the line, in fact our field guns are in the outskirts, another beautiful old cathedral in ruins. It was more of a piece of wealth than Albert and I felt when ever will there be retribution for all the misery and destruction these Huns (or Nazis or Swine) have caused. It seems terrible. Picture London but in ruins with only a few buildings standing and think how the Londoners would feel. These poor French people have suffered much.

The benches were ankle deep in water in a
 good many places and was pretty well frozen
 after my 15 mile trip back in a half storm
 hanging onto the side of the motor bike. Haven
 a nice fire and dry clothes fixed me up and I
 compared my lot with the infantry doing
 sentinel duty in the trenches with no change
 only perhaps a smoky brazier to get warm by
 and then only if in a place where the therm
 could not spot them! A second box from
 dear little Ekelle; she has been too good all the
 us has everybody. Shall have cake enough for
 a month. Read until midnight & slept well.
 Sunday 24 Dec does not seem a bit like
 me. Bruce & I was letter from Sarah also gloves
 and neckties. Had a walk and attended stables
 in morning. Beautiful day. Had an hour
 with Miss Stufles reading an French novel
 and read with — and had tea with the
 dear flutes very pleasantly. The
 unmarried daughter is quite attractive.
 Was late for dinner but did not need
 any. A lot of quinine going on. I
 suppose it was bought for the team who
 shelled both — and here today the
 farmer while I was there but only near
 the station. My thoughts are with you
 all tonight and I have an intense longing
 for some and loved ones but must not
 dwell on it. very much love Jhb