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Fence
16/4/15.

Dearest mother

Your letter of May 25th reached me two days ago and I am glad to learn that all at home are well. I wrote Alice pretty fully four or five days ago and there is very little to write about since.

We took part in an attack yesterday, in fact we had been preparing the way for it for three days with heavy continuous firing. Our mission also the 7th and 51st took part but it was almost an absolute failure. The 1st Canadian Battalion which led the attack on the right took some trenches but had to fall back because the centre attack failed and those on the left succeeded only in part. I expect the losses were pretty heavy but have no particulars yet that can be relied on though I hear Campbell Becker got through O.K.

Yes the Indians appear to be good fighters and I have had several opportunities of watching them advance under heavy shell & rifle fire. They are well officered and have strict discipline which counts for much. Yes, one should

not grumble at the loss of a few papers and a diary when one comes out with a whole skin but, at the same time, it is annoying.

The general situation appears to be a deadlock here and when it will improve I cannot say. The Germans are so thorough in their defenses and methods and our staff work is so rotten that, though our men are better, man for man, our army as a whole is inferior. At least that is the way it strikes me. At present our losses are heavier than theirs and will continue to be so as long as we have to go on attacking strongly fortified field defenses.

I only received Jbbs last two letters but unfortunately addressed my replies to him in England thinking he would be over there long before this. That accounts for his not hearing direct from me. I think the address on my letters had better be as follows.

Major Woodman Leonard

12th Battery 3rd Brigade. C.F.A.

1st Canadian Division

British Expeditionary Force

c/o War Office

London England

This does not differ substantially from the address you now put on but there will soon be two Canadian divisions over here and I think the above is very clear.

Since writing the above I have just heard that Campbell Becher was killed last night when leading his battalion in the attack. My source of information is good and I expect the news will be in the papers long before this reaches you. It will be very hard on Mrs. Becher but she has the great satisfaction of knowing that he died for his country at the head of his men as a gallant officer and gentleman. "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori". Only the day before I had had a long talk with him and we wished one another good luck at parting. I think everyone in his battalion loved him and he will be missed by many.

I saw Cols Lamb and McDowell a few days ago and they are both well. People on the staff run very few risks except on extraordinary occasions so they have nothing to worry about. Frank Ware is in the same category although

He only has a minor position on a brigade staff.

Uncle Jack sent me a couple of pipes the other day also two pounds of tobacco so I shall be well supplied for some time to come. Someone has also subscribed to the Montreal Daily Mail for me as it reaches me fairly regularly I do not know to whom I am indebted in this case but feel sure it is one of the Montreal relatives.

The weather is again good though I am glad to say that it is not as hot as it was a week ago. Last year at this time I was just back from Petawawa and busily engaged in paying off etc. No one imagined then for a moment that the whole of Europe would be at war a year later.

I have been up a good deal the last few nights and feel rather tired but am otherwise well and in the best of spirits. My servant Shinky has not yet come back nor has Ratter my groom. However I have a boy named Charles (who used to wait

5.

in Saggi's shop) in the farmers place
and he is not doing badly.

I lost quite a lot of clothing
etc also my wrist watch up at
Ypres but am making a claim
for them and understand that
I shall be reimbursed for their
value although it will be some time
before I get it.

I am going up now to try and
get further particulars about Campbell
Buck's death and will write Archie
if I hear anything worth while. Best
love to all

your devoted son
Ward