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Sunday 13 Aug

Dearest Mother

The weeks seem to pass very quickly and yet it seems such a long time since I have seen you all. Yesterday was the anniversary of your wedding day and I am so sorry not to have mentioned it in my cable as I had intended but it slipped my memory when I was sending it last Thursday. I hope you and Father will accept my congratulations even if late and allow me to express the hope that you may both be spared to enjoy many more with your family still around you.

I have already acknowledged all letters in my midweeky one to Father except Alice's of July 27th which came just after I had written her and also Estelle's of July 15th which reached me only on 10th Aug due to addressing. I enclose envelope. Letters should now be addressed to
Lt. Col. Ibbotson Leonard
Canadian Corps Cavalry
B.E.F
France.

although they still reach me alright addressed the old way but at the same time are occasionally delayed.

II

13 Aug.

I have just heard that McEwens promotion to major in command of B^d Sqdn has been confirmed and antedated to 17th May when the regiment was formed. I will mention it in my cable this week and know you will let his people know if they do not see it in the press before.

I am very glad indeed for his sake and he has been very faithful and deserves it. He has always been a great help and comfort to me ever since we left Canada as I always felt I could confer and consult with him and rely on his discretion and judgement.

I have not seen Woodfor two weeks although I was rather hoping he would look me up today but fear it is too late now. I get a few lines from him with enclosures and could get him on the telephone if necessary. We now have a line of our own to Corp HQs and can connect from there to everywhere in New England (with special permission)

A typical summer week has just past and the harvest is making great progress and the grain I should say is about half cut everywhere. We have had no rain now for about 5 weeks

and everything is very dry and dust on roads so thick that it almost makes a pad for our horses feet.

The Hun let gas off on our front this week and there were quite a few casualties amongst working parties who had left their coats off for account of the heat and their gas helmets also and could not get to them in time. It does not take much chlorine gas to kill a man and there is very little can be done for him if he has had several lungfuls. Death is most painful and distressing as the sufferer simply pants and gasps for breath until his heart can stand it no longer. It sometimes takes 48 hours. There is a great opportunity for some pathologist to discover an antidote. Our artillery opened up on them and gave them such a pounding all night that they did not leave their trenches. It was a steady rumble and the whole heavens were lit up by the flashes of the guns. I sat outside my hut watching it for some time.

Stratton and I rode back 10 miles this A.M. and had our lunch in a town from which a splendid new car

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to be had from the channel on one side to
 away south of the Belgian frontier
 on the other. It was fairly clear
 and we were able to pick up quite a
 few places with the naked eye and
 others more distant with my glasses.

We stumbled into a celebrity quite
 unexpectedly when we went to the best
 hotel for lunch and were told it was
 "reserved" for our betters(?) today.

I believe Hyla was up this week
 and had dinner with Wood one night
 this week. I hardly knew Fred Bell when
 I saw him; he is in Wood's old battery
 under McTaggart as I suppose you
 already know.

We are encouraging sports while the
 good weather lasts and ~~there~~ intersquadron
 games of "soccer" and baseball are
 being played in the evenings and
 the officers are playing indoor baseball.

The official photographer took some
 pictures of our sports day which I
 saw and were very good. I may be
 able to get some taken on, but they
 all have to go to G. H. Q. for censoring
 first. I am mentioning some of
 your various matters dear as I write.

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Monday 7th August. Up early and down at Tappin Field at 8.30 where B were drilling until 10.00 when they were followed by A as there is not room enough for two squadrons to work together. We are spending a great deal of time on sword work and every man to qualify has to pierce a heavy sack hung from a gallows on which is a 2nd bell's eye at full gallop. The sack is weighted and resists enough to give the rider's wrist a bad wrench and jar his thumb if he does not "lock his arm" and hold his sword properly. The men are very keen on it and most of the horses will now run straight. I wonder if we will ever get a chance to use a Hur instead of a sack? We are waiting for it. They visited our range where the Hatchers guns were shooting and in the afternoon made out another scheme for Tuesday, Wed & Thursday (one squadron each day) and laid out a path over the ground with straw. Wrote Sarah a few lines at night. I have not heard from her for some time. Discussed the possibility of peace this year and unanimously decided it was out of the question.

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Tuesday 8th August Up at 6.00 and spent the morning with "A" on the scheme. I rather enjoy this kind of work. Strawling on a Court of Enquiry all day, one member of which was our friend Eaton of the A.S.P. who looks just the same as ever. He ^{was up for} lunch. He enquired very interestedly for London (ent) news. Nice letter from Father and one from Wood with enclosures telling about his promotion. Capt Mc Guire (Montreal) our acting chaplain came for dinner and spent a pleasant evening. He knows the Gauls and other Montrealers well and we quite like him. Played a little polo in the evening before dinner, both my pony and I are improving.

Wednesday 9th August. Scheme with "B" all morning, they did not do as well as last week. Was late getting home for lunch. Seven (!!) letters and a Militia List from Dunes. I had quite a feast and did not go out until after tea when I played a little polo and watched a baseball game between "A" & "B". They play on the priest's farm at one end. Enjoyed my late dinner and spent evening writing Father and other letters. Did not retire until after midnight but slept well as mosquitoes not so bad.

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Thursday 10th August, sent cable and did some scheme with 'C' Squadron all morning. They did better than last week. I had the Hatchhires rifles of one of the other squadrons out acting as enemy and I think it added interest to the work. Strawbenzer rode out later. Wrote up another scheme in the afternoon embodying a new idea of the G.O.C.'s to use us near the front line for "covering" in case of a slight move. Heard a lot of sad stories about the "gassing" earlier in the week. The poor chaps gasping for breath could be heard a long way off when they were lying in the dressing stations and field ambulances.

Had a good hour at polo with Straw between 5.30 & 7.00. He, of course is a very good player.

Friday 11th Aug. Saw at drill farm and watched the drill and sword work. Took a few runs at the sash myself on my big horse who runs very straight. Looked over some sick horses at "B" that I think we will have to evacuate. Carried out a tactical exercise without troops in the afternoon along the lines suggested to us by the Corps commander. Very warm and dusty and drank four cups of tea when I got in. Had a good run at polo later and enjoyed my dinner. Letter from Sarah and also Alice.

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Saturday 12 August Marching order parade from 8:00 to 10:30. Took all the officers out of the regiment and had the N.C.O's alone handling it. They did well. Rode down to Corps but no news. Another Canadian Division is beginning to appear on the scene. Rode down to "C" and looked over some of their horses that are unfit. Wrote to Edna and Mrs Brimlow after lunch. All the officers came up to 149 for tea and we afterwards had a very amusing game of indoor baseball in which all participated. After dinner "A" Squadron gave a concert on their 2nd anniversary which was really very good. I am enclosing one of the poems that was recited. It is original. It was really a very pleasant evening.

Sunday 13th August Canon (St Col) Almon preached at our 10:00 o'clock service and I liked what he said very much. Strawbridge & then took the 10 mile ride I have already described and had lunch in a little French tea room. The town we visited is of great historic interest and was at one time fortified by the Romans and has been the scene of at least half a dozen battles in the dark ages. There is a monument

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on the top of the hill and the Municipal building
is very very ancient. We were unfortunate
in not being allowed in the Hotel which is
very good indeed. I wrote at this until 7.45
while straw. I went over to "A" for a good
dinner, chicken, which we thoroughly enjoyed.
Monday 14 Aug. Did not finish last night
and had to make out a scheme this morning
but will finish in time for the mail. It
is much cooler today and windy so there
may be a change in weather soon. We are
now putting all ranks over a course of jumps
which we have arranged in a lane. It
gives men great confidence and makes
them at home in the saddle. We have
just received an invitation to play polo
with a British yeomanry regiment attached
to the next Corps on Wednesday and will
likely accept.

Will draw to a close and go for a ride
before lunch. Very much love to one and
all.
your devoted son
Jhb.

P.S. This is my the end of my 2d diary
book but I have not been able to send the
recent ones over.