

From the holdings of
Western Archives, Western University

27 Aug
2.30 P.M.

My dearest Mother

It hardly seems a week since we arrived here and I last wrote you, I fear rather hurriedly, my last diary letter.

We have spent a rather interesting week varying and as the weather has been ideal and the country is beautiful, it has been rather enjoyable. There are no isolated farms as the inhabitants congregate in small picturesque villages and go out to their fields to work. In Belgium the farms were all over the country like in Canada. I think the French system has its advantages in a social way as it must be better for the people and children to mix together in the way they can in these villages when the day's work is over. The country is more open and except around the villages there are very few hedges along the roads and now that most of the crops are off it is possible to ride almost anywhere across country. The country is very rolling too which I make it pleasant.

One of your interesting weekly letters came about the middle of the week from

II

27 Aug

Sarah and I duly sent it on to Wood.
Today I have your note of Aug 7th with
interesting enclosure from Estelle which
I am also sending you. I also had a nice
letter from Aunt Louisa who is so good about
writing to me. They are apparently having
a nice rest at METIC and looking at the heat
in Montreal. What a terrible prolonged
hot wave you have had in London. I
feel sure you have found it trying
and have often longed for the cool breezes
of the lower St Lawrence. It seems too bad
that you and Alice could not have gone
away but I suppose you felt you could
not leave Father! I am still eating
your Rowntree's gums as I write. They
are delicious and keep so well.

I think Wood sailed away yesterday
and we see other units of his Division
passing today and hear that my old
Division is coming into this area next
week. We have no word about moving
ourselves and rather think we may be
here another week or perhaps longer and
we certainly could not be more comfortable
anywhere.

I am improving my French with Madone
who is most kind and cannot speak
English and corrects me very freely. I

27 Aug

III

much for that reason I'm staying as I
am sure I could make some progress.

No mail today or papers as the field post
office that was supplying us has moved
out and the new one does not arrive
until tomorrow. Sarah has been a little
under the weather and I am rather anxious
to hear from her as my last letter saw
nearly a week old; however I hope for one
tomorrow. Letters mean so much over
here.

Please thank Father for last Buffalo
Express which I read at Breakfast this AM.

I am sitting at the little writing desk
in my comfortable room and Madame has
put fresh flowers in the vase on it for
me.

Monday 21st August Made a 6.30 A.M. start and
spent the morning riding about the training
area which is about 4500 yds by 6 miles
long. It is about 1/2 hrs ride away from
the town. Made a detour towards home
and rode through several new villages.

Rode into town (about 1 mile) after lunch
with Straw who wanted a hair cut. I also
wanted some buttons but could not get them
although there were three very good tailor shops
and a Burberry agency. We afterwards had
tea and "French pasty" and returned for a
conference of the officers of the regiment at

Wednesday 23rd Aug. Up at 6.00 again and
worked at the same scheme only with another
squadron leading. It was not carried out
quite so well. We are practising spreading
out and closing in again to avoid supposed
artillery fire. It is very pretty to see
the regiment extended in line of troop
columns going over the crest of the hill
at a trot or gallop. Met Wood at the village
of - and rode through one of the national
forests to his billet where I lunched with
him but left soon after as he was busy
and I had a long ride home. Took my
time however and did not get in until
6.00. Wood finds some of his new officers
very green and inexperienced but no
doubt he tells you about them. Madame
asked me in to take coffee and I met a
very pretty young woman whose husband
is at the front; she blond with brown eyes.
We talked French altogether. It was late before
the party broke up but I wrote Alice and
Mrs Lamsfield before I retired. I find my
kit has accumulated once again so I sent
my tin box home when I dined and am
now down to rock bottom once again. All my
spare things are with Mrs Lamsfield in
Sellingbridge. Sent my weekly cable of
all well.

IV

5.00 P.M. about the scheme for tomorrow.
Our headquarters mess is very comfortable
and we have an additional room which we
use as an anti room.

Tuesday 22nd Aug 6.00 o'clock start and
spent the morning at an advance guard
scheme in which we practiced going from
hill to hill by bounds as each was
successively reconnoitered by our patrols.
This is the latest idea. Just as we were
finishing I was surprised to hear Woods voice
and he came up behind me. They ~~are~~ ^{are} on the
opposite side of the area and about 10 miles
away from us but use it for training also.
He looks well and I arranged a date with
him for tomorrow. Rode home another
new route alone. The army commander
was out watching the manoeuvres of the
infantry. He also saw him on the way
back. We had all the officers in to tea and
a little talk afterwards. Mc Cuen is in the
same billet with me and drops into
my room occasionally. He is upstairs. (Another
regiment is passing town on its way out)
Read for a while in bed by my drop light
which is quite a luxury. My bed is most
comfortable and the sheets are embroidered
and the initials worked on them. Wrote
Sarah a few lines.

Thursday 24th August. Another glorious day for our manoeuvres which were carried out all morning. Passed another old chateau in a state of ruin. Some unit has evidently billeted there all winter. "Puster" my best horse is in fine fettle after the month I gave him up gross with his shoes off at our last billet. It is a pleasure to ride him once again over this country. There are no fences to jump but plenty of ditches and some steep banks to scramble up and down. After tea Straw and I took a beautiful ride to an old convent about 6 miles away, passing another beautiful chateau and a "Karrable" a soap factory which beat "McMechan" all to pieces as far as smell went. Saw Jack Creelman for the first time since I have been over. He has grown very fat. He got special leave to Canada last January and expects it again this year. I don't know how he works it. Retired early and read in luxury for a while.

Friday 25th Aug. The summer is drawing to a close but I feel I am taking full advantage of good weather as I am riding always two and after three times. I think I cover from 25 to 30 miles a day pretty regularly.

27 Aug

We inspected all the bullets in the town in the afternoon and found them dirty. The people seem surprised to say seem to throw all their garbage out of doors. We have several men doing field punishment and have turned them loose to sweep the streets and pick up refuse. A very good job for them. Took another nice ride before led to a large cement factory passing through the extensive grounds of a beautiful estate which however is being well kept up. The chateau was so hidden in the trees that we could not see much of it. Got caught in a little shower on the way back. It has been rather a muggy day but I have no trace of hay fever and am using Edna's preventative daily. Wrote Sarah in evening as still a little anxious about her especially as she is alone of over there.

Saturday 26th Aug did not get up so early as we only have an exercise ride this A.M. and baths for the whole regiment this afternoon.

Went for a ride in the morning by myself but was caught in a thunder storm which cooled things up considerably.

Went for a long ride through the national forest in the afternoon (about 8 miles). It is very beautiful. Strambuzi is nearly always take these rides together.

Smith & I took dinner in — at a French Hotel, a very good meal indeed for $6\frac{1}{2}$ frs each. The French cook very well (another regiment passing) We wandered around the town afterwards and spent an hour in another café where we met some friends. Home about 10.00. The change did us good.

Sunday 27th Aug Did not get up until 7.45 when Markham had my hot bath in my room for me. He does my washing and mending very well but is rather stupid at times but very faithful. I caught old Leslie smiling at some girls the other day and gave him a jolly about it.

Inspected all the horses and billets this A.M. and have been writing since lunch.

Think I will later go to the Grand concert in town. Will add a few lines after.

9.30 P.M. I had a cup of tea at our mess and then motored to the gardens at — with our supply officer who was going through the town. We listened to a very good band for half an hour and watched the French populace walking by in their best clothes. It is not so much what they wear but the way they wear them. I must say that even here in "the provinces" they are very smart. The supply officer then went out and I spent an hour at the officers

Club looking over the papers and latest periodicals. It is nice to see them once in a while. Straw had gone for a ride by himself and got back for dinner at 7.30 just as I did. Various battalions have been passing all day and are still going by. I suspect the manoeuvre will be complete at this end by tomorrow. Have not heard from Wood but rather think he has gone. When I came in tonight the family were assembled and I have just had half an hour chat with them in French.

Please thank Father for his two business letters of Aug 1st & 8th which came this week. I think he has done very well indeed considering the great heat. The Hydras also seems to give you a good deal of trouble. Aunt Louisa said how much Susan had appreciated the revolver. They used to be a free issue to all officers but are not now. You both see Willie Leonard will be saved this expense. Very sorry to hear about poor Charlie Moore and hope he will pull through. I suppose you heard Gordon Blaschaden died. He was at the bill with me.

I am enclosing a photograph of one of the hospitals where Sarah has been resting. I could make an extra carbon to send to Estelle & Claire if they would like it. Jh