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III 4 men
on the way back. They had a crane to load with
former but 4 men put the latter shell in
the gun on a little cradle. The report was
tumultuous but not nearly as sharp as a
gun, more of a roar. You could easily
follow the flight of the shell in both
cases. I have after heard of this and was
rather incredulous but and was therefore
glad of an opportunity of seeing myself
missed Lisle and Starbuck to walk
back (about 3 miles, as we are near the
right of our front) but he found me just
at dusk as I had given them up.

Preparations for the forthcoming attack
evident by increased traffic. I saw
30 London motor buses bringing up
reinforcements. Traffic control is a
great problem and an unsolved one.
It is responsible for a number of
failures. I realized it very fully as I
came home. Late for dinner and
wet as it had rained most of the
afternoon. Saw Stewart Sumner
my way out who said young Skilow had
been slightly wounded in the cheek
and would likely be sent back to
England, so his wife will be able
to see him after all, in spite of leave
being cancelled. The Tommies call a

4 Mar

IV

wound like that a "blightie" and consider it good luck as it gets them away from the trenches for a time without usually serious results.

Tuesday 29th Feb. Leap Year. I wonder what the next 29th Feb will be in 1920? Minimal ride at 9.00 in a field on top of hill close by as roads still dangerous. Rather enjoyed it, and it is good practice for the men although no horse is allowed on the roads without a saddle when on active service. Campbell making a start on our map of the new trenches, attended to office work in morning and rode down to the Divisional Train in the afternoon. No papers and rather anxious about operations at Verdun as we don't get much outside of the Corps ^{news} except through the press and "latrine rumors" which latter are generally the first medium of news. Received copies of operations orders for the next two days programme but am sorry to say our function as mounted troops was nil.

Wednesday 1st March. Milder but still shivery. I had a minimal ride on the hill again. Went up to the windmill in the afternoon to watch the bombardment

IV

4 Mar

It was quite a sight and our new point was excellent and quite safe. Went for a walk afterwards to get up an appetite for my dinner. Mc Ewen back with us once again as the A.P.M. has returned and resumed his duties. Clemens down in the evening talking over the vicissitudes of 8th C.M.A. which he belonged to. I fancy I had perhaps the most trying experience but ended up in a most satisfactory way to me. The real attack started at an early hour on -

2nd March and the bombardment was very intense. It was impossible to sleep. Did not hear the actual results until next day. Out on ride as usual at 6.30 AM.

attended to correspondence all morning.

10 remnants came in during the afternoon for distribution which Mc Ewen attended to.

Rode over to the town where my "lace ladies" line to get a couple of handkerchiefs for Sarah's birthday (the 6th). Had on 11" "how go off almost beside me in route".

Spent our usual quiet evening.

Friday 3rd March. Ride as usual.

Over at Headquarters for a map I am checking up. Wrote up "war diary" all morning for month of February. Started out on a tour of inspection of all my posts

and billets on foot accompanied by Mac Ewen but was overtaken by the worst storm from the North Sea (I suppose) I have yet experienced here. Rain and sleet and hail and wind. We were wet through in spite of coats in 20 minutes and had to put back when half way around. Changed everything and took a nip. Could not help pitying those poor fellows in the trenches and especially those holding the new bit (recently taken) who could not change or get near a fire. It must have been terrible. Some quiet evening beside comfortable fire in our little (oil tin) stove.

Saturday 4th March. Still snowing for ride but all out nevertheless as horses must get warmed up and exercised once a day. At headquarters all A.M. sitting on Board. Gen Turner came in for a few minutes while we were there. Always so nice. Weather better after lunch so Campbell of Brode down to "hail head" and saw an excellent concert put on by one of the regiments in rest there and afterwards had tea with our "little French girls" at "Le mode College" where we were joined by Spencer & Lockshutt. Left them there and rode home alone meeting Frank's horse for first time (sure saw other) on the way

4 March

He looks very well and is getting stout. He accused me of the same ^{fault} so I could not say very much. I have spent evening reading papers and writing this but at 11.00 PM and fire low will say "good night". Campbell just in. Did you ever get diary letter book # III

Sunday 5th March 8.00 PM. It is now 3.00 P.M. with gas at Lakewood and I picture ^{you all} around the library fire after dinner! I often wonder when we will be all together in that dear old room again.

A letter from Sarah says she has forwarded an interesting letter of Father's to Wood which I will get in due course, also one from Conna. Quite cold and frosty last night. We are making up for low tide January. Had my weekly hot bath and cold bucket this morning. Church in the little Flemish School House. You should hear my men sing. They fairly "raise the roof." The service is very hearty.

I forgot to say that I saw Major Owen yesterday for a few minutes. He looks altered and says he does not see how he can ever go back to Vancouver again. Mrs Owen is bearing up wonderfully. I have never met a cleric I think more of or admire more sincerely than him. He says Harold was offered a staff Captaincy shortly before that preferred to stay with the Regiment. He was scout

5 March

officer and of course wears less continually
exposed in "no man's land". Was shot
through the head while in a "listening post".

Major Clemens said he got your letter ^{rather dear}
the same day as my note and wants me to thank
you for it. He will write later. He says he is
very happy in his work over here and is sure
he accomplishes a great deal. He was very brave.

I am sorry to say leave is cancelled and I
fear that I will not get over about 1st April
as I had hoped. I wish Father you could cable
Hitson ~~for~~ to consult me about something
in connection with your shell business.
but it would be hardly right I suppose although
sometimes conditions make such things
justifiable. Only an expense of greatest urgency
is recognized and the application is dealt with
by the Army, no powers being left with
either the Corps or Division. Wood will
feel it too as his leave was cancelled when
they went back and now will be again. It
seems hard.

The Evans & Clemens away for dinner
getting some remnants so only Spurger
Cockshutt Campbell and I on hand. The
leave ^{matter} will be hard on Cockshutt as his
mother & father land in England this week
expecting to see him. Went for a
walk this afternoon as sun out and

weather clearer but still a north (sea) wind and quite frosty. We came back about 6.00 with 10 very nice remnants. We will very likely be able to exchange a few of our own horses for better ones. This is the best lot we have seen yet. Things on the front have quieted down considerably the last two days but I see by yesterday's "Chronicle" that the Hun is making another big assault on Verdun. I wonder how it will end?

Poor Hughes, our faithful cook, has pneumonia and I fear is very sick as he has been cleared. He has not very much to work on and I fear it will go hard with him.

The III Division are partly with the Corps now and I suppose the front will be rearranged accordingly at an early date.

As I have another Court of Enquiry tomorrow morning I will end now and get the letter sealed and censored so as not to delay. I want also to drop Uncle Jack and Tom Maitland a letter each.

Am keen to hear about Aubrey's name and also Alice's news that you mention and suppose there will be some letters this week. White still in England (until 9th) on sick leave. Very much love
dearest mother. ever your loving son
Dad