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Sunday 26 Mar
9 00 PM

Dearest Mother

Here we are about 40 miles back of the line for a couple of weeks special training. I will tell more in the diary part of my letter which I hope to finish tonight as I expect a very full week and know I will not have very much time to write. I have quite a few letters to acknowledge.

Fathers business letters of Feb 28th and March 2nd so full of interest especially photographs. I am sorry I have not time to answer in detail. His personal letter of 2 March I am keeping to answer in the middle of the week if possible but in the meantime please tell him I am fully in accord with his suggestion about the stock in E. L. & S. and think it a safe idea.

The price of plates seems to me to be outrageous. The big corporations are as usual taking advantage of the situation.

I have your short letter dear Mother with enclosures (Mar 9th?) and another a little before it with sweet sympathy which I appreciate so much. I will try and write you especially a little later when days are not quite so full. All enclosures I am sending on to Wood, who by the way is enjoying his leave now. I

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hope, as he expected to get away last Friday.

There was quite a lull for me today it is really wonderful how quickly our mail follows us. It was here (being redirected from London) when we pulled in yesterday night. Alice's nice letter of 8th Mar which was so interesting, Estelle's of 6th Mar forwarded by Sarah with your long diary letter of March 5th, also a Sweet One from Elaine dated 2nd acknowledging cable I sent. I am sorry that I can now only acknowledge and say how much I appreciate them all and how much they mean to me.

All forward to read a little later in the week when I get time to read again as he won't be back until a week today.

Elaine's socks (or Sox as I am sorry to see Alice spells them) came too and most assuredly will not be worn by anybody but me. They are beautifully knitted & I may be permitted to express my admiration. I also had a "news from London" from Aunt Elizabeth for which please thank her and say I will write later on.

Monday 20th March. Had writing done about the postponement of my leave. Mother moved up to Cuckshuts Hill until the same as latter will not be back before

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we go. Major Bagart called in afternoon and arranged about relief of my men that he has. Then rode over to the Infantry Brigade that furnishes these reliefs and arranged all details. Was late getting back for dinner. Wrote out some orders and retired. White is certainly much better and I am so glad that we will be all together in our new billet as I think being split up and living alone, especially taking meals alone has a very depressing effect. I shall think of Sarah taking after meals alone for same reason.

Tuesday 21st March Out on ride with Mr. Evans over at Headquarters about getting various men rehired and then walked over to cyclists. Wrote some letters in the P.M. and walked around to the various billets and made some arrangements with the I.M.S. Read in the evening. Poor White dull as no word from home and I believe his Father is seriously ill.

Wednesday 22nd March. Did not go on ride. Feel a little dull as had expected to leave for England today and if road goes on Friday it would have been so nice to have been together a few days over there. He was over for lunch and we had such a nice visit except that he had to hurry

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back at 3.10 in a snow storm. I accompanied him to the top of the hill where my Squadron was assembled for just time in six months for a little drill. Although a little rusty I was very pleased with them. Had a talk to the N.C.O.'s and then cleaned up odds and ends of correspondence.

Thursday 23rd March Out on ride as day miserable (3rd had one) hope for a nice day for our move tomorrow. Busy sorting out old letters and burning all old letters circulars orders etc etc as we have to buy a collection to carry. Called on Col Her in the afternoon and then inspected all billets for cleanliness in the P.M. Packed my tin bag and put bag preparatory to an early start. Am sending two men who are a little under the weather to our new billet to hold same down for us until we arrive.

Retired fairly early.

Friday 24th March. 5.30 AM. 2" of snow on ground and snowing & sleeting hard so our hopes for a nice day knocked on the head. All troops and cyclists met at the rendezvous on the day and we started at 8.30 exactly. Snowed all morning and quite a wind as well. Transport could not keep up with us so left the Emen behind with it. Off loaded, fed and

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waited near a famous mountain about 12 miles in rear where the Romans had a fort. Cleared in P.M. and although cold the sun came out and helped matters. Got into the quaint little town where we are to billet about 4.00 and transport arrived later when I had just settled nicely in village. I had a room in the Côté's house and tea and breakfast. Some of the horses had to be picketed out but all were under cover.

Saturday 26th March 5.30 again. Got our billeting certificates signed and left sharp at 7.30 again leaving Clemens in charge of transport this time. Crossed and then paralleled a canal and then went through S.H.A. A lot of military traffic road road material etc etc goes by the inland water ways which cover the whole of northern France. The country changed in the afternoon becoming quite hilly a very beautiful. Had one rain storm which a bright sun soon dried up. Passed a very large aerodrome and saw dozens of machines. Off loaded & fed in a quaint little town beside a pretty stream. Gradually ascended all afternoon and reached our village in a beautiful valley surrounded by hills about 5.00. Had sent a cyclist officer

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ahead to arrange our billets and each troop
marched into a farm as soon as they arrived
and settled down at once. The Staff of 2nd
Cavalry Division to whom we are
attached were most kind and attentive in
every way and did all they could for us.

Mr. Cullen & I are here together and each have
a bed room (as also the others, in other farms)
and a larger room in which we all mess
which is so nice after being separated so
long. Got all the horses under cover and
men in comfortable barns. No one can
speak a word of English. No young men
about here and one old dame told me
she had 5 sons at the war. The farmers
seem to live in these small villages which
cover the whole country and go out to their
farms. Had dinner about 8.00. Young
Bishop looked us up. He is only about
5 miles away and looks well and is full
of tales about flying and narrow escapes.
I slept well on but no in a bed as
prefer my sleeping bag.

Sunday 26th March. 6.30 today and
bright and clear although still very
cold. Visited all the horses at stables.
The G.O.C. inspected all my horses
at 10.00 AM and seemed fairly pleased.
He also lectured to us at 2.00 PM in a

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nearby town in a school and gave us a general idea of what ground he wanted to cover. Had a pleasant ride back and a very jolly dinner all together, Bishop coming down again. The party only broke up as I started this and Sam now alone as McEwen who wrote him also has just turned in. I feel we are going to have a very interesting and instructive two weeks and only hope the weather will be good.

The country is beautiful with hills and valleys and fairly wooded and will be well suited for this kind of work. All new and horses none the worse of the long trip which is a satisfaction to me.

As my fire is getting low I think I will draw to a close. Just a hail storm outside just now. I suppose off the English channel.

So glad to hear Estelle feeling better and Jay is more herself again. She deserves a holiday after her long faithful work. Why can't she and Father get away for a spree together for a few weeks. I think it is about time they had their "leave". Won't read this as usual so please overlook any errors. Love as always
your devoted son J.H.