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11. March 1916

Dearest Mother

Saturday night once again and as usual alone tonight as Campbell goes out to dine with Cocksbutt & Spencer on Saturdays having a standing invitation so I will start my diary letter. I bought a couple of pounds of very good raisins at rail head today and am enjoying them as I write so you can picture me regaling myself as of yore.

No Canadian mail today or in fact this week from any source which of course is sad but suppose that there must be some good reason for it. Had forwarded Father's letter to Sarah which I was glad to get also an interesting one from Edna.

We have had a solid week of winter weather and it is still cold and the ground covered with snow tonight. It seems very strange as we did not see a flake of snow in either January or February and only a little in December, as they say here however "C'est une hiver extraordinaire" so I suppose it is unusual.

Monday 6th March. Had an early morning ride on windmill hill as we have christened it ourselves as roads dangerously slippery. Was president of a Court of Inquiry at 10.00 AM on damage to some hutments which kept me busy

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all day. My assistants were Capt Durk of
 Moosejaw a partner of Pope who married Clare
 Buckle, and an extremely nice chap as well as
 of great assistance to me on the Court. The
 other was a Capt Matherson of Winnipeg who
 was a small boy at U.C.C. when Woodford
 were there in 1899. I brought them both up
 for lunch with me as they had ridden quite
 a distance. It was 6.00 P.M. before we
 adjourned until tomorrow P.M. Spent my
 usual quiet evening.

Tuesday 7th March. Did not go on ride
 as wish to go over some roads for a
 road report we are to make, myself. This
 kept me riding hard all morning. I had
 the Court reassembled at 2.00 P.M. at my
 billet and we finished the matter. I gave
 them afternoon tea and a drink before
 they went. Snowing or sleeted nearly
 all day and very miserable and raw
 out. I heard that Sally was in London
 on Saturday for the day with an old
 friend. So glad for her to get the
 change occasionally as know how
 lonely she must be sometimes. Am so glad
 for her to have the change. She is just
 about one hour's run from Paddington.
 Campbell played patience in the evening while
 I read the papers and watched him occasionally.
 It reminded me of your playing *Maths* dear!

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Wednesday 8th March. Out on early ride but so slippery we had to dismount and lead our horses back. They are so apt to strain themselves.

In fact I lost one very good horse from just such an accident. About 6 inches of snow on the ground but bright and sunny during the day. Took the finding of my Cant out to Headquarters and discussed a two weeks special training that the Army are going to give all Divisional Cavalry Units. It will be a nice change and carried out away in rear under supervision of the Cavalry Corps (3 Divisions of 3 Brigades each or a total of 27 regiments). Rode down to see Major Gleser about a claim for loss of kit put in by one of his officers who was wounded and evacuated. Campbell up at McEwen's billet in evening. Read and dreamed until 11.00 and then retired.

Thursday 9th March. Took our ride in "new field" as windmill hill too slippery and frozen up. Really quite cold. I should say about 20°F. Campbell working at another map we are making. Attended office work all AM as Casson still away. Wrote Alice a few lines and sent Father a week end cable. "all well". Heard from Wood who is on his way back to the front. Hope to see him next week.

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Campbell giving 3rd Troop some special instruction in bunking as White still away. Took a walk in the afternoon and visited Cackhutt's Spencer billet but found them both out. Am reading some 1915 Callies which were sent over to us. It seems funny to look at 10 years back just now, but some of the stories are very good.

Friday 10th March No early ride as had the whole Squadron (except those on guard and special duty) turn out at 10.00 on Windmill Hill in full marching order. Found them rather rusty in packing up but excusable as first time in 6 months I have had them sufficiently together to do this ^{not} before. Sent them out for a short ride while MacEwen and I visited the various billets to see how well they had left things cleaned up. Went out over some new trenches we are mapping on our left with Campbell and MacEwen. We were able to ride to within about 500 yds of front line just there as a ridge made of dead ground. There are not many places where you can go so close mounted by daylight although the transports go very nearly up to the trenches with rations etc in a good many places at night. Was tired and wet when we got in

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about dark and glad to spend a quiet evening
by our comfortable little fire. Campbell
again at "patience" while I read letters.
Saturday 11th March Turned them out
again in full marching order to enable
them to carpet mass of yesterday. Was
unable to see them as this is my day for
the standing board. Slept with 3 cases.

Mr Ewen said his inspection was
fairly satisfactory. A letter from White
saying he had another 6 days
extension on medical certificate, but
none from Canada or Sarah which always
means a blank. I wonder if you
realize how much letters mean to us
over here. They are what we live for
if that is not putting it too strongly.

The arrival of the mail cart (Bob
Baldwin is our postman and always
drives to Hqs in our two wheeled cook
cart every day for it and takes our
letters back with him after lunch)
is the event of the day.

Campbell and I at usual nod down
to rail head and saw some good
"movie" and had tea at "14 rue de College"
very pleasant. Bought a new sponge.
I think I bought my old one from
Canada, also some "savour" and

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and little shaving glass as my nice nickle
one that Sarah gave me has become too
dull to use. They don't stay bright
long in this damp climate. Made a
few other purchases at Expeditionary
Force Canteen (where we buy cigarettes
sweets groceries canned goods and
other extras at wholesale prices) and
rode home. Had a lonely dinner and
have finished my paper which
however is 8th Is no mail today.

Will close for tonight and add a few
lines tomorrow.

Sunday 12th March 8.00PM as usual spending
my Sunday evening alone, in fact was
alone for tea as I Campbell / McCuen
and some of the others went down to rail
head with the intention of going to Mass
and remaining to dinner. The R.C. Cathedral
is quite large and very old. I was in it
yesterday for a few minutes. We had
no church parade this AM; no cleric
available I suppose. Had my usual
bat bath and found my new sponge
quite a success. The only awkward
part is that the ladies of the family
(there are 5 daughters) keep their Sunday
clothes in a large wardrobe in our
room and have several times come

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to the door for their hats or furs, much
to my discomfort and their amusement.
I don't believe any of them men or
women ever take a bath. They certainly
have no facilities. Spent the morning
writing military letters etc. Received
a Christmas box through Miss Mary
Plummer (Canadian Field Comptrols Assn)
sent by Mrs Beaumont (my Sgt Cook's
wife in London) about 9th Nov. Do
not know what the delay was. Plum
puddings were mouldy but eaten
nevertheless and of course apples
decayed. I wrote her a nice note however
also Miss Plummer. Have never yet
heard from Mrs Gates about the \$100
they sent for our use at it was through
the Canadian War Contingent Assn.
and which I wished to spend on a
dinner instead of tobacco. As a matter
of fact we get too much free tobacco
and the men would be better if they
smoked less and officers too
not excluding myself. My men
have also gone through the winter
without their issue of rum although
I have often been asked to sanction
our drinking it, and would have
if we had been in the trenches.

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all in for dinner and we had a very pleasant party. Capt Thomas (our S.M.'s brother) of 1st Btn was up. He is one of the few original officers left.

Went for an hour and a half walk and saw two aerial scraps whizz out.

Our own Ind. Div. artillery are now replacing the British batteries that have been with us all along and were doing quite a lot of registering.

Sent Alice "La Vie A Paris" and Father a couple of Military Almanacs under separate cover. No Canadian mail for about 10 days and we do indeed miss it. A letter from Sarah today saying she had tea with Helen Gurn in London and went to a theatre with White who got a further extension of sick leave while his nose is being treated. It has been quite springlike today and snow rapidly going. I hope it will continue now. Want to write Sam Cook a few lines so will close for tonight.

Monday 13th March Out on early ride at 6.30 and gave the horses a good work out. Very heavy fog from the north and still cold but the bright sun yesterday has dissipated most

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of the snow. Enjoyed our breakfast although I still stick to prunes or stewed figs jam and marmalade. We got an awfully good issue of the latter.

Have been writing an operation order for a relief on Thursday and attending to other correspondence all day. It is now noon and as I see Corp. Baldani's his mail cart outside will have to hurry and close. It has now cleared up and sun out and the new batteries are starting to register and some planes are up. It feels a little more springlike. It looks as if they expected us to be here a long time as I see we are scheduled for our two weeks special training during the latter part of May. No Canadian mail

again today which is very funny. Must try and write Elaine this week.

I think I will her a letter. Picture you back at Lakewood but am anxious to hear of Aubrey's plans. A year ago I believed I was laid up with my throat. He can remember.

Dearest love to Alice & Father

your devoted son

Stf