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Saturday 18th Mar

Dearest Mother

Will start my diary letter tonight although I don't know that I will get very far with it as it is now late. I am feeling very happy today as leave has been allowed again and D.V. and if nothing happens I go next Wednesday. Very likely Wood will be over about same time as he was just about to go when it was cancelled.

Sunday night 19.00. Will resume as was interrupted last night and went to bed instead of writing more. Well, the unforeseen happened this AM at breakfast when I received a wire saying that the Mounted Troops would undergo two weeks special training with the Cavalry Corps (away back of GHQ) from 24th to Apr 10th and that all leave would be cancelled during that time. It is a parallel case to Wood's above described. I would not feel so badly if I had not written Sarah by Cockshead and also asked him to wire her. He got special leave and started early this morning and I suppose is in London now. I cannot get a letter to her until Wednesday which is the day I must meet her although I will try and wire but it is



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a special personal favor to have a wire sent by signals by I think my friend Maynard Bagart (RCE) will try and arrange it for me although it often takes as long as a letter. Naturally feel pretty blue tonight and not much like writing a long letter. Something might turn up however even yet and in this game our personal feelings and interests are secondary although it seems hard and I hate to have raised Sarah's hopes. Would not mind so much if I had not written her. Enough about my own feelings.

The last two Canadian mails we have have been quarantined which accounts for no letters for over two weeks. When Isaac Wood last Friday he showed me a business letter he had from Father, I forget exact date and also interesting ones from Alice and Elaine and also an envelope from Estelle, all of which I was so glad to read. Today Sarah forwarded you most interesting letter Mother of Feb 21st just after your return from Montreal [when Father called to you from bed!! I can hear him] and although I have missed several intervening ones it was so full of interest. Harry & I hear Estelle and Elaine have their hands



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full but suppose they must expect it. Would like to hear the former make a little better progress. I cannot help feeling worried a little about her and would like to hear of her being a little stronger.

Monday 13th March Beautiful spring day as I have already said and so acceptable after our touch of winter. Snow rapidly disappearing. Rode my new horse to the afternoon and although not much change in the town (I don't suppose a little more battering now will make much difference) the roads in and out are honeycombed on either side with shell holes, and occasionally a filled in one on the road itself. In one or two places I saw where there was not a space of 50 yds on either side without a large or small shell crater. They very seldom let these locations alone. Saw two very large guns concealed in thatched huts firing behind the town. They loosed off about 20 rounds as far as they could just as I was passing. Spent my usual quiet evening.

Tuesday 14th March Ride as usual in the morning. Attended to correspondence in the morning and took over a special application for leave from Lachhutt whose people came over especially to



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see him, having started before it was cancelled. I will have to go before long. I also applied for myself at same time. A French plane down a few hundred yards from us. Propeller shot off by the machine gun of a Bosh plane. The pilot died about 15 minutes after although he landed so skillfully that the machine was not otherwise wrecked. He spiralled down.

Rode back to the Trappist Monastery I have already described to look over the country with the crew and plan a little scheme for tomorrow. Met Ed Pant en route. Lovely warm day. Usual quiet evening.

Wednesday 15th Mar Paraded all available men in full marching order at 10.0 AM and after carefully inspecting them rode to the hills in rear and after feeding our horses and having lunch, worked out a very successful advance guard scheme in the afternoon. Rain threatened at first but afterwards beautiful and I think all ranks thoroughly enjoyed the change. Had a letter from S who is looking after White who is ill in London. Had a call from some English Missionary Society who expect to take over our bullets in the near future. Campbell



V

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up at other billet in evening so read  
and wrote alone. He was tomorrow.

Thursday 16th March. No ride again as  
I am shifting Campbell out to control  
posts to relieve Cocksbutt who comes in to  
White's billet while the latter and his troop  
come down to this one. The shift was made  
without mishap at 10.00 AM and all the  
bills left clean and in good order. I  
allayed them the afternoon to settle down.  
and took a walk around to see them all.  
Hear a rumor that we are to move to  
another front nearby at an early date.

Wrote Elaine also some other letters.

Rode down to rail head at 6.00 PM to  
meet White who is due back and not  
quite up to the mark yet from all reports.  
While taking dinner at the pretty French  
girls he walked in on me having met  
Peshie on the street and having had a  
motor ride part way up. He was very  
glad to be back as fearful of getting  
transferred to depot in England and then to  
some other unit. He rode up slowly  
and I introduced him to his new quarters.  
It was a lovely warm night.

Friday 17th Ireland Out on ride. Peshie  
has a green flag flying over his hut  
and big bunch of shamrock on his



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cap. at Headquarters in morning as I have to send some Cychets to Pt. Limerick. My application for leave returned from the Corps with regrets. Rode over to see Wood in afternoon for first time in nearly a month. Found him looking very well and with his DSO ribbon up at last. He was in his old position but has two new officers, one Harcourt who was C.S.M. at R.M.C. when we were recruits. A very nice chap and I think very glad to be with Wood. Rufus Minthead in for dinner (as Wood expected me) as his home battery very close by. He was well and very bright and delighted to be over at last. He seems very keen and enthusiastic and I should think would be a fine officer. Did not leave until 11.00 as we met Wood's nephew with some French wine.

Saturday 18th Mar Antwerp side. My standing board at 10.00 AM and on going to D.A.A. & M.C. afterwards was told that "leave was on again" and that I could go whenever I wanted and 10 days more on Tuesday. I decided to go on Wed 22nd and came away delighted with the warrant in my pocket and at once to write Sarah. Rode down to rail head with White's Cackshutt but no concert



## VII

today. Harmer had tea and a pleasant ride home. Gave Lockshutt a wire to Sarah (as he goes early tomorrow) and letters after 3 days in transit. White and I enjoyed our dinner and chatted most of the evening.

Sunday 19th March Beautiful bright day.

W bath as Campbell took it and McEwen & I share one but used two pails, one foot in each, to good advantage and the floor is tiled and easily mopped. We with had news at breakfast and spent an hour at General Staff Office arranging details. Had two gunners from a new battery waggow line near us in for lunch. Rode over to Cyclists in PM and then visited the billet of a neighboring British Sri Lanka Squadron which we hope to take over after our return. It is a good one and I hope we get it. They were very nice Irishmen.

McEwen was with me. Started this night after dinner and with interruptions it is now 10.30 so will turn in and try and sleep off my disappointment.

Monday 20th March Out on ride with McEwen as White not fully recovered and Lockshutt on trench warden duty and Campbell on control posts and Lockshutt on leave.

Have started making arrangements to move back. It will be a two day trip



VIII

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easy marching and reminds me a little bit of our 2 weeks training in Canada only under very different conditions.

The field punishment I awarded, Mother, dear, is laid down in King's Regulations and has to be carried out in that way. The case was serious as the culprit lied until confronted by the witness and led us to suppose another man was to blame. I consider he got off very lightly. "Stealing from a comrade" is a very serious offence.

I am enclosing such a sweet note from Mr. Owen to Sarah in which he speaks so nicely of you all.

Still feel a little blue about leave but it cannot be helped and it would not do for me to press on be absent for this special training which is arranged by the Army.

Very little more to add and hope to get the Canadian mails that have been quarantined sometime this week. Weather rather dull today. Hope Father is well and Alice not too tired. I am sure she missed you so much. Suppose Hazel is with you now. Hope she is feeling better. Will close with very much love as ever your devoted son

Stb