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**Western Archives, Western University**

4 May 1917  
4.30 P.M.

My dearest Mother  
am going to write a few days of my  
day letters now and finish it on Sunday.  
The Corps has just put on another big show  
of which you will hear in the paper and  
has gained all its objectives although the  
British on our right did not, necessitating  
our forming a defensive flank. We are  
still holding as usual. Unfortunately  
the Germans put up too big a fight to  
give us an opportunity so we were not  
able to take an active part. Comparatively  
speaking I think we have done our share  
here and have had a different German  
division in front of us since 9th April.  
They don't seem to stand it very long.

Your nice letter of April 30th  
from Atlantic City came yesterday and I  
will send it on to Sarah and continue to  
do so now with all your own letters if you  
don't mind. I also have one from Alice  
for dear Wood written about same time.  
Also a letter for both of us from dear  
Uncle Jack and one from Victor Hardiman  
expressing sympathy. He is over now  
with an infantry Bn but hopes to get a  
staff job later on. A nice letter from  
Mrs Brinton also from the west.

4 May

Am so sorry she was not at Westchester  
 while you were at Atlantic City as I  
 would so much have liked you to see her  
 and family.

Have not had a strenuous week so  
 far but am kept agreeably busy  
 which is a relief these times. Spring has  
 at last come and everything is budding and  
 beautiful and birds making and singing  
 their love songs.

I wear two of Wood's friends' crocheting  
 for photographs and as I do not think  
 you will object I shall arrange about  
 them when next I go on leave. There is  
 no word of it yet although quite a few  
 are getting to Paris.

I am sending Sarah Woods two old  
 cigarette cases subject to your approval later  
 on as she expressed a wish for something  
 personal.

Monday 30th April Warm and bright but  
 visibility poor. Up early and signed a number  
 of monthly returns and after breakfast  
 started out for the front with Strickland  
 my paymaster who expressed a desire to see  
 what the battlefield looked like. Picked up  
 the men at our forward squadron and  
 rode up to just the end of the ridge where  
 we left our horses although they were later  
 shelled and had to make back.

4 May 17

The gun had shelled and set on fire a large ammunition dump at --- which we passed. It was burning Marsdenless all day and about every hour there was a terrific explosion.

We proceeded on foot to a new peak more to the south where we could see the plain below and spent an hour studying the various villages and roads with our glasses eating our lunch meantime.

We then went forward to --- where our patrols went on 9th and where I wanted to locate a new forward rendezvous. It is a hopeless wreck shelling on and off all the time. Saw Hyde of one of Woods' batteries there and he showed up a well where we could get water if needed, although very deep. Two of my horses with saddles and sword scabbards are still lying in the square where they fell. The more I think of it the more I think they did well to get there at all. Went back another route and in places with dead horses and here and there a man. Tried to locate Walter Hingsmill on way back but could not find his battalion. Had tea at McEwen's and got home at 7:30 with a good appetite but hot and dusty. Saw 1st King's Horse last summer. Letter from George Wilson also from the Robertson.

4-V-17

Tuesday 1st May and a typical "May Day". It seems hard however to reconcile these fine days with the destruction, sorrow and suffering that are consequent on this war. Breakfast at 8.15 and up on hill for an hour at 9.00.

Had quite a fight with Peggy at the pumps again. She is very stubborn when she wants to be. Spent rest of day making remarks on officers, reinforcements, bases, equipment etc etc in war diary which must go in today. Also formulated a new form of canteen statement for the three squadrons who I find are both buying and selling on credit which will not do. They each make about 200/- profit per month (most of which is spent on extras for men's messes). Wrote Father in afternoon also Sarah & Wood's kit which I am having sent to Messrs Cox & Co, where his kit for me was sent and where I can look it over when I get to England. I will keep some clothing and equipment that I can use.

Pleasant if you would prefer to all returned I will be at his other personal things.

One of my subalterns Smith has applied to go to U.S. as an instructor and as I know he is newly married which likely influences him I will recommend and forward it.

I do not remember if I am repeating  
 some thing I may have said in other letters,  
 if so please excuse me and say if I have  
 you with too much detail. I think I  
 told you about Prince Arthur of Connaught  
 so about repeat. It was rather amusing.

usual game of poker in this but usually  
 find other things to read or do and besides  
 the stakes are too high and I hear they are  
 getting to be crowd of gamblers, as I often  
 tell them, but doubtful I should interfere,  
 and if one plays pretty steadily at it  
 loses and gains generally even up pretty  
 well in the long run.

Wednesday 2nd May another beautiful  
 day. Rode the Wake off the hill and made  
 sundry comments on the work being  
 done. I will have to move as they are  
 ploughing it up but have found a better  
 place near Bols de ———. Following  
 General Byngs example I have given up  
 wearing gloves riding in the summer.  
 I believe as they make ones hands  
 hotter and drier and Leslie keeps my  
 reins sponged. Smith and I are going  
 to get a picture taken with our horses  
 soon. Had to call down one of my horse  
 drivers for having dirty headstalls.  
 Tomorrow them all being kept who

silver these days. The men shake them in a sack to brighten them. Wrote a letter to the Corps about training the squadron on patrol duty which needs it badly.

Rode over to new area with Smith & the R.S.M. and located our jumps which will be put up tomorrow. Weather took a long cross country ride and planned a scheme for Saturday. Everything so beautiful everywhere, especially the wild flowers in the woods. Saw dozens of partridges nesting. Wrote Alice and left off in evening. The farmer is so sweet about writing and his letters so full of interest. Inspected all the mine fields at noon and decided that the sooner they get out of the mine houses and into "hidies" in a field than that good weather is here. Fell on slippery stone steps of one house and cut my hand.

Thursday May 3rd. Another typical May day. Thunderstorm bombardment preliminary to attack this A.M. A hum came over us about midnight dropping bombs or near by aerodromes but no damage done as far as I can learn. Came over in bright moonlight. I heard it 15 minutes before the explosions and suspected what was up.

Inspected a full marching order parade.  
 The latest type of gas respirator was viewed  
 for mounted men so have had an adjustment  
 made to enable it to be carried high up on  
 back and clear of saddle. Radeover and  
 inspected new ground and jumps which the  
 RSM is looking after. After lunch rode to  
 --- and had tea with my French friends  
 who I have not seen since January. They  
 were very nice and the gardens beautiful.  
 "Madeline" promised to write Sarah that I  
 was looking well. Very dusty and windy  
 but nice for a change. Partridge & Langton  
 of supply column for dinner, former  
 of Uthman and latter a friend of the Gibbons.  
 Good paper to stand in with as we often  
 get a little advantage in ration or  
 forage by being friends. Had to go in  
 poker game as Dupas afraid our "sharks"  
 would do up Parmalle but he won  
 about 45 pts and as usual lost 34 but  
 not very serious. Bed about 1.00 AM on  
 Friday (4th May). Left for new field in  
 Bois de --- at 9.00 and was much pleased  
 with it. The jumps are fine and the field  
 nice and level with jumps on two sides.  
 Did not attend stables but sent Smith  
 over to inspect sick and wounded horses  
 which are being well kept in over two

am glad I kept them<sup>8</sup> but could not  
have if we had been moving. Had  
man killed and 2 wounded yesterday also  
two horses by shell on a cross road.

Corps commander has sent a very  
nice circular letter to all regiments  
about the success of Corps during April  
operations. He is a fine chap. I wish  
we had been able to do more.

Smith just in from doing a little  
tent pegging. We buy and get the officers  
interested in it and jumping every  
other afternoon as some are a little  
backwards, besides it brings us all  
together informally which is a good  
thing.

Our field Post Office has moved  
so far I cannot send Dean over  
any more at night as it will be 10  
miles away, however will try and  
find another.

Must try and answer a few of the  
notes that have come so will  
break off and finish this week on  
Sunday.

No Great Canadian mail yet.

Very much love dearest Mother  
to your three

Your devoted son

J.H.