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Sunday
22 April 1917
5.30 P.M

My dearest ones at Lakewood

I think I will give you my week's doings before touching on other subjects and leave them until the end this time.

Monday 16th April Brighter but cold and horses all have their hoofs up and are rapidly failing in spite of all we can do for them.

I think we might do better at a more forward rendezvous if we can get water so much that in view sent McEwen & King up to reconnoiter between — and 4 lines and also two small officers patrols to select alternative routes to a jumping off place as after Wadges experience when going over the crest with a patrol it would be unwise to try there again by day. I don't know whether I told you but the Otter spotted the horses and literally followed them along the road with 4.1's and 5.9's finally literally blowing Wadge off his horse with 0.0 by roadside. How he escaped I do not know.

Feeling very uneasy about you dearest Mother and Father and not knowing if you were well again when the sad news arrived, I felt I might get to Canada for a few weeks and so rode into Cape Hat to make enquiries. Saw young BOVEY (son of the Dean) in the "A" office

and he looked it up for me, and also a new order that is about to come out, and said the policy of the Army was to be as lenient as possible with all ~~cases~~ ^{requests} for leave for urgent business purposes and that in the case of a commanding officer leave could be granted to Canada up to 4 months if a strong enough case was presented. In such a case the command would be kept open although junior officers would be returned to England and have to await their turn.

After getting this information I cabled dear Alice that I could get leave if really wanted and you don't know how proud I felt of you all, the three of you for the beautiful inspiring message that reached me on Friday last one from Father one for Alice. I cannot tell you how I felt as I was affected very much and strengthened. Your bravery and steadfastness are indeed worthy of the dear brave spirit we all mourn but are so proud of.

I cabled per enclosed and hope you will get it and my second deferred cablegramme with further particulars today. Sarah sent me the one you sent her and it touched me very much. You are indeed a family to be proud

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of and are "playing the game" as I know dear Wood would like to see us play it.

I can never hope to do all he has done for our cause but his noble example and the record he leaves inspire me to do my best and I am thankful that at last I am in a position where I feel I can be of some use.

I had lunch at "B" (Carps) Mess with Greg Anderson whose brother had his hand blown off. He was once in London, very tall and thin. I received orders to make back leaving one squadron in Carps reserve up in front. I inspected a growing park of guns mortars M G's and other trophies which are being collected in the garden in front of Carps Commanders Chateau. Saw the Town Major and got billets for the squadron and then rode back. I moved my dug out but made a bad deal, as although I was more private (in the mess before) as far as humans were concerned, I found the Russo-German parasites that joined me on Friday night hit it off with an English breed who hit the dug out and the result was a general gathering!! Issued my orders for the returns and then after dinner waded over to 3rd Brigade Wagon

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lines formerly headquarters and spent the evening with Ike Robertson talking about the dear boy. He had planned to meet Wood in London after the war and they had many political discussions as he is a hot tory and often used to say he could bring about his defeat when he ran for the house. I believe the dear lad would have liked politics. Robertson & his wife had also undertaken to look him up a suitable heiress as soon as possible. He told me how fair Wood had been to look an officer who was thrust on him and who he did not like but all the same was just to him and gave him every chance. I believe he was respected and loved by all ranks in the brigade. Robertson has his cone as it could not be sent and either he or I will take it over the first leave we get. He can tell us more little personal things about Wood than anybody as they were very intimate. I will see him again soon.

Foolishly I had not brought my torch and spent an hour getting home and in the rain falling twice right into old trenches half full of mud & water. Did not sleep well for reasons already explained.

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First letter of sympathy requested from dear Sarah which was such a help. The letters have been unusually regular and have been a great solace to me.

Tuesday 17th April. The worst kind of a day for a move with a cold heavy steady rain but all all in the open it did not matter so made no change in plans.

Cast a shoe on way in, but reached here in time for lunch & arranged a hot feed for horses who were following on real far men. Found Smith, Spenser & Paymaster who were left behind before in good form. Old Leslie nearly all in, the first time I have ever seen him give up. I had to get another man to unsaddle, however he pulled himself together later and did not have to go sick. Brought "Peggy" & the "Wako" back with me also Wood's saddle. Gave the brigade 2 of my horses and a saddle in exchange.

Had a good hot bath after lunch and had clean bail blankets in my bed roll and hope I am rid of my friends for the present. Your first sweet cable of love comfort and sympathy came and it brought me very close to Lakewood also gave a few letters for dear Wood which I am alluding to. [B.W.I Regiment going

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by with pipe & drum band, as fine a
looking lot of black niggers as I have
ever seen from West Indies and well
disciplined. They are billeted here and are
very funny and talk darby talk with
an English accent. W. G. Walker a
short letter and intended writing more
after dinner but fell asleep at my table
and so concluded bed was the best place.

Wednesday 18th April. Not troubled by
lice and don't know what Madame
Saulery would say if I got them into her
nice bed. Very busy all morning in
office with 10 days pile of correspondence
which as Lawson my adjutant was up
with me had not been cleaned up. Got
Smith to look over our wounded horses
about 15, minor wounds which we hope
to cure ourselves, the worst ones had to
be shot and a few sent to the M.V.S.
for treatment. My V.O. Douglas could
not give. Our losses are now 2
officers 6 killed and 14 wounded and
48 horses which are not so heavy when
you considered we tackled a village
strongly held with machine guns
and actually got a footing in it and
had 1 officer & 10 prisoners with hands
up yelling "Kamarade" when the
machine gun swept the street and as

they (my patrols)

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we were wanted we had no chance to duck
far cover. I enclose a copy of the Corps
Commander's report on our venture
(we made 2 others as well) and the Army
Commander's remarks in reply. These of
course are confidential, but if we cared
to publish them I think they might be
more interesting reading than the eulogy
on our esteemed friend Reason which I
see in the Advertiser you sent Wood, Mother
dear, wherein he dined with Kitchener
about which we have already heard
several times. I also see an article about
Lt Col Hylea Betts in which both Woods
are very nicely referred to. You dear
people are "playing the game" in Canada
but the place for soldiers to play it and
take part in the "Great Adventure" as dear
Wood puts it, is right here on the firing
line in France.

after lunch I rode up again on the
"Woke" with Smith to see the Evins and
his squadron in their new quarters
and found them in "SISSON" huts and horses
in sheds and fairly comfortable. Back
just in time for a good dinner.

Called on the B.C.C.S. to see about when
we would next be needed but was only
able to see his assistant. Made out
Elizabeth (for delicious stuffed dolls) and

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May (for safety razor & 3 silk handkerchiefs)
 Mrs Allport for a delicious box she
 had sent Wood and also answered 2 more
 of his business letters. Bed about 1.00

A Mon Thursday 19th April. Inspected
 and allotted 25 remounts to replace
 casualties. Very good as a whole. attended
 office and inspected wounded horses
 with the V.O. at noon stables, all doing
 well but decided to evacuate bathers in
 a run down condition suffering from
 general debility and exposure. Spent
 afternoon going over dear Wood's
 portfolio and diary and sorting over his
 papers. The farmer I am sending to
 Sarah with some things to forward to
 you with his other things but the diary
 since 1st Jan I am sending today by
 registered mail, sealed, to dear Father.

It is now 7.00 PM and old Sean is
 waiting to go to mail so will finish
 tonight but want what I have written
 to get off now. So much love dear
 dear Mother and Father & Alice
 Dbb.

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Thurs 9th (con). Feel asleep in Mess after dinner the first time I remember doing it, but suppose reaction of last 10 days. Finished the dear Lad's diary instead of writing as I intended in my room. I am going to follow his example and try and keep mine more fully in future although in a way these letters take its place (I am eating some of Aunt E's delicious dates)

Woods thoughts and sentiments and humor as expressed in his diary are a revelation to me who thought I knew him well and he has certainly lead a very full complete & useful life over here and as Gardow White said in a note of sympathy today done more than his share for a great cause. I have taken the liberty of writing up his "last day" for him.

Friday April 20th Still cold but sunny up on hill watching "C" doing some dunting thrusting as I want every man to be able to "stick" a Hun if he ever gets the chance. They are very keen. Cleaned up the "historical record" of the regiment and had it done up in book form with copies of our regimental poems. I intended sending Father an extra copy at an early date. Much strengthened and comforted by the two cables from Alice and Father about which I have spoken.

Two letters from dear Mother for Wood March 15th & 21st for which so many thanks also for interesting enclosures. Yahr dear

letters Mother are always an inspiration and
 your devotion to your duties and work
 wonderful. So glad your efforts for W.C.A
 fund were so successful and I knew they
 would be. Wrote the three sisters a joint
 letter which, under the circumstances I
 hope they won't object to. Wrote Col Hobbs
 thanking him for tobacco, also Mrs Belts for
 sweet note (enclosed) just to come after Sarah's
 Razor from Uncle Elm & dates for Wood came.
 I am wondering now if I dare tackle another
 layer and hope to sleep tonight. You know
 my capacity for such things. Prepared a
 lecture on "Taking of villages". Bed about 12.30
 Saturday 21st April. Had all ranks practicing
 this job and the rushing of machine guns
 which is our only way against them, up on the
 hill, a lovely morning although ground very
 wet. Usual routine in office and attended
 stables. Received 6 pro sacks from Miss
 Cochrane (formerly at works), very thoughtful
 of her and will write soon. Inspected
 our transport 25 vehicles in all and must
 say they look well. I have an excellent
 transport sergeant. Delivered my lecture at
 3.00 P.M. with aid of large maps to all ranks
 and men appeared (?) very interested.

I am getting along so well with Smith
 and trying to make away with the little
 things that irritated me when I was in

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The same position. The rooms next me here
now in the Chateau and as a matter of fact has
the better room facing south, as I did not
bother to change and am still in same place
where I have now been 6 months. Checked over
lists of Woods kit and made a few notes on
same and will send them to Father. In
evening I wrote up his diary
and did not turn in until nearly 2:00 A.M. a
very heavy bombardment and a huge fire.
I suppose the Hun as usual is burning the
beautiful city of ~~_____~~.

Sunday 22nd April Bright but still cold
with hail & snow did not get down to breakfast
until 9:00. Am quite free from vermin. Visited
Col Almon & Capt Sharford who called to express
sympathy. Office for an hour and inspected
saddlery and wounded horses at noon stables
all done well. Worst cases are debility from
exposure. We are still short 27 and 24 men.
after lunch practiced lent pegging on the
hill with sword & lance with other officers
as anxious to keep them keen and also put
Peggy & pony over our jumps. Do you
remember how Wood & schooled her all one
winter in the snow? She has not forgotten
what she learnt then. Packed Woods
parfolios and a few things to send to Sarah
for transmission to Canada and also diary
by registered post to Father and have been

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at this except for dinner (chicken on Sunday)
ever since (now 11.00 PM). Am having Wood's
Times to which he has subscribed until best sent
to me.

I also told Sarah to allow his latest
picture to be sent to Illustrated papers in
answer to a request they made to her and which
she referred to me. It is his due as if there
ever was an unassuming modest soul it
was he and he never allowed himself even
to be justly advertised. I hope you will
approve. I also wrote a little article about
his military career. I saw Col Eaton's
picture in Claribel almost at once.

Mrs Legendre Anna Shaw Wood's niece is at
Lysart and Sarah likes her so much. She
is very sympathetic and knows us all
by her day at least. Was she ever supposed to
be engaged to Campbell Bisher? She told
Sarah about the bull dog of Psi.

I did not get over to the dear graves as I
had hoped as I want to go alone and
also wanted to get this writing finished but
will go soon, although tomorrow must do
some rearranging up in front.

The French women and girls are all
sporting their Easter hats and dresses
and Madame Souley's two "puffer" sisters
in the house here for the holidays each have
one too, although black & purple predominates

I have not seen much of them this time. If from what I can see one might expect a small crop of pecaninies in this part of France in about a year's time!! The Turks left their mark in the same way about 1½ years ago when they were here.

Very heavy firing again to-night, and the sky is almost constantly bright with the flashes of the guns.

I find Rackham so congenial and am so glad to have him in the mess. He went through his introduction to shell fire very creditably and had some bursts very close to him. He was with me the night of 13 th 14th in ~~the~~ wood.

I am enclosing clippings from Times and Daily Mail which please keep for me as they are the only ones I have, also the other letters and things I spoke of.

I suppose Aunt Tilly is with you now and know you will enjoy her visit and hope she stays sometime. I am wondering if the dear grandchildren & their mothers were with you for Easter. I hope so.

Again I want to thank you three dear brave souls for all loving sympathy and help. You have no idea what a relief your cables were and how strengthened I was by them. I am so sorry now I did not cable more fully the first day but you soon will have my letters. So much love JH