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29-4-17

My dearest Mother.

I won't be able to finish this letter in time for mail tonight as I am just in from ——— where I rode with Smith after lunch today, however will make a start.

Monday 23rd April. Warm and bright. Started out for the front at 9.00 and picked up McIwen at our forward squadron at ——— about 10.30 and after calling at Carps Hqs for a few minutes pushed on to ——— which a month ago could only be entered except in trenches at night but now is a steady stream of traffic with the old double track road being rapidly put back as it was before the war.

Here we left our horses beside a battery of 8" guns whose firing they did not in the least object to and proceeded on foot over the top of the ridge to a village of the same name to reconnoitre a new forward rendezvous. McIwen had selected behind the railway. There had been an attack of one of our divisions early that morning on the left and we had a good view of the lost part of it and the cells of ——— before an O.P. where we spent half an hour studying the country. We could see red brick dust as a shell hit a house and white when it hit a stone building and black when they hit in a field. It was quite a sight and a splendid new point. We passed a

cross road which the Hun has registered to a  
nicety and over which our transport and  
ammunition waggons have to go at night.

There were 40 or fifty dead horses rolled  
down the embankment bar & smashed timber  
and waggons and quite a few dead. I have  
not fully seen such a bloody mess in one  
place but the brave drivers face it every  
time they go up and take their chance. I  
was deserted there except for an occasional  
shell. A little further on we also saw lunch  
in a German dugout until the Hun quit  
shelling a straddled aeroplane and a  
German 8" how in front of us and went to  
his lunch too I suppose. I did not  
altogether like the plane movement had  
chases and think we would be better a  
little further forward. In way back met  
Billy Hodgins (coming up with the transport  
(12th)) He has stuck to it and is one of the  
three originals left.

Wonderful progress as regards roads  
and communications have been made  
and I saw a full gauge locomotive near  
our former fuel forward rendezvous  
of 9th which we only reached there  
after crossing about 2 miles of trenches and  
shell holes. Had tea at Mr Ethens but on  
way back and got in just in time for  
dinner at 7.30. Found the warm day

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converting as not used to it and my feet  
 were sore after long tramps. Mrs. Little from  
 Sarah to whom I made before retiring.

Tuesday 24 Apr. Displeased with the way  
 our men were carrying out their sword  
 work and felt satisfied very few of them could  
 stick a blow if they got the chance and get  
 away with it. Must have some good stiff  
 durkumis made on which they will  
 break their wrists as swords if they don't  
 assume the "locked arm" position.

Another nice day although colder again.  
 No buds even have started yet. Went for a  
 little ride with Smith and attended to office  
 work and prepared an imaginary scheme  
 of attacking villages on our front so as to  
 make officers study them and be ready to  
 go after any one if called on to do so  
 later. 25 reinforcements arrived to  
 cover part of our casualties from the 17th  
 amongst whom were several old men.  
 Inspected them mostly from Medicine Hat,  
 Wolf Army and myl Jacks. An intelligent  
 officer who had been interviewing Gorman  
 prisoners for last 2 weeks was stranded  
 in the village for the night so we put him  
 up and were much interested in his  
 experiences. There is certainly no want  
 of food amongst Gorman soldiers  
 captured on this front.

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Have few names of medical officers serving in combatant units (so will have to submit Hazard's name). Received another long cable from dear Father urging me to "carry on" here and mentioning satisfactory conditions in London on. It helped a lot. Supposed was a defered cable from Canada mailed up from the base.

Wednesday 25th April. Circulated my scheme to Squadron and then went up on hill and watched "C" jumping and rushing imaginary machine guns. Inspected all bullets and messes at noon with the M.O. which necessitates walking all over the village. Saw the "habitants" helping themselves to meat from a horse we had to shoot with a broken leg before we could bury it. They were welcome but but the sight was not conducive to my eating a hearty lunch. I dread French sausages and never eat them although I suppose a horse is a cleaner animal than a steer or cow. Rode over to see dear Dad's grave in P.M. about which I have already written dear Mother. Saw thing about recommendations for some French decorations that may(?) be allotted to us for war on 4th. (Remembering so well French brought) I have 22 letters to answer!!!!

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Now have a new man as C.O.'s orderly  
(Law now entitled to a 3rd man) Mc Kay  
in old Sledge's place as I considered him  
to be good a man for the job and returned  
him to duty where he can get promotion.

Told Mc Kay I expected him to be the  
clearest man in the regiment and I think  
he is doing his best. His head chain is  
like silver. We don't carry head rap any  
longer. Special poker game in mess in  
evening. Dead road times which now  
come to me. Letter of sympathy from  
Mrs Leonard (ford) of R. B. P. & Co. Mother  
at length and sent off cablegramme  
which should reach you today. Bed about  
1.00 A.M. on

Thursday 26 April Cool but bright but  
hardly any signs of buds yet. They are a  
month late according to French farmers.

Sent Smith (laughton V.O.) forward to  
look over B Squadron Horses which they  
found picking up wonderfully. We are now  
getting extra forage which helps.

Inspected a full marching order parade  
and sent them off for a route march while  
I took an hour's ride alone on Peggy who  
I find very rough. Felt very lonely in  
afternoon and after writing a few letters  
went into Smith's room and chatted  
to him for an hour. He is very

companionable and we are getting along well.  
 Wrote Miss Claudia Cochran to thank her  
 for six pairs of socks for each Wood & also  
 Mrs Leonard of Bedford. Tried to read in  
 evening but could not settle down. Bed 12:00 PM  
Friday 27th April. Drill again and displeased  
 with sword work and they have not yet made  
 the dummy's sword. Did not say too much  
 however. Find they are ploughing up our  
 drill field so will have to go elsewhere but  
 unused fields are few and far between.

Rode to Chateaufort saw families of  
 to see if I could get one of hers. The Cabut  
 happened to be home on leave!! and accompanied  
 me out to inspect the field and want 100 frs  
 per hectare for 3 months lease so I did not  
 close. They were both very nice and when I  
 got back I had to sit down and drink  
 a couple of glasses of wine and talk. The old  
 Cambers also joined in. Seeing a  
 small boy peeping outside I asked the  
 Count if it were his son. He said yes, I  
 have one dead, one you see there, and a third  
 coming there, pointing to the Countess  
 whose condition was obvious. When we  
 all laughed. They look on these things as  
 natural and not to be kept secret or avoided.  
 How sorry faced we are as a nation  
 and how hypocritical. Galloped back  
 with Smith who I had kept waiting outside

Book XIII

(a partly used one of woods)

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as we had no horseholder, but were nearly late for lunch. White came up after lunch. He said he had written Alite. He is anxious to get back to the regiment again.

A letter asking for former U.S. citizens to go back to U.S. as instructors also for names of others who would volunteer and I should recommend. Most of us are now anxious to see it through after we know.

Rode out with Smith and managed to locate another field in a wood and got name of owner who will have to look up.

On way back visited a German prisoner's camp the O.C. of which I knew. About 500 living in huts low army rations with blankets and more comfortable than most of our men. They work in quarries and get 2d a day. We are strictly living up to letter of Geneva convention. Discipline is strict and maintained by the German N.C.O's. They are certainly more industrious than our men and make almost anything in way of small comforts but of comparatively nothing.

They have their band and play in a little square. They read on Sundays any German book they like. They get

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about 50 parcels a day from Germany  
 all of which are first opened. I saw  
 them and consider them as good as new  
 now get here although their tastes are  
 different, bread, coffee, onions potatoes  
 cigars socks etc etc. Bread is cut up  
 and nuts cracked to remove nothing  
 concealed. We had tea very pleasantly  
 afterwards. They have some fine French  
 pictures in the mess.

I am sorry to say I saw several Germans and  
 had to go to M. O. but hope to get rid of them  
 soon.

11 letters when I came in. Sympathy from  
 Col Gunn, Reason, Greenlee, Mrs Alport  
 Mrs Betts (2nd) Hirst and Ludlow. I  
 must try and at least acknowledge them  
 soon.

Saturday 28 April Sent Smith & Langlas  
 over to inspect 22 remnants second batch  
 of about their number to replace casualties.  
 Bright and warm. Up on hill where  
 they now have a good cliff dummy which  
 at least offers as much resistance as a  
 Bosche carcass. Watched the pumping  
 which is very good on the whole. I tried  
 to jump Peggy but had a 20 minute  
 fight with her just just same as in  
 yard at Lakewood in winter 1913-14.



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Spent afternoon at war diary which will be a very voluminous compilation this month and was only half through at 7.30 when I went to dinner. Read times in evening and wrote Sarah. 11 letters again chiefly from Canada for all of which ever so warmly thanks, but all written about end of March and 1st of April just before you went to Atlantic City if you did go after all.

Line from Warwick thanking us both for subscriptions which I am so glad dear Father paid. I feel it is the very least I could do and wish it was more. I hope my name did not appear in report according to instructions I sent.

Line from Uncle Charles M. C. who has fallen and broken leg. Am so sorry. Am using safety razor but will have to get accustomed to it.

Line from Aubrey dated March 28th but has just written him so will wait a bit before replying.

Two from dear Alice dated March 22nd and 27th (delayed) with report about red X collection. Alas I can no longer forward them but know dear Wood is with us in spirit ever now.

Also enclosures from your dearest Mother dated Apr 28 & Apr 4th, one or two of which Uncle Jack and Ella saw sending to Sarah.

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Letters of Apr 1st & 3rd I will answer early  
in weeks! Was so glad to see his dear writing  
again and do trust he is better and quite  
strong again.

Mrs Sarah, who feels as if she had lost  
one of her own brothers. In one letter she  
said there was no one she liked being with  
more than dear Wood, outside of her mother & H.

I think they were very close and had some  
very happy hours together. I would like to  
send you some of her letters about him, but  
feel she has written you very fully.

Mrs H. and returned about 10 o'clock.

Sunday 29 April Usual bath and breakfast  
at 9.00 P.M. Spent all morning at war  
diary and finished the "operations". A real  
spring day at last and buds are now  
really starting. Enjoyed my ride to  
with Smith this P.M. where we had tea and  
bought some soap and one or two little  
things. All French girls out in their finery  
we loafed along as it was warm but  
we did enjoy the sun and spring air  
at least.

Had Town Major & Hazard in to share  
our usual Sunday chickens but they  
were very tough and had cost a small  
fortune!

Two more small successes on and near

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our front have cheered us very much especially as we have taken heavy toll of the Hun although it has cost something, but in same ratio as volume as we have shells now (thanks to your faithful munition workers) to keep up a steady devastating fire which saves our flesh and blood.

I am enclosing the C.W.C.A report in which I see a letter from dear Wood, just like him please keep it for me.

Am sending other letters to Sarah and asking her to forward to Lakewood.

I hear all my letters are now being censored and safe diary gets through all right. I put a roll in it to the censor in case it was opened and how registration receipt here.

Now have diary letter book 11612 here but won't attempt to send them home for present.

There is some rumor of Carps being released soon but how far much felt in it as we are now practically repaired up to strength again and I think we expected to put on another stunt first.

Am expecting more recent Canadian letters soon and magazines & papers which always take longer to come. Ever so much love for you dear have free

Shh