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In the Field
20-Apr-1917

My dearest sisters

Will you excuse a combined letter to express my loving sympathy with you all in this our common bereavement, there is so little that can be said as I know we all feel the same, heart broken, and it seems hard to say they will be done and believe that God in His infinite wisdom knows best. Wood did, a gallant soldier and a Christian gentleman for the greatest cause for which any man has ever fought and I know we all feel that his life was not thrown away and that he accomplished much to further that cause. He did his share and a great deal more and did it well as the unstinted praise of his superiors and subordinates shows.

All his previous battles and engagements have not been the unqualified success that this one has and the hard part of it seems to be that he did not live to see the fruits of his labor and the unqualified success of the day. It is a relief to know that the dear lad did not suffer much or long and to feel certain that he had every attention.

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while he lived. I have now made all possible inquiries and feel pretty sure that he was practically paralyzed from the first. I know you will get all the particulars I have sent to Lakewood so will not repeat.

He was up early on 2 day (9th) about 5:00 AM as the infantry went forward at 5:30 and was highly pleased with the barrage. He kept watching it and the advance from the roof of his dugout with his field glasses. Later he came down and had a hurried breakfast and about 8:00 AM started out with the Gruchy in his slicker to make the forward reconnaissance which as you know he nearly finished when that about 9:30. He had on him his slicker, oldest uniform, Sam Brown diary, about 80 francs worth and was carrying his walking cane. Of these things I was only able to get diary and cane as they are very stout and forward these things I direct to next of kin (dear Father). I read the dear diary last night, so beautifully and fully kept up to the night of 8th. I could not help smiling at the little touches of humor here and there

and it is hard to realize that he will never exercise it again on earth.

The Robertson (his paymaster) has been his greatest chum for the last year and I can tell so many little interesting stories about him. Wood told him lots of things, personal matters, and his views on superiors, imperial officers etc etc, that he would not tell any of his other senior officers. He has written dear Father and is going to visit Lakewood whenever he gets to Canada.

I spent one evening with him before coming back here and we had a lovely talk. Wood had H.C. with Canon Scott about a month before when at his other position. Tell dear Father I am getting the diary off by registered mail tomorrow but will have to wait and take the cable over to England.

I have been opening the dear boy's mail something nearly every day and have answered those that called for attention and will endeavor to write a few special friends with a few particulars. Just now I am busy re-organizing after our little show and getting ready for another run a little later one. "B"

Squadron (McEwen) is still standing & near the front while "C" is back here getting repairs and equipment. 25 fairly good horses came in yesterday. "A" is sort of it being used at present for police duty. Our plans have to be laid well ahead and I find it difficult to get officers and N.C.O's to study the maps of enemies country and photographs etc etc. Am giving a lecture to command on the best way to attack a village or wood, always a difficult point with machine guns & mine to contend with.

— Now dear Alice I have your sweet letter of Mar 21st to Wood before me about Mr Beal and Father. I also have two letters to us (sent him) from darling Mather which I will answer on Sunday. They are dated 16th & 21st March, about a month ago. Sarah also sent me a letter to her dated 21st.

— Estelle dear, I found your letter to us both dated Feb 2nd in the dear lads portfolio and rather think he must have answered it. I had no difficulty in reading it so you need not worry about your handwriting. It does seem hard my dear dear sisters

that you should have this cloud over your lines but I know that you are all inspired by the same bravery of spirit as I think we all inherit from our dear dear Father & Mother and that our chief thought now must be for them. Alice's cable tells me how bravely they are attending to their respective duties and I am sure that Wood's dauntless soul, which still moves on before us will rejoice to think that we are all "carrying on" and "playing the game" as he has so aptly said.

I cabled dear Alice that I could get away for a couple of months without losing my command if I was really wanted but I now feel as I have the Regiment and hope to be of a little use that my duty is to stay and see the game through, but at the same time will come without hesitation or regret if you cable that you need me. If the war is not over by end of summer and things settle down I will certainly try and get over.

You have no idea how I was comforted and strengthened by the

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first cable "Fondest love dear boy" (Oakwood
and later by the two that came today
from your dear Alice and from dear
dear Father saying how brave Mother
was. They touched me and brought me
very close and I reproach myself a
little for the abruptness of my cables
about the dear lad in which I might
have expressed more sympathy and
love for you all. You know I feel
it and that sorry few words were
inadequate and was very ashamed at
the time. Please forgive me for not
saying more.

Now Elaine dear, please thank
dear old Schaf for his letters of Jan
24th (a copy and I trust by now he has my
answer) March 14th and also of March
20th. His cables also came to hand
and I fear he will think I may have
disregarded them, but I have not. I am
going to write him at length very soon
and in the meantime please convey my
thanks for all he has done and tell him
how much I appreciate it.

Also have a letter dated 15-2-17 from
dear old James and I hope to get around
to it soon. In the meantime kiss both
the nephews for me.

I am enclosing a p/c which I took out of a German dugout. I am not much of a "looter" & in spite of having all kinds of opportunities lately. I sometimes regret afterwards that I did not help myself more freely, but at the time you generally hand other things to think of. Tell me if there is any particular article of German make you would like to have and I will endeavour to procure it.

Our success at — ridge is very great. I heard one German officer say they considered the position impregnable and he wonders still how we ever got it. I suppose great victories are always clouded for some and if not would I do wish dear Wood had at least tried to see our great success.

I am proud of my people too and feel badly at losing 12 officers and 16 men killed as well as wounded.

The Corps commander said "it was a very gallant and dashing attempt and reflected great credit on the regiment".

I enclose picture given over the trenches in early hours ~~of~~ of April 17th and will try and get some. God comfort you my dear dear sisters. Love
 sending carbon copies to each so you need not affirm