

From the holdings of
Western Archives, Western University

22 April 1917

Kid
My dear dear Father

How can I express to you my deep sympathy and love in this hour of trial and sorrow. It is a blow I had begun to hope you would be spared and it seems all the harder when we think that He has passed unscathed through the campaign from YPRES (II) in April 1915, FESTUBERT May 15 LOOS Sept 15, YPRES III June 16 SOMME Sept Oct to Nov 16 and up to ARRAS April 17 without a serious wound. I would have liked him to at least ^{have} lived to see the success of 9th April for which he worked so hard and to which he contributed so much, but God knows best even if it is hard for us to comprehend his divine wisdom. I believe Wood's brigade was chosen to move forward first because General Trenchard had greater confidence in him and even after his death his plans were carried out to the last detail without a hitch and the officers knew did not know that he was no more until 2 days later.

I have written the dear brave Mother fully and now only want to tell you about the dear lads kit and effects, the sentimental portions of which I want you to get as soon as possible. I had to look over his papers and diary just in case there were some things that

required immediate attention, but found nearly everything in order as he felt he wanted to bust during the operations and had even paid his bills and servants.

I am having his bank book made up and expect his pay etc and balance will be sent to you as Dept of War in due course.

His diary I have read and completed and mailed you by registered post today.

His leather portfolio I have gone through and kept a few letters that I will answer and forward to you later, also one or two little articles that I can use such as protractor and refills for diary which is same as mine.

I am enclosing the key and have sent the portfolio to Sarah today with some things of his & mine to forward to you with his other effects. I have kept his cheque book to compare with bank book.

The kit and belongings he had with him in France [except what was actually on him at the time and which will be sent you direct by authorities] is shown on enclosed list made up by Capt Robertson and his servant Pottan. On it I have marked the articles for Sarah to forward to you at once (she has a copy) and those that she will retain until I get leave as some of them such as clothing and equipment I can use and I feel the dear boy and

22-4-17

you would want me to. I have also given one or two of his intimates a little keepsake and intend also giving one or two more (pencil lighter, cigarette case) to McTaggart & Shearer whom I know he thought a lot of and whom he would like to be especially remembered.

I also intend later on sending his photograph to Gen Thacker; Major Hammuch, Mr Sam Robertson, Ware, McDonald, McLaren, Smith, Ross, Penhale, and his four B.C.'s Ball, McTaggart, Crean & Shearer but will wait to hear from you before doing so.

In addition to his kit in France he kept surplus clothing & equipment stored with Messrs JOHN WILSON SON & COUMBE
22 CATHEDRAL YARD
EXETER.

I am writing them to send me and Sarah also an inventory and later we can arrange to send most of these things back.

I have his saddle but will try and get it back if possible although it is not his personal property.

The picture of the Church I think is ARRAS Cathedral and he got it and French Jimmie's hat for you. I was with him when he got the latter. We all wore them in the time we miled together to save our heads

from the roof and water drips.

It is ^{now} ~~some~~ ~~time~~ ~~ago~~ ~~as~~ I will get to England at first opportunity and send to you. If there is anything else on the list that you or dear Mother or the girls would like and which I have not started let Sarah know and she can send it on later.

I also enclose original signed inventory.

I want to tell you that I am taking every care of myself and not exposing myself to fire except when called to do so in the execution of my duty. My work only calls for occasional effort as you know and I never have or will be exposed as much as dear Wood. I say this so that you can reassure yourself and the dearest of best of all Mother's as much as possible.

I want to again thank you for your brave and inspiring cable which has put new heart into me and will enable me to "carry on" here with renewed strength of energy. Now that I have a command I feel I can be of some use while before I believed (I admit it now) that I would have been glad to get away from the regiment at least. I am glad now that I followed your excellent advice and stuck it out. Your grief is mine my dear Father but we must bear it and believe that it is for the best.

p. Will write about grave again. Your devoted loving son J. H.