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Reed

Sept 20-1918

Oct 12-18

Dearest Mother

Leave always upsets my diary letters and although I keep my pocket diary just the same and can write up arrears with its help yet I fear you are the loser if such a thing can be applied to the recipient of anything. I have never as well as ever!!!

This time I attempted 2 diary letters whilst away which I fear due to the lassitude of my mental powers at the seaside were not even up to my poor standard, but were written with the intent of reducing the long period between such epistles if I had wanted to write them upon my return, as a matter of fact I freely admit that I was afraid to wait 3 weeks as I doubted my ability to make myself concentrate on diary letters covering so long a period.

Before starting I want to say how sorry I was not to have sent a cable to you or dear Father for your anniversary. At that time it was impossible but I fully intended writing and am so sorry I overlooked it. Please don't think so badly of me for this apparent thoughtlessness, as it was not intended. Now to complete this diary I will give the dates of my movements.

• Tuesday 27 Aug Spent day in front with King and saw the 2nd day of battle of —.

• 28 Aug Rain - 22 reinforcements came to replace casualties. Took an 8 mile walk in P.M.

29 Aug. Rode Wahe in A.M. Wrote Father & cable Alice. Leave warrant came. Smelt in front Got 2000 frs. Cleaned up in office.

30 Aug Left at 10.00 A.M. via Harry for Anniers where I caught train to Paris at 5.30 getting in about 8.30. Went to Westminster for night

31 Aug Left at 7.20 and reached Tours at 1.00 and found Sally looking badly.

Sunday 1 Sept Left for Archachon at noon and got in at 8.30 P.M. very tired as hat.

2 Sept to 15 Sept at Archachon except for 3rd which we spent in Bordeaux.

Wrote diary letters on Friday 6th and Wed 11th.

— 11 —

Thursday 12 Sept Wet and miserable but got up and went to church in the little English chapel in "Villed'huain" where an elderly clergyman from Bordeaux preached a very good sermon "Maristha" and administered H.C. for which we prayed.

Called Mrs Brunton on way back.

The Linfrings came over after lunch and Bernadine played and sang for us extremely well. Her father is Blahaw and she is very accomplished, as

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well as pretty in spite of wearing spectacles. She is 17. We then went to their villa and had an afternoon party which Madame had arranged especially for me and at which I ate 3 doz Arcachon (small) oysters and then had to do some gymnastics on the running rail to amuse the girls and when it broke as I was upside down I took a cropper with pipe in mouth but fortunately was not hurt and did not lose any teeth so am still available for the service of my country!! Bought some reading matter on way home and a Daily Mail, and read until 10.00 in the salon which is luxurious.

Friday 13 Sept!! an unlucky day but nothing happened. Had our bath at 10.30 with Linfrings in one piece suits, most sensible I should say. Salt water wonderfully buoyant and as tide in conditions & weather also ideal. Hotel people most attentive to us as very few Canadians ever here and there is no doubt at all that we the Australians & Scotch stand highest in French opinion. American next (although they have boycotted this hotel) and English last. Took little steamer across inlet to "l'Orme" and saw the Atlantic

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breakers rolling in on a sandy sand beach, with pines graining on sands. Had some oysters and a "Kummel" and got back at 4.30, a nice little change. Bought some fresh figs (from me, as I am very fond of them) and peaches for Sally's breakfast as we only get bread (which she cannot eat) and chocolate for breakfast so supplement with our own butter, fruit & honey. No confiture can be bought any longer. Spent a quiet evening after an excellent dinner. We drank a red wine "Medoc" and liked it very much.

Saturday 14 Sept Am last day. Am back in am & water at 10.30 and had a great appetite & dinner at 12.30. Had a little shopping. A Major Trudeau of Montreal turned up a French Canadian dentist from a hospital in Paris. He had coffee with us on "Terrace" and promised to look at Sally's teeth in Paris in October. He knew the ladies quite well. Went to Communion and had Sally's "Sauce condiment" revised and then called on the Ekshams, cousins of Smiths and found them very charming and nice party. We had not met them sooner but Smiths letter only came today. He has lost 2 brothers and has a son

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at the front. They have a lunch mella and apparently are very well off. Packed interesting and much amused at Trondant who was entertaining a bunch of 30 singers from the "Midi".

Paid my bill, 900 frs which I considered very reasonable as it included a tax of 10% and all our extras at hotel. We had a pension rate of 50 frs per day.

Slept badly and got up before 6.00 on Sunday 15 Sept. Had dinner and caught Bordeaux train at 7.20

getting there at 9.00 and catching the Paris Express on which I had luckily reserved 2 seats at 11.20. Had lunch on board and travelled up with my

charming American officer ~~Mayer~~

Mayer and got home to Paris at 6.00. A

very hot day and we both felt it after the lovely air at Arcachon. We both

had to leave but had nearly a full 2 weeks and thoroughly enjoyed every

moment and thought very often of you at Harrogate at same time. I

missed one part of holiday — but as we did not get into it don't mind at all.

Also Woolly took dinner with us and we saw her. Came to island and sat in moonlight chatting until 10.00.

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Monday 16th Sept. Up about 10.00 after dinner
 a bed brought in by old Pauline who was
 delighted to see us back but worried about
 her husband as she had no word for a week.

Abe called to say good bye. A very fine
 girl but married owing to her long
 YWCA training. Lunch at Palais and
 sat in garden watching swans and had
 tea at Boulanger gardens. Bought a shirt
 and some combinations which I need
 badly but which have been only available
 in French shops since arrival of Americans.

Had dinner at Phoson Hotel and
 ran into Edith Branger & her sister
 friends of Sally's who came back to our
 hill house and stayed until after
 11.00. They cheered us back up. Heavy
 thunderstorm. Sally got a little

supper for me about 12.30 and at 1.30
 I started for station with my pack on
 my back. Was there until 3.30 and
 then when train came in, I found it
 was in barn late and I could not
 connect in Paris so came back.

Sally heard my hot nails on street & let
 me in.

Tuesday 17th Sept. Abe came in at 9.00
 for Sally & thinking I had gone. She
 expressed great delight on Sally's arrival

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and there is no doubt in my mind that Sally is the guiding light here in this work with the French people as her knowledge of French and her manner help so much, and some of the paid workers in my mind are hopeless duds who could not make good with Americans and much less with French. Lunched at a cafe on the sidewalk and caught 3.30 to Paris and stood until 8.30 when we reached Paris. Got room at Westminster and was in bus for last half at "Folie Bergere" which I always find very entertaining.

Wednesday 18th Sept at 6.30 and got seat on 8.25 to Amiens by being there 3/4 hr ahead of time. Had a quite trip up and caught the narrow gauge at — and walked last 5 kms to an old village only to find we had moved about 8 miles forward.

McDonald of 3rd Bde. Machine was there in rest and I had tea & dinner with him and he told me about poor old Bill McTaggart, Betts, Slatchard and several others. The Brigade suffered very heavily and was fighting the German artillery.

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almost gun for gun all day 2nd
of 3rd. McTaggart was talking with
McEwen who was just in front of his
battery a few minutes before he was
killed. ~~He~~ McDonald said both
the others would come through all
right. He gave me an idea of our
next move and sent me up here in
his car (he was asking C.A.H.) at 9.00
and I heard about Smad when I
arrived and amongst my mail found
a letter from him saying Mrs
Blackadder had called and was in
his hospital and that he was doing
well with left arm broken half
an hour after. Zero hour on 2nd.
I do hope he will be all right. Our
people had had some interesting
work and tried to get away but but
too much wire at first and later
no chance as they were well organized.
They had had some same kind of
experience and saw very heavy
shelling but not many casualties.
How they came off so well I don't
know - as the machine gunners &
psychics with them suffered
heavily while waiting too. Your
letters I just before you went to

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Harval made me feel you three have
 had a very trying summer and that
 you badly needed rest. Cannot
 help feeling a little worried about you
 and dear F. Dick but hope Harval will
 have helped. Will try and write F. Dick
 soon. Thank him so much for box
 of Japs sent 17 July which are a great
~~gift~~. They were making for me
 also another but for Schup and
 delicious candy from Charlie. You
 are all too good to me.

Thursday 19 Sept. Called Estelle for
 her birthday wrote Sally a few lines
 and you a short note in case I could
 not get at this before Sunday.

Went to regiment out drilling and had
 a good look at horses at new stables
 They show the hard time they have
 had to exposure as all water here
 as village a ruin with barely a
 roof left on. but good weather
 should help. Spent P.M. in office
 and had a meeting of squadron
 commanders at 4.30. Read up orders
 and communique's in evening to get in
 lunch with things and will make a
 forward reconnaissance tomorrow
 as is ready. Will close with on Sunday
 must have
 Jbb