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Recd July 10 Sunday
17 June 17
4.00 P.M.

Dearest Mother,

Here I am back again in my room after a week's absence and although 6 or 7 Canadian letters awaiting me as well as several from Sarah I will try and get a few lines off first to catch early mail and finish this evening. Am sorry I did not write during week but time was very fully taken up and only managed a few lines to Sarah. Sent the cable on Friday and hope you got it yesterday or today at least although very little reason for sending them these days as our Camp front comparatively quiet.

Have just had a bath as I only got in by train at 1.00 o'clock after a 2 mile walk under difficulties with my sore leg and in the heat of midday. Have just had a bath and am sitting in underclothes as very warm and have washed some of these slacks over under to keep us out and I fear it washed at some place however am very comfortable and well.

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Monday 11 June Did not sleep well
 partly because on account of heavy
 thunderstorms and pending kaffos I
 should have started last night and so
 been sure of being in bed by 11.00.
 Up about 5.30 and got away at 6.30
 and should have made ~~it~~ at 9.30
 according to previous trip. Also the
 rain still had and we had several
 minor breakdowns and did not get in
 until 10.30 and I had to apologise to
 M.G.S. for being late. A flight gave me
 a good breakfast before I started
 and I thought I saw it was quite cold
 and hands I think when I got in.

Was so sorry I had missed the
 opening remarks on general war
 situation which on the whole seemed
 optimistic. General Anderson was
 very nice and we discussed tactical
 matters with him very freely. The
 object of these commanding officers
 conferences is to enable them to
 take matters as they are then
 right before the Army staff and
 to get some good results and
 a better understanding is
 established. Some are for other
 Canadians there and amongst them

Kitchen of my old household battalion
 with which I engaged a room at
 Hotel ~~_____~~ where he lived for the
 week and were very comfortable and
 found rates very moderate. We had
 lunch there and afterwards the conference
 about 30 went by motor bus (one of
 the old original Dongon buses brought
 over in 1944) to ~~_____~~ where we spent
 a very interesting afternoon at the
 special market place where all sorts
 of special odds and ends are made to
 suit special conditions such as
 camouflage in trees and gale posts
 (camouflage, observation posts
 etc etc). A lot of Chinamen and girls
 are employed. They will copy the
 tree stumps standing in front of
 areas and put a message in the
 drum which is sometimes large
 enough to take a man inside.

When it is ready the original is cut
 down at night and the drum must
 be up before dawn, so that the enemy
 will not miss it. The facsimile is
 quite wonderful. Had a late tea
 and "patissier" and sat on plane
 watching working!! Dinner
 to 11.00 P.M. as we look at about

9.00, still broad daylight. Hot water
 running so left door open. Sat on
 steps again watching the promenade
 mostly military as far as males
 are concerned and stopped in about 11.00 PM

Tuesday June 12th. Up at 7.30 and had
 a bath ~~but~~ which ~~for~~ is charged and
 after café and roll/bread only
 caught bus at P.O. at 9.00 and went
 to Army School at --- about an hour
 run down the coast where about 300
 officers and NCO's are given a
 5 weeks course. Quite a proportion
 of Canadians. We witnessed a
 platoon attack according to very
 latest ideas in which the platoon is
 a complete fighting unit by itself
 with its own rifle men (who for
 this reason wore red hat covers), banders
 blue, rifle grenadiers ^{black} mustard gas
 and Lewis gunners (yellow). It was
 very well worked out and the
 ground very suitable. They were
 beautifully situated near an old
 chateau [near which is the Dickens
 chalet where he wrote the Tale of two
 Cities] and they are only a mile from
 the plage and have golf and
 tennis after work is over. Saw

Russel one of my officers and also one of my men. Our meeting place is the bulletin room in Anglo French Club where we spend the afternoon with Major General Timmins going over matters of administration and equipment. Must say these higher English commandets have no airs and graces and meet us as equals in every way. I was impressed with them on and off. Ritchie and I bought some books afterwards and dined with one of our Canadian comrades at the Paris Hotel very pleasantly.

Were rather amused at 7 or 10 o'clocks who came into the hotel room about 9.00 for a drink. The minute I saw them I said they were Americans and when they pulled out cigars I was certain they were the advance press people for the U.S. division of which we later saw quite a lot on their way over.

They will doubtless talk a lot but I'd them as long as they do their bit even if late in the day, and I believe they will play the game and in time help us a lot.

Have a very sore ankle due to

a slight burst and having had the
 backs of my old boots badly repaired
 at the back by my saddler (and cast)
 he made them by staff. Boiled it in
 hot water but will have to borrow
 patches for my boots tomorrow as I
 only brought a haversack, although I
 might have been more comfortable
 and brought old shoes down too.

Wednesday 13th June. Feet very sore
 and feet tender worse by walking.
 but did not want to give up. I caught
 bus after "call of duty" and spent
 day at Army school where we took
 lunch and later on getting back
 about 7.00. Went around the school
 in the A.M. and saw some more of the
 general instruction. There are about
 300 "boys" here under 18 who have
 been withdrawn from their units
 and are kept here until suitable.
 They are well looked after and most
 comfortable and I am sure the
 training will do them good and
 make excellent soldiers of them when
 they reach the required age.

The G.A.C.A. unit will use
 artillery vehicles with us in the
 afternoon and closed up several

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fronts and accepted some suggestions.
 We feel that the R.F. Co do not cooperate
 with us as much as they might and I
 think commenced high that more
 could be done in better "harbor". Went
 to Charlie Chaplin from 6.00 to 8.00 on
 our return and again my ladies were
 in the box but they were quite
 respectable ones this time. Had a
 bottle of burgundy at dinner. I am
 getting to quite like it at meals.
 Went up early to get my boot off
 and doctor ankle and had a
 little on my hand until Ritchie
 came up. He is a fine chap and
 dominated - the dinner I was
 about very successfully. I am
 as you know gone up - last November
 and seems to find England more to
 his liking. From what I hear
 he has going down very much in
 opinion of his officers and men
 for taking a "softly first" job
 especially as it is now known that
 he engaged it himself. However
 we are not all made alike and
 must not be hasty to judge. Ritchie
 is now 5 or 6 as Alexander is back
 again. He too has been away a lot.

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Thursday 14 June Miss not getting
 my letters. I think that I can tell you
 Richie got one from his wife and
 an early I did not tell Sarah where
 I was going as apparently quite in
 order. I believe I might have
 had her come over as there are lots
 of English women here although I
 put them all actually working at
 YMCA or Red X. I think there seems
 to be the rendezvous for the miser
 French people also quite a few Portugese.
 Lord Gordon Lumsden presided in the
 morning during which we principally
 discussed how the ever increasing
 load a soldier has to carry might be
 reduced. In hot, Resing started his
 guns, bombs and many other things
 now argument through the old
 marching order which has been
 brought. It is quite a problem
 at school went to Army School again
 for lunch tea and had lecture from
 Judge Advocate and saw a
 consultation exercise put on by
 students. They threw unloaded
 bombs to make the new keep out
 of the imagined passage.
 Back by bus about 7.30 and

Indulged in an expensive dinner at Mories Restaurant at which Rich and I had previously engaged a table Palmer of Perry (the other guests and with wine and liquors it cost us 80 frs. Strawberries are a great delicacy. Perry by the way says Duval is slated for this battalion (the old 5th in Ist. plin) and will keep an eye out for him. He is sure and will help get it soon, a very nice chap wounded 3 times.

Friday 15 June. Two representatives from G.H.P. spent the morning with us and answered many questions. They made us feel that (the higher authorities are doing far more than we thought to meet our difficulties and so reassured us a lot). There is a great shortage of fireworks due to so much being made in Germany but we are gradually capturing it. We also heard quite a lot about the experience gained as a result of Messines attack where everything seemed to have worked as well and practically without a hitch. Took train out to Machine Gun

School at ~~the~~ but were disappointed
 not to see a barrage. However very
 interesting and right on the coast I
 will have opportunity for the young
 men like to have and recreate I
 after work is over. Unfortunately
 I don't send officers (much) for that
 cause as it does not include our
 special Harkiss gun. 1 1/2 hours
 getting back in boxes as no suitable
 train. After dinner at am hotel
 the DERVAUX I drove with Ritchie to
 see a friend in view of the Canadian
 Hospital but he was out and we
 enjoyed the drive. My foot about
 sand and I will have to get my
 M.O. to look after it when I get
 back. Very hot night.

Saturday 16th June. Spent
 morning at bakery where
 I saw old Dimitry of R.C.G. who is
 in charge of one of the Canadian
 Bakers. They make beautiful
 bread but it is handled so roughly
 getting to him that it is spilt ~~by~~
 crushed and crushed. So many
 handling. He also mixed dust
 and saw Chinamen and Egyptians
 unloading ammunition and guns

The latter seem a fine crowd and
 as they work. They are now
 to purchase contract. They tell
 me they have not yet lost and
 arrangement still on the route!!!
 very hot and some C.O.'s asked if
 this was not a brewery for us to
 visit next. Had time for a hair
 cut before lunch and had a look
 at the beautiful flowers on the
 market. The British Commander
 himself concluded our conversation
 after lunch by our hours chat
 with us and said he looked at
 as a change (well deserved) for
 was more C.O.'s of whom he
 did not see as much as he wanted
 and for whom he wished he could
 do more. He is a fine fellow.

Spent for our billeting
 allowance 6 pps per day = 36 pps
 our expenses are about 150 pps
 and I must have spent 500
 as Richd. J. made the trip "on the
 cheap". Had two deck chairs
 and spent the balance of day and
 last watching the sights. Very
 hot but a little breeze then
 Had dinner and went up to get

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boat off while Ritchie tried to get a
 car and finding by getting home
 orders and bank tickets. The car
 offered to send me a car on Monday
 but I did not feel like waiting that
 until then alone at increased
 expense. Altogether it was a
 most enjoyable week and most
 agreeable change to all an
 an excellent opportunity very
 seldom afforded to meet C. & J.
 other English divisions & cars.

Sunday 17 June. Up at 5.45 but
 too early for any breakfast and
 caught train at 7.30 am which
 was where I met but Baddy with
 whom I remained until the
 party. He suddenly thinks a lot
 of his old 7th C.M.R. experiences.

The bill mean sports day
 was a great success for which
 I am glad although sorry to
 have missed. We then used my
 room ^{for 2 days} while I was away.

Bill now read some of my letters
 after getting this off as I full
 of little gilly with to have
 written during week.

Done

JH