

From the holdings of
Western Archives, Western University

Francie
5/6/15.

Dear Uncle John

It was a great pleasure for me to receive your letter of May seventeenth from Boston. I am delighted to hear that Aunt Miriam still continues to improve and I hope it won't be long before she is herself once more. Give her my best love when next you write or see her.

I sent a card acknowledging the cigarettes and I hope it reached you promptly. It was so good of you to send them and I can assure you they were enjoyed not only by myself but also by the other officers.

My Battery was relieved at Ypres on May nineteenth and marched at once down here where we came into action after a rest of two days. We are at present only a couple of miles from La Bassée which is I think the local objective of the British forces hereabouts. Our people have taken a good many of the German trenches hereabouts.

(2)

but the ground gained only amounts to a few hundred yards and the cost has been heavy. In many places the dead out in front are still unburied and the stench is horrible.

We do some interesting work each night but it is risky as the Germans do not hesitate to fire on the burying parties.

Last night we took part in an attack here. We cut the wire entanglements and blew down the parapets of the enemy and then our infantry advanced and succeeded in taking the trenches they were after with very little loss. An hour or so later the Germans countered in overwhelming force and retook the trenches they had lost. Our people were not ^{enough} numerous to properly hold them and had to retire. So it goes from day to day we occasionally make a few yards and never a day passes but many are killed. It looks to me like an elimination process and whichever side has the most men left at the end will be the ultimate victors.

The U. S. had better keep out of it all. They help us considerably with munitions etc and their army is only a drop in the bucket while, from all accounts, the efficiency of the navy is anything but high. There has been too much dignity and pride about Wilson's stand but I suppose he is out for German American votes just like the rest of them.

I am still about thirty men and as many horses short which makes my Battery quite short handed. Sam Hughes seems to have overlooked the question of re-inforcements (of which our division alone requires five thousand a month) and all the units sent over expect to keep their identity. This will have to be changed or our division will gradually cease to exist.

The weather here lately has been beautiful and as we are living in dugouts this has been very fortunate for us all. I noted it is a most welcome change for we seemed to be cursed in England and

for the first month or so over here
with the wettest kind of muddy
weather.

We are still hoping that either
the French or ourselves will soon
make a big push and really change
the existing conditions. It is rather
discouraging however waiting for it
from day to day and week to
week. With best love

your affectionate nephew
Woodman Leonard

P.S. I hope you can read the
above, many apologies for its
untidiness.

W.L.