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My Darling Mother
Reed 18 Sunday 20 Oct
As we move early tomorrow morning about
20 miles forward after retreating thru I
will write today and get right up to date
Saturday 19th let's as routine work pretty
well up to date. I borrowed a Ford from one
of the motor machine gun brigades and
accompanied by Smith went forward to
try and see how B & C Squadrons were
getting along yesterday & today. Cold &
glad to see B. W. I am wearing low
gear to where they had reported. Yesterday
night we found everything including
ammunition dumps had jumped about 10
miles forward & fortunately having car
unable to follow them up. Passed
through beautiful city of - that we
have looked at for 1 1/2 years from Vimy
ridge, Roads blown up and bridge set
but not much damage to houses
which however were stripped & looted
to the last nail by the "Sikhs" & what
could not be carried away down to
children's toys littered the streets. Pictures
on walls show bare testimony
to their vandalism. Met some other
men who have had the end of their
lives working in front of our
unfearful, recommending villages

2

20-10-72

swamps and clearing out small M.G.
nests and so saving the infantry
deploying. The Huns hardly put up
any fight but "beat it" nearly always
after firing a belt or so on M.G. &
thus were so dead and hardly any
wounded. As soon as the Huns see our
chaps trying to outflank them they go away.
Lost 2 more prisoners who had their
banners shot 1 kilometre behind them &
were caught. All main cross roads &
bridges blown up and up to a certain
line no civilians but for last 5
miles inhabitants all there, poor thin
and emaciated, mostly women children
old men with drawn faces & haggard
eyes but nearly crazy with joy. We
never got such a reception, everybody
shaking hands and all women
wanting to embrace us. Men saw
such enthusiasm as the poor souls
displayed after 50 months of Hun
domination & oppression & brutality.

Rachman who followed us with
ration train had ~~had~~ ^{coffee} at one farm
house, the old woman weeping. Both
his daughters were of course in a
family way and showed him their
condition and said they were forced

Englishman who's killed upon the last
summer. There were three other such
cases near by. Nice looking simple
girls they were too. I tried to push
on past infantry and finding a
road blocked went into a farm house
to take a country track around. We got
to house & mother daughter & 3 kids
nearly overwhelmed us as the first

British to get there the first only having
pulled out at 11.30 we got there about 1.00
The daughter said she had been beaten
for not working to take in the corn
crop for the Germans a month before
and her face showed it. She
looked positively hunted, & ill about
16. We finally located halch of 2
troops but officers all out, called
on the Bugadik and then drove car
maneuver like across country to a
wood the infantry were clearing up
saw a burning village in front.

All the mounds destroyed, every tower
blown down something in way of
a factory burnt or rendered useless.
They must pay off the full price
in years of labor & material if they
cannot in money & only
unconditional surrender will satisfy us.

20-10-17

very wet to have seen my officers but
 selected a village and will move up
 tomorrow. Had difficulty getting
 back, as we had phoned our Ford
 ahead of everything on wheels and
 with blown roads & dark fogs
 a job pulling out and besides I had
 run off my map. Have never
 spent such a day and had to pull
 out at such times, but must keep
 my promise and so have sent in my
 application for leave to take effect
 about 1st Nov!! If not granted I
 fear I shall not be here just now.
 Cheerful letter from Sally on my
 return. Bed early & slept very well.

Sunday 20th Oct Sent off holding
 party. Signed war diary to date &
 made arrangements to make balance
 of regiment. Held office after lunch
 and interviewed Woodman whom I
 am passing over, a very painful
 business but had to be done. A
 miserable wet day but hope it will
 clear for some tomorrow. Evening
 moving forward and traffic past
 here almost continuous. Heard about
 success in Flanders reaching France
 and fall of Lille, Tournai & Reims.

5. *

island of Bruges must grabbying. I
hope the Corps gets to — in a few days
which just here is only a few miles
from Belgian boundary.

Expect D Squadron back in a
few days which will be a help.

Leah made a swim for my pipe
so not smoking so many cigarettes.
Sent Moe's saddle to England as
want to keep it and will try get mine
very too.

Things look very bright and I
hope it will mean the peace we
must have before Xmas.

Want to write Father so will
close. Very much love

J.H.

P.S. Two of my wounded have since
died in hospital and hear Les
Byre & Patterson wounds seem
although not dangerous. Farns being
well.

Pirival arrived back from hospital
as a reinforcement, after being sick
over 6 months.