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Mother's Birthday.

14 Oct 1917 - 2:30 PM

Dearest Mother

We are on the move and as diary letter book packed on transport you will have to excuse this in field message book. A beautiful day after a lot of rain and I am going out for a ride with Sam at 3.00 so will only be able to start now. My window open on a lovely garden belonging to this handsome and up to date typical French country house and the noise of our farriers shoeing horses far next days March and aeroplanes above comes through as I write. The house is owned by an old maid who lives here in summer but she has a very interesting and pretty niece from Paris visiting her who talks English about as well as I talk French. She was going today but now says she will remain a few days longer. I am most comfortable after first night

14-X-17

and have a feather bed and a silk puff to cover me. The floors and stairs are scrubbed as white as a ship's deck and I almost hate to walk on them. Expected to move today but no orders yet, so maybe here another night and am glad as men & horses getting dried out and cleaned up after our soaking yesterday & Friday.

Halm's business letter of Aug 31st & yours of 17th Sept from Harval in which I last wrote. Is it not funny how some are delayed about 6 weeks and others come in from 2 to 3 weeks, but I differ with you and think they all eventually work up. Sarah's reach me in 4 days (5th after writing) from Paris and her take just about as long, so it takes us 9 or 11 days to exchange them, and will perhaps take longer from our new location when we get there. I am a little

14-10-17

worried about business changes that may have taken place the last 6 weeks but know Father would have cabled if anything important.

Monday 8th Oct. Very high wind but rode across country (now getting a little soft) with Smith to high country north of — and looked over plain to north east and picked out a number of distant places some across the German lines. Back before stables were dismissed and had a good look around.

Chipping of borses progressing very well, if I thought the mare gaining to lean on uncomfortable stables I would buy "belly clip" as less hard on borses if they have to stand out. Looked up a new room to move to next Monday to make way for Madame Saulier's baby that is coming. Hard to get a decent one now as brown very plenty but must make best of it and wait

turn anybody else out if I saw help it. Went down to  
 revolver practice in A.M. but did not do very well,  
 walking and running at target. Read Times in  
 room from 5.00 to 7.00 as plenty of good reading and  
 a heavy shower. Received of 49 lb. in for dinner back  
 after being here wounded quite seriously June 16  
 and at Vinny. a very fine chap. He played  
 bridge afterwards and put him up for night.  
 Electric light on and off due to storm. Had a  
 box of nut jacks fudge.

Tuesday 9th Oct. Windy still but milder and no  
 rain. Wrote Sarah a few lines after breakfast to  
 catch mail. Cabled Mother congratulations for 14th  
 and went for a long ride on Peggy alone who was  
 very refractory and in a lather when I brought  
 her in. Held office on a number of improperly  
 dressed and dirty men after lunch depriving

them of 2 or 3 days pay according to gravity of  
 offence. It will have a good effect. Had to give  
 Brinton a call for missing his turn of duty as  
 orderly officer at morning stables. It was not  
 like him and I believe he felt much chagrined.  
 Campbell back from working party to go on leave  
 to Paris. Radevito — after lunch and bought  
 2 shirts as I was in rags, not quite what I wanted  
 and a little too big (size 46 French) but had to have  
 them. Went in for tea but a "no palerene day" and  
 only had cup of chocolate. I will ride right home.

Letter from Father, alone at Oakwood after his  
 return and am anxious to hear if he get 6" shell  
 order also about smoke breaching for ships  
 and engines for same. So hope we can do some  
 of this work. Start letters from Mother and Alice  
 also which I was glad to get. Played bridge until  
 quite late and then packed a little parcel of lots for

Campbell to take to Sarah <sup>6</sup> to supplement her <sup>14-X-17</sup> security  
fare at Lord Byron. I have urged her to make a  
change if possible even if she has to pay a little more.

Wednesday 10th Oct. Rumors about the Corps moving  
to another front. Corrected lists for some promotions  
and submitted same and cleaned up some old  
office work in case of move. Took a cross  
country ride on Bushi after lunch but ground  
getting very soft and I fear we will soon have  
to stick to roads. Joined revolver class and  
made a possible out of one practice and 11 out of  
12 at another one walking. While in office  
afterwards wire came in saying working party  
was being returned which I take as a sign of a  
move. Whilst playing bridge after dinner an  
more order came in & I finished the game and  
then got out my operation orders which took  
until midnight and which I signed and sent

14-10-17

around to squadrons at 1.30 A.M., so that they could  
make a good start in morning. Wrote Sarah and Father  
while waiting

Thursday 11th Oct a very busy day but as I had made  
my start the night before I did not need to get up any  
earlier. Wanted to ride over to Wood's grave but was  
not able to make it and only hope we are again near  
here in the future. News from the base still seems  
good in spite of bad weather but imagine they  
want to give us a time on our old "stamping  
ground". Working party did not get in until 6.30  
PM all mud and wet out as they marched which  
makes it very hard to move in the morning. Got  
out orders for various details yet to remain and  
made arrangements for them to rejoin. Saw Town  
Major. Inspected billets and stables with  
Squadron commanders at 5.00 PM but still a

14-10-17

lot to be cleared up, as after a year more or less in one place very hard to pull out ~~and~~ of bellies on which we have put so much work and yet not overload our transport with odds and ends of furniture and junk that we have collected including a number of slaves saved from ruined towns of the rear front line. We had just arranged for electric light (from mines) in our stables & messes and each Squadron had spent about 100 francs for the lot, all of which will be lost. Sent off my billposting party in P.M. and the incoming billposting party arrived while we were at dinner, another cavalry regt I am glad to say so all our work will help them. Got back our shields for rifle shoot nicely engraved. Fortunately good weather all day. St. Cheval (paymaster) got off on leave to England and Campbell and Cackshutt to Paris. Had a fire in room to burn up last of my coal.



14-10-17

Friday 12 Oct. Up early and had last meal in     .  
Inspected all billets at 10.30 and pulled at 11.30 in fairly good shape just as the other people were coming in. We did all we could for them and they should have very comfortable while we don't know what is ahead of us and do not expect too much. Good weather until about 2.00 when the rain started and as coats all rolled we were pretty well soaked when we got to      and as I had not been able to send transport ahead it did not get in until 7.00 P.M. so no hot meal for men but no grumbles or complaints. We got a few eggs 9¢ each and had an omelette and black bread, but all horses got cover of some kind in sheds or outhouses. Billets for officers and men very fair and after all about time some of us roughed it a little once again as we were getting too expensive. Old Dean was much up in air

(his first move) and did <sup>10</sup> not dig out any of my things <sup>145X-17</sup>  
except hold all that I carry in wallets or saddle and  
left my N. P. cap and sweater coat behind (I have got  
latter since and have 2 of former) and I had to sleep in  
underclothes and put on best things in morning. I  
gave him a call and he has since bucked up a  
good deal as I have enough to think about without  
marching my servant as well as well as regiment.

Saturday 13th Oct. a year ago today started on  
leave from Somme. Started 2. M. and Squadron  
commanders reloading waggons and discarding  
a lot of junk as loads for his heavy, and some  
officers his outrageous. Apparently we are to be  
there a couple of days. Rode into Corps HQ is which have  
moved to a town near us but they know nothing  
yet. Got back just ahead of heavy rain storm.  
Several officers and details rained us during  
day and need to have a man for every horse route

again even if only for a short time. Took party  
on a transport party of our successors at  
who came in about 9.00 PM soaked and cold and  
found billets for them and gave them something  
to warm their insides. They did indeed need it.  
Had a nice chat with Mille in house here who is  
quite "charming" "Parisienne". Played bridge in  
evening in mess as was called to unit in room. Have  
to be in by 10.00 as board maid set up to lock the  
doors after us and gate also!!!

Sunday 14 Oct. Saw Mother's birthday and have thought  
after very often. Hopony cabarrned in time. Nice  
bright day but cool, typical fall weather, attended  
to returns in office and had another ball on left  
wrist (due I believe to old watch bracket) lanced and  
dressed. Inspected all burses at noon states  
which took 2 hours as all spread out through  
farms and barns of about 2 miles of village.

12

14-10-17

They are looking well and men working hard cleaning  
 saddles and chains. I must say they are a fine  
 crowd and I am proud of my command. No grumbling  
 or graving and the C.E. speaks in highest terms  
 of work we have done in front, and several nice letters  
 how come in about it which I always publish in  
 orders. Got for lunch. Went for a nice ride  
 with Smith and visited one of the largest steel  
 mills in France in next village but of course  
 could not get in. It is bombed by planes quite often  
 and has been hit several times but still goes on.  
 Most of workmen have left and live in our village.  
 May be here another night before we have as no  
 wood in yet. Sitting cold here so will sleep and  
 slip over to mess for some tea. All love  
 and best wishes dearest Walter for many many  
 happy returns. Wish I could express my feelings  
 in person  
 devotedly  
 Jbb