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Western Archives, Western University

Dearest Mother

Sunday

13 Jan 18

Such a big overdue Canadian mail
the last few days that I am almost overwhelmed
by nearly 20 Canadian letters in all
written in November and ante dating quite
a few I had already received which explains
quite a few things. A shipment must
have been held up or side tracked
somewhere, most likely due to Halifax
disaster.

Your letter of Nov 18th via Sarah a very
beautiful one which touched me very
much. You have been so unselfish about
the whole matter that I almost feel in
some ways that I should have made the
decision myself and gone and run my
chance. I have since heard that 2 senior
officers have been allowed to go and their
places held and I won't forget it and will
motivate my business (to find out) if
the question ever arises again.

You misunderstand a little as I
would not have lost my rank by
going although might have had
to in order to return to France but
could have course have kept it and
stayed in England, but that is just
what I did not want to do. However
let us hope that the sacrifice will

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my lead to something later on. all
my enclosures so interesting especially
about Alice in N.Y. as have so far heard
very little of her trip. am so glad the
Bucks were nice to her and am sure
they enjoyed it. so glad the squirrels
settled around and hope I will see them
when I get back. They must be very
tame now. Sympathized very deeply
for dear Father but at same time
greatly admire the stand he has taken
but have written him very fully. Don't
lose heart about military situation and
we must and will win or else life
would not be worth living. Your
list from Fortnum & Masons came and
sounds most delectable and will check
it off when box comes as don't think
they could have followed your order
last time. So tell you the truth I did not
expect anything and am now most
agreeably surprised by boxes from
Estelle, Elaine & Edna, not to speak
of gems in prospect. They are even
more welcome than that I know,
you are all really too good & thoughtful.
The Comyns have arrived and also
S & P and Life & date for all of which
so many thanks.

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your other 2 letters to me are Nov 18
 and Nov 26 th so you can judge how
 delayed. Sorry about Blechnier, first I
 had heard of it. Wonder if he got his
 commission. Recommended young
 SUMNER for one in R.F.C. the other day. I said
 he had his father's consent and should make
 a good officer. Glad dear Father is
 going slow about tractors and have no
 objection to what he has done and feel he
 will consult me before doing it up in a
 wholesale way. I am not afraid of the
 manufacturing but am of the selling
 unless we could get a big government
 order in either Europe or America.

Yes I think Paul and Strani had a lot
 to do with my candidature up north but my
 leave at NICE has made me a new man
 again I am thankful to say. Thank
 Father also for his letters of May-18th
 19th & 25th which were also belated
 but think now all have arrived to
 date. Am expecting Joan for dinner
 tonight so must hurry and get diary
 part of letter finished.

Mail just in now with yours of Dec
 18-19 & Father's of Dec 15 & 20 but
 won't open until after I finish. Also post
 box from Fathin's Masan.

Monday 7 Jan Still very cold and almost as much snow as we might expect in Canada about this time. Rode across country to see the deer grave but going very bad and had to come back by road which are terribly slippery as they try to keep them cleared and only sprinkle earth & ashes through the towns. Still some green on it. I don't know the name of little evergreen around the boarder but it last very well. Cemetery now full and they are starting another along side. Could not stay long as late and make who I tried at gate very restless. Imagined I felt that dear Wood knew I was there.

Back in time far end of noon stables. Nice box of Betty Brown farm also most acceptable, and map so new than at times when we always have a surfit.

Big Canadian mail already acknowledged. Mark Father and enclosed a letter to Free Press. Ranged out a series of winter lectures and distributed a list. 3 of us played bridge with "Betty" as Rackham not very keen and Strickland now transferred to H.A. We are going to miss our little game as no one else in mess very keen. Had a mess meeting after lunch and decided to pay individually for all drinks which I think will be better.

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Tuesday 8 Jan 18 Still cold but nice and off fire
 very comfortable although if we did not draw
 coal for ourselves from oil runned "Fossil" in
 forward area at night I don't know how we
 would do as rations very small. Means very
 fortunate in being in the coal belt for the
 winter. Off to stables in morning and
 walked out in P.M. as no pleasure riding.

Called in at 4th Br Hqts (they are resting
 near us) on way back and asked young
 Melles (of Sandals) who is now O.C. up to
 dinner. He seems a fine boy and has
 certainly done well and we had a nice chat
 after dinner. He wants Edward Ahmen
 although I have written; must call on
 his O.C. and get some particulars.

Strickland had dinner and stayed over
 night. He finds work hard and I think
 now appreciates how well he was treated
 with us. Worked preparing my lecture
 a little in evening. Sister Sam Sally who
 I fear is in a deep grandeur as to what to
 do about her dear Mother who although
 so unselfish to say same, yet is very
 lonely without her. It is hard for Sally
 to decide. Old Sam back from leave and
 I am very glad to have him again as
 very faithful. Had box of cake and candy
 from Sam also letter thanking me.

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to god father his son which I will be pleased to do.

Wednesday 9th Jan Coldest day yet. all water frozen in my room so I had no time dressing but did not funk my bath.

Went out to see exercise rides on Peggy and was not pleased with what I saw. So merely told King the changes I wanted made. Inspected all billets and cashboxes with M.O. Most men living with the mums again. We are trying to get along with less rations by drinking less than our allowance and as far as I can see nobody notices the difference. Bright letter from Sarah. Worked at lecture most of afternoon & evening.

Thursday 10th Jan Mild. Radiant & sun rides which today were satisfactory.

Looked over our gardens to be over which we are spreading manure and getting ready to plow about 2 acres as soon as frost goes. We are going to try and supply our unit with fresh vegetables all summer. Same inspection on

"Functions of Mammal Traps" at 2.00 PM with some success I think. Had to check several officers about slackness in regard to citizenship regulations.

Read SEP and mail in evening.

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Friday 11 Jan Made an early start and was in my chair at Corps HQs at 10.00 AM but had an easy time as only 2 cases and was finished before lunch which I took at "B" mess. The lad was only 17 years old although he enlisted at 18 and was charged with a very serious crime. I wrote a letter about the case. The other was a Welshman and could not speak or understand a word of English.

Called on The Robertsons but he was on leave. Sent Bayley a horse to ride up to camp as cycling very heavy. Back about 5.00 to find the biggest Canadian mail yet, so large that Mr H. S. Moggart could not carry it all so had to leave some for tomorrow. Had a pleasant evening reading it. Letter from Sarah was one of my letters back from Paris leave.

Saturday 12 Jan Milder roads not so slippery so rode up to — and inspected belts and cellars of our forward parties all of which I found very comfortable. They have done wonders out of the ruins nearly every cellar had a stove of some sort! Some of men have unearthed beds of the poor miners who once lived there and even their mirrors and pictures.

Had to furnish a couple of men for absence and missing their shift. New drafts who get loose as at depot in England, so gave them each 14 days to show them that they were here for business and to do as much as they can to win the war instead of as little. They should have had a saint's portion and will if ever up again. Found 15 mile ride home by long ^{and} was dead tired when I got in as near to 40 mile trip than 35. Box of candy from Elaine which I am now enjoying, also 2 parcels from dear little Belle which I have not yet opened. Wrote Sarah a few lines and turned in.

Sunday 13th Jan Slept late and did not expect city breakfast at 9.30 but got some. Weather, new socks just sent me down to ground. Bright sunny, so Smith & I rode to ~~the~~ and got back just in time to have a look around stables. Horses seem to be holding their flesh very well. Worked in office until 3.30 and then went to room, 1/2 mile this but only got well started when a message came to say 2 officers in Mess to see me, and went over found McMillan and Evans. Later I had asked over for tea and we had a nice game of bridge after. Truly a fine modest boy and devoted to

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his dear Walter. He has not joined his Ben yet. Took him up to my room and showed him some letters. He said Elaine had sent him such a nice box of candy.

Walked home, although I told him he must learn to ride and then I could send a horse for him. Was dead tired again for some reason and had not energy to write so turned in.

Monday 14 Jan. Dried a fall of snow again but soft so riding very bad. Walked to — and then spent an hour at stables looking over lucky horse. We had a mangy mare and very hard to diagnose but nothing much I think so for men if is very hard to keep horses as clean as I would like and certainly the men in work very hard all day. Rackham gave a very good lecture on "economy" at 2.00 P.M. and I added a few words. We are now arranging to sell soldier out of old bulby beef ties, and have been sending hundreds of tons of drugging back to England for last six months.

Have nearly cut out the cigarettes thanks to Imperial Machine and am going to try to but don't like changing from cigarettes to tobacco in another country. All

Love

John