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Dearest Mother

18 Oct 18

Wrote you last night acknowledging all  
dear letters and as seems to have a little  
respite although "standing to" will try and  
continue the thread of my diary letters  
taking a few rasms as I do so.

Monday 17 Oct Lt Martin, an ex Sgt of this  
regiment now with 3 war decorations took  
dinner with us last night. We shared letters from  
sally and a mass of post notes from  
certain farmers. Bulgaria's surrender cutting  
off Turkey should be a great factor as well  
landing near at night. Then heard over my  
tent but sounded "very tired" and had come  
along way, merely harassing for from  
a H.V. miles away. At breakfast half a  
dozen more near my camp one getting 2  
of my heavy draft horses and Cpl McFarlin  
in arms. Will keep horses in their holes  
hygiene by day as well as at night.

Loafed about most of day but would have  
felt better if I had taken a ride, but  
interested in papers of which I have an  
accumulation. Read some sally. Rain  
and no E.A. Order to stand to at 6:00 AM.

Tuesday 8 Oct British attack on — our  
own right going well but as our troops  
cannot consolidate before dark, stand to  
prepared 24 hours. Days cold and have  
barboured our cases. British warm as

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mine in England and I don't want to get it  
 over a new of possible leave. Arriving  
 I in myself in Rochham's absence as the  
 start of officers. Taylor's D.S.O. for his  
 gallant attack at Amiens on 25 German  
 with 4 men came through and we are  
 very well pleased. Gave him a bit of ribbon  
 I had to spare. He goes on leave tomorrow  
 with great glee. Walked to — wood and studied  
 — from the hill as expected to be operating  
 there tomorrow. Felt better for walk and took  
 stables on my return. One shell last night  
 fell half in hole in which 2 horses were  
 lying down, but they were not touched. If  
 we had not dug them in I am sure we  
 would have had many casualties. Had a  
 hour out after lunch and rode over to 3rd  
 British Cavalry Bde 16th Lancers, 4th Hussars  
 & 5th Lancers and made very very pleasant  
 call with Mr. Evans & said these horses,  
 a very fine lot and a treat to see them. Told  
 Mr. Evans my plans and he is to look after  
 Wabe & Peggy of Dgo. Bernard in fardinner  
 Wilson will know how to arrange fare  
 overture. T. from took dinner with us last  
 night told us some of his experiences.  
 He has killed many Germans with his own  
 hands. Sally went with a headache  
 slept well.

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Wednesday 9th Oct. Stood up at 8.00 AM, sent two  
 patrols to get in touch with infantry under  
 Fyfe & Brinton. Sent in reports about things  
 death, and appreciated the situation and our  
 task today with my officers on the map.  
 Gen Brutnell arrived about 10.00 and advised  
 that our chance had come as the river was leading  
 it across — canal. He gave me 2 objectives  
 (high ground in front of infantry) and as much  
 information as he had (I always now verify  
 such information myself before acting)  
 Regt was ready in 15 minutes and we moved  
 forward in open formation — Inf Bde Hqs,  
 Gen Tremblay (an expert) and got the latest  
 situation from him and arranged to work over  
 his front. Left Barnes there to water and went  
 over bridge (not blown) to — Gen Hqs with  
 Lamson (acting as adjutant) and squadron  
 commanders, verified the situation and  
 deciding to act at once, made my plans and  
 ordered "B" under the river to 1st objective  
 about 2 miles away, found a house for my  
 Hqs and put up my lance & flag in front  
 of it. At the bridge a dozen engineers  
 were lying dead bayoneted (shot  
 one with the leads to blow the bridge in his  
 hand and the charge was lying near where  
 our engineers had remained. It was  
 very quiet work on part of our infantry.

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as canal quite deep and wide. They had blown  
all the other big bridges. Enemy air craft over  
after and bullets spattering like of beams and  
panels road. Matheson got one through shirt  
of his jacket. About noon I got 1st message  
from the Emen saying he had reached his  
objective the high ground with slight loss.

Meanwhile H & C had come up to me and held

them in support later sending one troop to  
fill a gap in the Emen's line. Kept in touch  
with Thornblay by telephone and co-operated  
as closely as I could with infantry sending  
out several special patrols to clear up panels  
for them, one of which under Fyfe locating  
a M. G. nest by riding up to it and unfortunately  
only lost their horses. The Emen worked

splendidly. Sgt Prudnick in charge of one

advance patrol sent as a screen ahead had  
both his front men knocked out (one killed  
the other still missing) by a M. G. behind who

galloped up to us. That 2 of the gunners  
with his revolver silenced the gun &

let his patrol clear his trap get into  
position. Sgt Burnett got to a point

about a mile or more in front and held  
and held it all day under 100 yds of a

M. G. nest of 10 guns, getting rounds for his  
batteries and getting them out when infantry  
came up at night.

19-10-19

Brunell came up about 4.30 but not before  
 McEwen was counterattacked, but fortunately  
 Lewis was able to get help to him in time. We arranged  
 to relieve us with cyclists & MG's and relief  
 was completed and we pulled out about 7.30  
 after McEwen gave a splendid report on the  
 whole situation. Casualties light about 12  
 men & 25 horses when you consider that 1  
 squadron & 1 troop seized & held a position  
 about 2500 yds ahead with a frontage of  
 about 4000 yds for 6 1/2 hours & handed it over  
 to relieving troops <sup>capturing 2 MG's & spearing 20 horses</sup> after dark. I'll send a  
 copy of my report to you tomorrow. I had  
 selected & forwarded Linnac as I came up  
 and when we got there found 2 echelons  
 parage and rations under old Russell's ready.

Min all delighted, especially H. Gurners  
 who had a great day bagging away. Some great  
 yarns told of NO prisoners taken. Had a  
 cold meal, checked up casualties, made  
 plans for tomorrow & turned in. It is  
 the best piece of real cavalry work we have  
 ever done & stands greatly to McEwen's credit.  
 Heard our 4th "D" Squadron had reached —  
 on way up & arranged to meet them. Hard day  
 on horses as just black when we got in  
 and impossible to locate all wanted  
 ones until morning, however very  
 satisfactory infantry, most appreciative.

12-11-19

Thursday 10 Oct. stood to at 6.00 ready to saddle up.  
 Spencer acting as liaison officer with Bde  
 came on his motor cycle and we moved up to  
 Chateau — at 8.00 where the General again  
 gave me objectives and a free hand, I made plans  
 left regiment and with Squadron commanders  
 & patrols went forward and established a P.  
 on high ground we had captured yesterday, where  
 I stayed myself all day & from which later I  
 got a telephone and could see our first  
 objective and all the valley below. My own  
 patrols kept me well informed and could  
 see the infantry attacking at 1.00 PM & getting  
 knocked out in a way I have never seen it  
 before. Made my arrangements to jump off at  
 2.40 and gave Sharpe (commanding A) and  
 Mathison (C) their orders, ordered regiment  
 up B in close support and panned out the  
 ground to them. The enemy volunteered to  
 recon water across bed we had to cross, but  
 and finding it impossible I had to alter  
 plans a little and attack from a flank.  
 Meanwhile our infantry held up by M.C. fire  
 from village — on left had to fall back to  
 river bed. Brumell came up in time to  
 see our 1st patrol & troop jump off at 2.00  
 followed by the others at intervals. It was  
 a fine sight and we could see every man  
 all the time even the dead and wounded as

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They were knocked over or fell off their horses and the horses too. One sergeant shot through thigh lay in middle of a ploughed field and his horse after galloping a few yds turned & came back and stood over him until he too was done in. The M.C. was very heavy and we could see the bullets hitting the ground all around horses as they galloped on.

Practically all horses of our Squadron were done in and half of C but they and it was impossible to reach objective but they got half way mounted on foot and held the position in dark and allowed infantry from rear to get up to them. Lt Hocken was shot through head & killed instantly leading 1st troop. Old SSN Atkins was shot through head just as he reached the road we held & 3 others were killed & about 25 wounded and 69 horses in all lost. It was a very gallant attempt and not thrown away as it encouraged infantry and helped them get up.

We inflicted 40 man casualties on enemy getting one party of 20 to a man with a H.C. which held to fire until they were a few in front of it. As soon as I saw how things were going I sent a message to stop any more going over & succeeded in catching up half of C & all B.

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I had 4 motor cyclists with me and fearing my  
 lads would try for objective on foot. I asked for  
 volunteers and sent 2 of them around about way  
 with a message to make no further attempt  
 but to defend themselves until night which  
 they did right gallantly and with very  
 few war casualties. I waited until they  
 all got out about 7:30 after handing over to  
 our infantry sent Bertram in with a stretcher  
 party and got back to camp about 9:00 PM  
 to again hear the various stories & make  
 up casualties. Loss of bases as well as men  
 very deplorable and cripples us badly for  
 present. We now have about 67 men all  
 have casualties including 6 officers & 155 bases.

Was as successful an operation but it  
 helped and was carried out with great  
 dash. Feel young Hawkins loss very deeply  
 as a very promising lad liked and will  
 thought of by all. Must try get his body out  
 & buried! No mail but a hot meal at least  
 and turned in at midnight in my clothes  
 again. D Squadron at — two days  
 march away. Perhaps they will be in  
 time for the show. We need them. No  
 mail or papers or news. We are  
 at an old German ammo dump all kinds  
 of shells lying about but some fair dumps.  
 Rain during night & no shell or bombing.



19-10-18

Friday 11 Oct. Up at 4.00 and at Chateau — with  
 regiment at 6.05 passing a lot of dead artillery  
 bases along canal which was heavily shelled  
 during night. Found zero at 9.00 so we could  
 have had 3 bars longer. (Off loaded and  
 scattered bases). Sat showering in General's car  
 even with a BW I borrowed from the chauffeur.  
 Was fully a line. General asked me to  
 breakfast and was glad of a 2nd one. Got  
 my orders about 8.30, explained them to all  
 officers, arranged to leave regiment when it  
 was and got to P. Row fort as at least 50  
 60 pounds in the vicinity and when they  
 appeared at 9.00 dir terrific and  
 brought down quite a heavy retaliation  
 as we went up. Was glad we were on foot.  
 Was scattered M.O. went with me. Found a  
 heavy barrage on our O.P. and as telephone wires  
 cut decided to wait until it subsided so  
 ordered everybody had about 300 until it lifted  
 about noon.

Walked down to man — — read with M.O.  
 to see meaning as my wire cut and never  
 saw so many walking wounded as from  
 British side on our right. M.O. did up  
 several barons and attended to our fox had  
 but just heard us. Enemy came attached  
 with tanks and British temporarily fell back  
 but later recovered lost ground.

General sent Walker up to confer with me and  
 he was at 0. P. on inspection and we sized up  
 situation and decided no change and about  
 2.00 as a result were ordered to return to barracks.  
 Only 3 barges today. Sent squadrons in  
 independently and rode back along through  
 beautiful city of — so sadly discolored &  
 it made my blood boil to think that 3 weeks  
 ago not a barge had been damaged. Rain  
 all day had made things pretty miserable. But  
 — Scotch Steer coming up to relieve us, a  
 very fine body of men in great spirits.

Crane canal and foulness in city & beautiful  
 stone bridge blown. Had 2 hours daylight with  
 barges which was sadly needed as 1st time  
 in 3 days, also a good hot meal soon very  
 welcome run as all pretty wet & no change.

Had meal at last & 3 Tins all together. What  
 a belly after others lined in but slept badly  
 and am again lousy. I seem to attract them  
 every time !!! Sent cable on Thursday but  
 omitted your birthday greetings, much to my  
 regret next day as had thought of it day  
 before.

Saturday 12 Oct Welcome orders to "stand  
 down" and resumed old routine and stirred  
 up stables to move barges getting all  
 attention possible. Quite a lot with  
 minor wounds. A barge seems to be able

to carry on with a M. G. bullet almost anywhere  
 as long as it does not touch a horse or leg or vital  
 but shell wounds make horrible messes of  
 the poor animals. Sent out 2 lumberjacks  
 bodies of killed and to salvage what saddle  
 they could and they got 4 bodies and ~~with~~  
 what we buried with one we recovered  
 yesterday found the well full military honors  
 at 4:30 PM. an A. C. padre reading the Latin  
 orime but an am all the same in the  
 eyes of the almighty. D Squadron (all  
 R.N.W.M.P.) arrived about and this was  
 their first parade!!! I put them in a buckfield  
 near by and found them as well disciplined  
 few looking lot of big men. All officers  
 old policemen. Horses green and strange  
 to say to horses which means ticks &  
 ticks as always were troublesome. Got  
 orders to move back to old camp but as  
 horses not in and D just arrived sent  
 James to General and put it off until  
 morning. Regimental stables at noon.  
 Sellers for tally, what I left better on  
 a horse at Dean had secured and  
 on Sunday 13th Oct had a bath in canvas  
 most bath & changed clothes hoping to  
 shake my "class friends". Then to call on  
 my presenter compass which I left  
 Canada with and my big knife

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That Ball gave me were stolen off my belt in  
 dugout. I felt very badly as they were  
 old well used friends but will get over  
 it in time I suppose. I put up with old man  
 as he is not medically fit for hoof duty  
 and should have his Calgary turned  
 and sent to a labor unit and away  
 from his friends if I turned his back.

Moved at 10:00 and arrived here before noon  
 and got some only half demolished houses.  
 Mother of wounded was Town Major. Got  
 all officers & 5 messes in an old Chateau.  
 Shift & Ruckham back so I am  
 relieved of doing duty as I am as well. Will  
 now let some officers who can't see  
 get away. Had conference of Squadron  
 Commanders in evening and decided on  
 16 recommendations for "immediate awards"  
 and wrote them out. Slept badly, found  
 in same room. No mail.

Monday 14th Mother's birthday and felt  
 badly about cable. Had a real ball in my  
 canvas tub. Arranged baths for mess  
 but at last moment they failed as pump  
 broken. They need them!! over 3 weeks.

Had horses grazed and took upon stables  
 and looked over D horses. Lovely bright  
 day. Canadian mail at last. Made  
 Ruckham acting adjutant and sent Ramsay

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back to remnants of his squadron. He has helped me a great deal. Put me away to bury his son in Paris and show brigade in his absence. Worked with Berleau at recommendations and got them off in afternoon. General Lepout late of 6th Div and now with British killed by a sniper while out on a patrol. A great loss to British army as a worker from words of the kind they (the English) need. A PM called to see need 2 squadron which are to do his work that I have been doing in past. Hear P. new of Wales over on the Curry's staff. Told Smith my plans about Canadian leave and discussed officers promotions with him. Rec Canadian mail and several letters from Sally. Work here at some length for 1st time in many days.

~~Wednesday~~ <sup>Thursday</sup> 13 Oct Got back for my at last and saw that everybody went. Grazed horses in P.M. Worked all day at reports on operations and war diary which this month will be quite a volume & needs a lot of supervision under such circumstances but Berleau and my men and will do well I am sure. An AC D Sgt Major from Newfoundland & my wife personally.

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Heard four Strabergie was killed leading his regiment at — 2 days ago. Gellman called to see about D Squadron and is arranging 2 weeks lecture for them on "Traffic Control"!! We think it a great joke. Worked at reports in afternoon.

Wednesday 16th lect. Slept well and as the village is not much knocked about we have a fair house and I have a nice room. Up sharply after 7.00 and inspected remnants of regiment and D Squadron at 9.30 and was well pleased as a few all dirt and mud and no daylight to clean things they turned out pretty well.

Gave them a few movements to warm up horses. Got off report on operations of 9th. Hit and Laddery inspection and a complete list of shortages made up. Discussed Woodman for promotion with Smith & McEwen. Inspected 2 M stores of "D" Squadron. Write letter applying for Canadian leave but am holding it a few days in case of further operations before bad weather. Give Canadian mail again which I have acknowledged. Met miserable. Read after dinner.

Thursday 17th lect. Jennings had lunch with Gellman and saw Gen Farmer

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18-10-18

Discussed NCO promotions with squadron commanders to complete vacancies, about 25 in all and selected our men regardless of seniority. Took stables & inspected transport after lunch. D Squadron a disgrace but they don't know our ways yet. Wrote Messrs Hocking & King about their dead sons. Gen Britnell back and resumes command of brigade. Interimmed and had a talk with the 25 NCO's I intend to promote. Heard them had been drummed out of — and about 8.00 orders to be ready for active operations at short notice. Before morning B & C squadrons left far front and were to jump off at dawn. Have not heard from them yet. Wrote your & Sarah. Better from Ferris & wife him.

Friday 18th Gen Curry & H R H Price of Wales arrived at 9.00 and inspected D Squadron. He seems a very nice quiet boy & was quite impressed. It went off very well. D Squadron wanted to — for instruction in traffic control!! Cleared up war diary with Berlean who is taking right hold of things. Wrote this after lunch went for a walk, played bridge after dinner and am now finishing 10.00 PM. Love Bob.