

W. D. N.
16.12.14.

Dearest Mother

It is just a week since I wrote last but have been rushed almost off my feet lately and have not had any time for correspondence.

I went up to London last Thursday night but was called back by wire the next day so did not have much time to myself. The re-organization which had been pending for some time was put through without warning and had to be carried out at once. Really all I did in London was to get a few Xmas cards and send them to some of the friends. I intended getting some little gifts for you all but had to leave without accomplishing this and will have to ask you to take the will for the deed.

I now have command of the 12th Battery which forms a part of the Third Field Artillery Brigade.

Please note this in sending future letters. I have McEwen as Captain with Leandrett and McLoggert as lieutenants and hope to get Magam also so have all my own officers except the last mentioned and Guntus. Harry has command of a depot Battery in the Second Brigade.

The section which Leandrett brought with him is composed entirely of London men and is in excellent shape and well housed. My other section came originally from Kingston and I shall have to cast at least thirty of the horses as they are a very poor lot indeed and a long way from being fit for service. The men seem willing enough but I have as yet had no chance to judge of their capabilities. I have still to organize my headquarters and get horses for them which will not be any too easy I fear. However I have my own Battery once more

and will do all I can to get it into shape as soon as possible. It will naturally take some little time to make a smoothly running Battery but it can and will be accomplished. The only thing I am afraid of now is that we will not be ready for service as soon as the other three Batteries in the Brigade which have remained as they were before except for losing a section each.

It makes me very wrathful indeed to think that all this work and worry could have been avoided had Sam Hughes left us alone in the first instance. Had he done so the London Battery would have been second to none by now I am sure.

I was to have met Kyle in London but had to call it off on account of coming back to camp in such a hurry. However I still hope to be able to see a little something

of him before very long if it can possibly be arranged.

The weather here is much the same as butchets and we get rain regularly every day. I have moved my camp and we are enjoying a brief respite from the mud but our present ground will be cut up as badly as the other before very long. I am keeping the horses in a wood about half a mile from the tents so as to protect them somewhat from the wind and rain. This however makes a lot of journeying to and fro and wastes much time. The days are so frightfully short that we do not seem to get very much done. It is not really light until towards eight o'clock and by five in the afternoon it is quite dark.

Am wondering when the second contingent will sail but suppose it will hardly be before the new year. Tell

ahie I called up Trixie last week and would have gone out to Richmond for tea had it not been for my hurried return.

I am greatly rushed without accomplishing very much and you can readily understand how unsatisfactory it feels to be in that state. Today we had a lecture from a Colonel of Royal Horse Artillery who was wounded in the neck a month or so ago. It was most interesting and he gave us a lot of valuable pointers. It seems that the British Army at Mons was most dishonourably defeated and only escaped being annihilated or being forced to surrender on account of the heroic behaviour of all ranks.

The French armies that were to have cooperated on either flank did not put in their promised appearance and at the time the British force was practically encircled. Things

are going much better now and the French seem to have recovered from the fear of the Germans which apparently beset them at first and are now fighting very bravely all along the line.

Please excuse the penneil but the ink in my pen ran out and I find my bottle is also empty. My writing too is worse than usual and I must ask forgiveness but it is getting very late and I am tired.

Best love to all and every good wish for Christmas and the coming year
 your devoted son
 Ward