



T.S.S. "MONTEZUMA."

West Down north
Salisbury Plain

England

30. Oct. 1914.

Dearest mother

I shall endeavor to answer the two dear letters received from you since arriving here, one written on Thanksgiving Day and the other a few days later.

There has been very little worth recording going on here. On Wednesday we were reviewed by General Alderson who commands the division and by General Smith the Inspector of Artillery. In so much as we are still short the greater part of our equipment the inspection was pretty much of a farce as far as we were concerned. Most of our horses had to be led and we only had a very few wagons out.

Yesterday evening I motored to Salisbury and had dinner at the White Hart Inn, quite a famous hostelry and made some purchases in the way of some small necessaries. We had an accident on the way there - our car being hit by a motor lorry and pretty well smashed up. No one was hurt however and the only



discomfort incurred was a walk of about two miles to the town. The drive home was beautiful along perfect roads by moonlight and evidently a very pretty country as we skirted the downs instead of coming across them. It did not rain at all yesterday (for a wonder) but today it is at it again. The wet does not matter so much for officers and men but it is hard on the horses and the continued standing in mud will eventually ruin their feet.

They are building huts at another camp some distance from this and we are to move there when they are completed, a matter of about a month. There does not seem to be any likelihood of any part of the Canadian Contingent getting to the front until after Xmas. We are, of course, told nothing and I am only judging by what ~~was~~ we hear.

I was sorry not to have posted letters at base but our orders were very



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plan and it was up to the Captain of the ship and myself to see that they were carried out.

Yesterday I furnished a mounted patrol for the village of Tilshead a few miles from here and rode down with them to take a look at it. Such a quaint old-fashioned place with houses right on the street, thatched roofs and brick walls separating the different properties. There are three public houses there and the patrol spends the evening there in case of any trouble between the troops and the villagers. On my way home I met Lawyer Welles of London and felt like asking if he heard regularly from both his families but refrained, perhaps wisely.

Frank Reid is here but I have not seen him. Gossip has it that his present appointment is chief inspector of latrines for all camps. The Canadians are grouped into four camps - Bustard,

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Pond Farm, West Down South, and West Down North which latter is ours. The King and Queen are expected down on Tuesday next which will mean another review or something of the sort. Tomorrow after divine service the Colonel and I are going to procure a motor car and spend some hours touring about. This is of course provided it is not raining. It seems to rain every day and a rainbow instead of meaning a cessation as it does with us seems to be only a promise of some more wet.

The news from the front is not specially encouraging although the Allies at present seem to have foiled the German attempt to get a base at Calais for the invasion of England. I was talking to a medical man the other day who had just returned from the front and he states that fully two thirds of the wounds are from shrapnel fire which goes to show what an important part artillery is



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playing. I feel that the war has only started and that the allies have no easy job ahead of them to bring Germany to her knees.

I hope Mary Labatt will be very happy in her choice. He seems a very nice chap from the little I have seen of him. I will write at first opportunity as I have always been very fond of Mary though latterly have seen little or nothing of her somewhat to my regret.

Major Donald our medical officer knew the Hunters in Victoria. There was some sort of a scandal there on account of the suicide of one of the doctors and that was apparently why Hunter threw up the job some time ago. I was glad to get the clipping you enclosed and return same for scrap book also a couple of snap shots taken on shipboard, and a menu card of our mess dinner last night. Hope you received letters posted at Plymouth



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with quite a few odds and ends enclosed.

I am glad that Ibb and your two sons in law are all drilling though hope it will not be necessary for all to come. Canada's next contingent should be composed of real Canadians not not 60 or seventy per cent Old Country people as this one is. Also the officers should be chosen on ability and not haphazard or by pull as was the case with our lot.

No, neither Kitty nor Lily specially popular but probably they are satisfied with one another which, after all, is the main thing. Hurgubard a very nice polite chap but the word "genial" hardly applicable in his case and I think Elaine would agree with me. Please write her and ask how much she paid for puttees and drawers she bought for me and get Ibb to pay her for them.

It is nice that Ibb was able to get a grey squirrel but he won't mate with



the black one if the latter still in the grounds. I see Alan McEwen occasionally as his lines are not far away from ours. Will give him a jog about writing oftener when opportunity presents itself. There were three photos altogether which should have come, one you have and the other two were groups respectively of the officers of the D.A.C., and of R.M.C. ex cadets.

I shall get Jack Labatt's address from Bert Labatt and if in the vicinity of Liverpool will make a point of looking him up. He certainly has had a hard time of it as just about a year now since the accident.

I got rid of my cold on shipboard and am very well now except that fingers are somewhat swollen. Seems to be a sort of chilblain due to the damp weather. Others are affected the same way but nothing to speak of or bother about except most irritating at times.



I am letting a number of my men go on leave every week and am trying to arrange so that each man will have had a brief holiday between now and Christmas. My man Shirley went to Exeter, his home, today and is to make some small purchases for me. Have not yet decided when I will go to London but intend getting away before very long. We are sending each of the officers of the Montezuma a silver match case with suitable inscription. They came up by post today and are very neat and appropriate. Just a little memento of the trip as all so very nice and kind to us.

I am writing this by candle light as there is at present quite a shortage of coal oil. If the weather gets much colder will invest in a coal oil stove. Some have them already and they warm a tent up nicely when getting up in the morning and when turning in at night. Will



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draw this to a close now as there does not seem to be anything of interest to write about further. Tell Bob I duly received his of October sixteenth and will answer it shortly.

Best love to all

Your devoted son,

Wood.