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Book No. XII

4 March 1917
4.00 P.M.

Dearest Mother

am just in from a nice ride with
strawberry on a bright sunny afternoon
even if a little cold and found my fire
which I have had started smoking so had
to run the room before I could get down to
write. As you will see I am starting my
12th diary letter book and in another few
months I will be away from Canada two
years. It seems a long time!! I think I have
already acknowledge the letters that have come
this week as I find my letter folder quite
empty, except for Father's business letter
of 5th Feb and one from Sueena which
came this week. I fear that our Canadian
mails are going to be more irregular and
that perhaps we may lose some although
I must say that up to date I think probably
everything has virtually come to hand.

English letters are getting over more
regularly. I forgot to thank you for
Churches and Report, applied mechanics
and two London newspapers as well
as one from Lyuba with Isabelle picture.
What a fine boy she has!!

Another wonderful week as far as
you are concerned although our infants
have a constant interest in the radio
and the Germans are making almost

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daily. Our men are still doing field line work. Although it seems about time we got them back to do a little training, evidently they have not very much thought of using it.

Monday 26th February. Spring in the air today and farmers already starting with their ploughing. Rode off towards the front from 10:00 until lunch time and enjoyed it very much. General Busby in for lunch with us, the first meal has taken since leaving the Regiment. He is a very nice chap & every way. Three letters from Sarah today but nothing from Canada although some enclosed from Wood which are always interesting. Had a discussion about English hockey in the evening and decided it would be good here if we could get the sticks without too much delay. Read Saturday Evening Post until midnight. I always find some good stories in it.

Tuesday 27th Feb. Intended going up in front but could not get a car so went for a long walk instead in the morning and for a ride with straw in the afternoon which I quite enjoyed. Not a very pleasant day.

4 March

Wednesday 28th Feb. James' birthday!
 Fear my letter will not reach her in time.
 Rode up to ~~the~~ with the crew where we
 left our horses and walked through the dust
 heap that was once a town and climbed a
 spur that overlooks the enemies front line
 and melted two of our own regimental
 observation posts situated thereon.

Unfortunately it was not very clear so
 will have to go up again. Left crew here
 in an old cellar. This whole country was
 fought over 12 months ago by the F. Trench
 and I saw several skeletons and other
 bones as it is in full view and has
 never been cleaned up. They are
 bleached and white. I happened to kick
 an old German boot and the bones of
 the foot fell out!!!. We then sent our
 horses around behind and pushed on to
 Woods village, less knocked about, and
 found him and Robertson in. They
 gave us some biscuits and cheese and a
 nice piece of cake and we remained until
 5.00 P.M. and then rode back. Missed my
 train with Barber. Straw motored
 down to the coast and spent the night
 with the R.C.D.'s. Letter from Sarah and
 magazines and papers from Canada
 left will arrive the whole day in
 the open air.

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4 March

Thursday 1st March came in like a bomb
so I suppose we will pay up for it later
on. I lectured officers on a scheme for
tomorrow (officers only as no men available)
and then took my usual 4 mile walk
Rode into.

— with our M.O. in
afternoon to try and get a little present for
both for Sarah but was unsuccessful
as shops don't keep very much as
every few weeks the town is shelled.

Had tea and some nice "patisserie"
and bought myself a cane, and a
few pounds of very nice raisins at
2 pence a pound (40¢) Is that high?
Saw back at night finding roads
very bad as a result of the thaw—and
heavy traffic.

Friday 2nd March. Foggy and wet
but worked as usual studying a few
French verbs as I went along.
Turned quite cold after lunch. Had all
the officers out on a scheme and quite
enjoyed the ride coming home with
me over a beautiful piece of
country just in time for old
Barber at 6.0 P.M.

Saturday 3rd March Saw no one
up to the benches with Lawson to
what was very there. I took my
usual walk but went about 8 miles

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and was not back in time for ^{4 March} stables
The horses are looking fairly well
in spite of the cold weather we have had.
Inspected all our transport after lunch
and must say they looked very well indeed
with all steel wash on harness shining,
and waggons washed and clean.
Rode out to ~~the~~ far end line about 2
miles and had tea with the M.O. at a
little Baker shop where we had a home-
made pie!! Bath in time for Barber
at 6.00 and wrote to Mrs Charles Melville
and school at night and then read
until 1.30 A.M.

Sunday 4th March - usual hot bath in
my canvas tub and a change. Saw
weaving, walking but Mother & Alice's sacks
and sawing. Some lighter ones have
been sent for the summer. Held a
court of inquiry all morning on death
of a young French woman whose
trough was run over by a lorry
and who died as a result. There was
a second lorry (a dud) being towed
and she tried to pass between them
carrying 2 pails of water on a yoke
and did not see the cable. Fair
rows at the front!! I was very
sad but none to blame but
herself. Still a few French

11-14-17

Stranberg is naturally very glad to get back to his old regiment. Col Keller who has had it is going to take over the depot in England and I don't just know what they are going to do with Douglas Young. But I'll tell you all I know later on. There has been a rumor about this change since I came back from leave but nothing more. This is the first change and as I have been assured that I would get this command I am not worrying.

I think I have acknowledge your letter about poor Aunt Minnie in my letter to Alice this week and as Salu's forward same day to Hood they are not by me at present. I know where Jack is but there seems to be so little that one can say. It must have been for her a happy relief from suffering.

I had a nice letter from Ivan and also another from Joseph, the farmer is still in England and I will try and keep in touch with him. I have never heard from Edward and really do not know where he is or what unit he is with, or I might look him up if opportunity occurred.

I see the name Lucas in list of killed today, making I think the