

**ROUGH DRAFT**

**The Letters Home of Graham Adam  
to his Parents  
1910, 1915-1917**

Graham Edward Adam was born on 31 May 1896 in Rangoon, Burma, the eldest son of James Graham Adam and Beatrice Eleanor Man. Graham died on 6 November 1917 aged 21. He was lost without a trace during the defence of Ypres Salient, Belgium in World War One and was memorialized at Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Viaanderen, Belgium. (Panel Number 24-28-30).

We are fortunate that his family kept the letters that Graham sent home. The first three letters are from the Western Canada College, after that the letters are written from a number of camps that Graham was stationed at, both in Canada and England, with the last series coming from the trenches in France.

Graham's father, James Adam, wrote in his memoirs about the loss of his son as follows:

We used to hear regularly from Graham from "somewhere in France". He used to write very amusingly and pluckily. He was wounded in the face and was sent to the base hospital, where he was marked "P.B." which meant "Permanent Base". We were very relieved at this as it meant he would never return to the front line. Alas, about this time the 'Passchendale offensive' took place and every available man was sent up. On Nov. 6th, 1917 we got a telegram to say private Graham Adam of the 36th Battalion (he had been drafted from the 56th) was missing. We made every possible enquiry through Hubert Man and others but never heard any trace of him, so presume he must have been blown up by a shell in that terrible campaign.

Dear boy, he was anything but warlike and must have hated trench life and all the horrors of war, but was very very plucky and must have done well as he was a company-runner when he met his end. His name is on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

**Letter No. I**

Western Canada College  
May 31st. 1910.

My dear Mother;

I hope that you have returned home safely. I Suppose Miss South is at Red Lodge by this time. How did you enjoy the automobile ride that we had? The boy who drove it was a day boy at the College. It has been frightfully hot down here, ever since you left. I hope it will be a fine day on Saturday June 3, for the sports at Bowden. Had you left anything at the Hostel (no. 4 120 Ave. West)? You forgot to give me the lamp burner after all. I suppose you can send it down if necessary.

I bought my cake this afternoon, and had it on the table this evening. It was very rich and gave some boys a pain, but they all liked it. Can you tell me on what avenue Dean Paget lives? What am I to say if I go there? That book which was sent to me is very interesting. I have been reading it nearly all the time. It has been too hot to study, and for any active employment. It is impossible to put any thought on work. Does Dolly find this is true; and Jack also? It is sure to be hot on the day of the examinations, as it always has been. One of the masters said he would try and get me on the cricket team as soon as it is formed. I should like this very much if it could be done. None of the boys seem to take any interest in cricket, and I don't see how they will form an eleven.

I must stop writing now to get some breath; the temperature of this room is about 112 degrees. This time next month I hope to be home. Give my love to everybody.

I remain your loving son.

P.S. What did you leave in the train?

## **Letter No.2**

Western Canada College  
November 6, 1910

My dear Mother;

I am awfully sorry that I could not answer your letter for so long, but I really was not able to do it before. I will tell you what the Matron does. Every Sunday night each boy is given a laundry list, where you have to put down the no. of my things which you have used during the week. Then you put all the things in the laundry bag, and they are taken, washed and returned on Friday night. Then I put on clean things every Monday morning. I don't think I will need Felt boots this term, but I could easily get them if necessary, because every Saturday morning, we can get an order for anything we want from the Matron. I had to get a pair of Gym shoes last week. I enjoyed the play "Twelfth Night" very much and got 74% marks on the composition afterwards. At an examination on Julius Caesar I got 71% marks, which the man said was very good was very good. I am still feeling homesick, but I see that it was a good thing I did not come home for Thanksgiving, as it would be such a short time at home. I shall be awfully glad to come home at Christmas.

About going to Church in the evening, I will tell you what happens. If the majority of the boys wish to go to one particular church, then all of the boys have to go to the same church. Only in the morning can the boys go to different churches. Last Sunday Bishop Pinkham preached at the Cathedral.

Please thank Dad very much for sending the Busters. All the boys in the school looked at them, and liked them very much. They arrived on Thursday.

I will try and write to Auntie Jo, Aunt Torie, and Granny, if I can. Will you tell me Uncle Frank's address? Before we left England, Aunt Mary told me that Uncle Frank would like me to write to him on his birthday on November 10, and I forgot to ask you his address. It is

very lonely here, especially on Sunday afternoon. Sophie and Mr. Hodgeson said I could go to their house whenever I liked, but I shan't go too often, unless they ask me.

I hope I shall like this place better before Xmas but at present I hate it. I am very homesick still. The other day I received a postcard from Miss. Wilson.

Goodbye. Much love from your loving son

### **Letter No.3**

Western Canada College Calgary, May 9th. 1915

As Jack has told you, I have arrived here safely. He met me at the station and the first thing we did, was to go and find the Normal School. He wanted to go at once to a picture show. I like the house in which he has engaged rooms, much better than the McAllister place, which is away up on a hill about 1.5 miles from the College, and on the top of a sandy mountain, which you have to climb up by a pair of very steep steps. So you had better go to the other people. This morning I arrived at Normal school at 8:30, but nobody turned up until about a quarter to nine. It appears that there is only one other boy taking my examination - about 21 years old, perhaps; wears glasses, and has rather a seedy look about him. I couldn't see any Civil Service Commissioners around, only Dr. Coffin (Principal) was there. To-morrow the exams take place for the Outside Service, when about 30 will write. To-day there were only us two-(the other fellow's name is Stevenson). The exams to-day were not very hard - Comp. Spelling and Dictation. I'll send the papers as soon as possible. We had to write an essay either "for" or "against" prohibition. I remembered a few good arguments against it, so took the abolition side. It was very lucky that I remembered reading in the paper, the other day, that Lord Roberts had said "Give me a teetotal army and I will lead it anywhere", and also that the liquor bill of the United States per year, would more than build three Panama Canals. Of course I put these facts down on paper, and hope that they will have a good impression at Ottawa.

Jack says that "only the examination can save me now", meaning the medical. Mr. McNeill has seen Capt. Morfett, and he will keep a place for me till Friday. I am going to the armories at 2 o'clock on Friday afternoon to be examined, and will phone the result. So be near the phone on Friday evening about 7. I don't quite know whether the men go straight to the barracks or whether they are billeted, but will soon find out. I can't very well retreat now can I? Unfortunately the news was true about the Lusitania, also a destroyer and another small liner have been sunk. They say that Count Bernstoff is threatened with death. A crowd of people in Vancouver made a demonstration, when they heard the news, and wrecked several houses in the German quarter.

Now I must close my letter. Mr. Patterson is going to help me with some Literature to night. I shall be glad to know everything on Friday. With much love

I remain your loving son

P.S. We looked up Jan Twide but couldn't find him.

### Letter No.3

Sarcee Camp, June 4th. 1915.

I am writing this letter in the YMCA tent, as you see. It is pouring with rain (not the tent of course), and looks likely to continue so for weeks. I don't know when we shall be ready for the front as we have been prevented from drilling, by the weather conditions. This morning was fine, and we got our things all nicely dried, when this rain comes up again and wets them. We did a little forming fours this afternoon, but most of the men found it too deep. In fact we did our drill very badly to-day, being unused to it after doing nothing all day. If this rain continues, I shall endeavor to get a pass and come home for a few days. It would be better than staying idle here all days (and I hate being idle!) If it is wet, I shall not expect you to meet me at the station, but shall form myself into column of route, and march out to Red Lodge by forced marches. You may expect me any wet day next week; but of course I cannot be sure of this. Colonel Armstrong spends most of his time in driving his motor car, and refusing to sign applications for leave.

There have been great times here this week. We got paid on Wednesday, and several men immediately went into Calgary and got very drunk. They stayed in town without leave all day Thursday, and some have not come home yet. We have to send pickets out from camp, to bring the men in. One picket has just come back now, with a good haul. Altogether there were about 70 men, who were missing from the battalion. As the men are brought in, they are taken up to the captain, and then either sent to the guard room for a few days, or confined to barracks, and given extra duties, besides losing a day's pay. One fellow was complaining about his food to day. He said they gave him better food in the guard room.

I have not seen very much of mother. I went to see her on Wednesday, and we dined at the MacRaes' I was invited to supper with her at Lieut. White's yesterday, but she did not tell me the address, so I was unable to find the house. That was yesterday and I do not know whether she has gone home to-day or not. I am going down in the town tomorrow, to look her up if possible.

Personally I am feeling better, but caught a bad chill on Wednesday night, from sleeping on damp ground, between damp Blankets, in a damp tent. Life is one damn thing after another! I have not done any drill since last Saturday, till to-day, but have been doing various duties around the camp - in fact the drill is not very hard yet, and I have managed to keep up all right. The physical drill is the worst. We have it at 6 in the morning, and it is very stiff. When I received your letter, I was engaged in waiting at the table in the men's mess tent. I immediately rushed outside and read it through, because I was eager to hear the news. Please don't forget to write. I am sorry to have forgotten to send you a letter by last mail, but I was rather knocked up with cold etc., and it was too chilly to sit down anywhere. The tent is leaking here, that is why the paper is all blotchy.

Please excuse it under the circumstances, for we live in hopes that some day we may all have dry feet at night. The day may be distant but that time will surely come.

I am quite used to sleeping in a tent now, and even the hard ground does not worry me. The reveille woke me at 5:30 this morning, otherwise I would have slept on. The floor of our tent looks something like the floor of the cow stable is, after a few wet days when the cattle have been in all day. I was glad to hear that Mac had a calf, but it must mean a lot of extra work for you, till Jack comes home, or I get discharged, to do all the chores. I ought to soon hear the results of my examination. I am very anxious about it myself, but hope for the best. (to be continued tomorrow)

Monday:

I received your letter to-day, and was glad to get it. How nice it is for Princess to have had a foal. You need not worry about me being cold at nights, because two of us sleep to-gether now, which makes 6 blankets, and we are quite warm. Your suggestion about sleeping in clothes, has been acted upon ever since we have come to camp. In fact, one night I slept in my overcoat as well. My cold is better now, but has not quite gone yet. I was very mad when I found out that Mother had gone on Saturday morning instead of Friday. I could easily have got off on Friday evening to see her if I had known. Unfortunately they have just removed the phone from our battalion lines, so I was not able to get Mother on the phone. I hunted all over the camp for one, but was not successful. You asked in your letter when I would be able to come home for a few days leave. Well I thought I would try and come up with Jack on sat. the 19th. I shall try and get a week's Leave of absence. Would the 19th. suit you all-right? If our general conduct is good, and there is some good reason, I think we are allowed a week off. I have become quite sunburned lately, and the skin is peeling off my face, it is very uncomfortable too.

I went to supper at Dean Paget's last night, with Jack. The Dean asked me to come again at any time. He is very nice. I went to the Cathedral to Church in the evening, but was not able to stay to the end of the service, as I had to be back here by 10 o'clock. The authorities are talking of building a street car line to the camp, but the matter is still under discussion. I have been advised (by whom, let his name be) to get transferred to the war office, as a clerk, if I pass my Civil Service Exam. What do you think of the suggestion? I should like to hear your opinion on the matter. The fellow told me that it could easily be done.

I hope you will be down here soon, so that I can show you around the camp, etc. If Miss Bishop is passing through Calgary soon, I may be able to see her too. The visiting days to the camp are Sundays and Wednesdays.

Well I think I will close up this letter now. I live in hopes of coming home for a few days next week if possible. Jack's examinations start to-day, so he told me. Did Monica and Kathy enjoy their visit? They never saw the camp.

Hoping you are all well  
I remain your loving son.

PS. Will you please tell Pat that they want 1,000 more men from Alberta at once to fill up the if gaps caused by the heavy casualties. I heard this to-day.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp. June 10th. 1915

My dear Mother;

How are you feeling after your trip to Calgary? I was very sorry that I did not come and see you last Friday evening, but I thought that, as you did not come to the camp, I thought you had gone home that morning. However it can't be helped now. I looked up your friend Nethercote, in C. Squadron, (the one who was at Lieut. Whites' when you went there). He was very nice, and asked me if I would like to exchange into his regiment, as he thinks there are a nicer bunch of fellows in C. Squadron, than in the 56th. I have not decided to do anything yet. He said that he thought you were very English. We went over to the canteen, and had a bottle of milk and a banana together. It is rather a big business, exchanging into another regiment, and I expect that yards of red tape are necessary. What do you think about it? When we were talking in the canteen I asked him what he thought of Mr. Adamson. He said "Oh rather a nice chap, but a bit of an ass, don't you think?" Just then I happened to look around and saw Mr. Adamson standing beside us. It was very funny. Last night I went down to Calgary and took Jack to a picture show. We met Mr. Adamson in the town. He said he was waiting for a friend. I asked him where his friend was. He said "Oh he's lying on his back in the bar room at present, and I'm just waiting for the Red Cross to come and pick him up". Sometime Mr. Adamson and I are coming up to Red Lodge together if we can get off. Would you mind having him for a few days this summer? He wants to see the Boggs again. I saw a drunken soldier fall flat on his back on 8th. Ave. last night and when I rode home in the automobile, there was another man sitting beside me, who had been drinking. He was singing away, and telling funny stories. He evidently expected to get into trouble, because he told me "If they try and keep me in barracks(hic) I-I-will just (hic) flyaway in my aeroplane." There were a few other soldiers with him in the car, and they were trying to keep him quiet, but it couldn't be done. He explained to everybody that he was not a "tenderfoot" (evidently he did not care for the term). He bought a flask of whiskey out of his pocket, and handed it round to the company. All this took place in a jitney bus, on the way to camp, during a shower of rain. I quite enjoyed the ride!

The other day I was sawing wood with another man, whom I did not know and while we were taking a rest, he asked me where I came from. When I told him, he said he knew several people up there in Bowden and Red Lodge. He mentioned the name, Boggs and Adams. I said "my name is Adam" and he was very surprised, saying that he knew Dad quite well. Do you know or ever remember knowing a fellow named May, who used to live a few miles east of Bowden? That was his name and we talked about all the different people we knew, for quite a long time. He told me that Bob Lowe was in the 51st. Batt. whose lines are just next to ours. I think our platoon is going to be inoculated to-morrow, and we are given 48 hours off duty. If I could **get extended leave, I might come**

home. I might say that inoculation always affected me badly. If not, I shall try and come home next week, as arranged. The men here have not a very good opinion of Dr. Gray, as a doctor - "damn nice little feller" you know, "but Gee Whiz - well sir I tell you - I reported sick yesterday morning, an' I told him I wanted a tonic. He sez to me, he sez - You don't want no tonic, he sez, what you want is some pills. I got just the right stuff for you, he sez, an' he give me some white pills. He sez to me, he sez, You take a couple of these here pills, right after you go in for your meals. Well sir I tuk, em, and say boy, I ain't never been to see Dr. Gray no more; no siree; not on your life. I asked for a tonic, and he give me an emetic. (This is a sample of what I have to listen to. Of course the incident itself is not true, but put in a mild form).

Did you enjoy your return journey back to Bowden? Was it nice to see the old familiar scenes again? To climb into the same old buggy, and to bump into the same old holes again? Mrs. Milden gave me your present of a handkerchief, for which please accept my thanks. Who sent me that book for my birthday? Please tell me and also I wish you would give me a list of the people I aught to write to, with their addresses as well. I can't remember them all. Also I wish you would ask Dad, when he writes to me, to put on the envelope "D- Company, 15 platoon, as I would get the letter quicker.

Now I must close up my letter. Love to all, and please don't forget to feed Sonny. He would have a great time here, with lots of food. I hope to come home next week. With much love,

I remain your loving son.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1915

I received your letter to-day, and was very surprised when I read that you had received no letter from me by the previous mail. After much conjecture on the subject, I came to the conclusion that I should have posted my letter earlier. There is a Post Box and delivery out here but I have always posted my letter, on the evening of the day previous to Friday, or Tuesday. The box is cleared at 7 pm. and I thought that if I posted my letter in the evening before 7, you would receive it on the next day. Apparently the letters are not brought into Calgary before the morning train goes out, so in future I shall post my letters on the morning of the day previous to a Friday or Tuesday. You will probably receive two letters from me on Tuesday night, therefore, but in future you will receive one by every mail if I can manage it.

In order that we might not complain of being too comfortable, the authorities have ordained that the men must be moved into other tents, and that the fellows who have been in the same tents up to now, are to be separated. They have picked out a draft of men from the 56th., to be sent over to the old country as soon as possible, and these men, (about 250) are moving into other tents, to undergo special training. The rumor is that most of the undesirables have been picked out for this draft, but of course it may not be so. Anyhow I am not on it, and I

80111 not sorry, because the training will be much stiffer for these fellows. They have to get their rifles already, and are doing preliminary musketry drill, while we merely march up and down the field or form fours etc. In fact our drilling this week, has been something like this.; at 8:30 we line up for parade, and march out to drill. In about 10 min. the sky begins to darken; in 20 min. it is pouring with rain. We rush back to our tents until the shower is over. Then we come out again, march out and re-commence. We are just getting into it, when, without any warning down comes a tremendous downpour; or hailstorm, which generally turns to rain. Of course we go back into the tents, and lie down until the hail ceases. In a little while the sun begins to shine, and the sky is perfectly clear. We all go out to the field again, and get to work. Suddenly a flash of lightning appears, followed by a clap of thunder. Everybody looks up, and is surprised to find rain on his face. Perhaps we stay out a little longer, until everybody is thoroughly wet, or the shrieking of the wind drowns the officer's voice. Then we are obliged to (reluctantly?) return to the tents, and just have time to drop off comfortably to sleep, when we hear "Fall in Co!" Fall in 15, Jump to it men Smartly now". We fall in sleepily and march out again, when to our astonishment someone says. "Twelve o'clock sir". "Is that so" says the non, com, "well I guess we might as well go in. Squad 'shun. Move to the right in fours. Form Fours. AS YOU WERE. Smarter now. Jump to it men. Form Fours. Quick march" then "Halt Dismiss," and the morning is over. It generally rains all the afternoon, in which case the men slumber peacefully or if not, the same programme is repeated as in the morning. Or, you might say, 'Continuous Performance from 8:30 am. to 4:30 pm. I know you are all wondering if I am managing to keep up with the terrible strain of military training. In reality I have seldom had such an easy week as this, for a long time. Of course it is distressing to have to rise at 5:30; but I generally go bed at 9:30, so do not lose much sleep.

Our platoon received its inoculation last night, and we are consequently all feeling decidedly sick to-day. My arm has been very stiff and painful and I cannot straighten it yet. We get 48 hours off duty, but are rigidly prevented from leaving camp, so I could not come home. In fact I felt too seedy to want to do much to-day, and have been asleep most of the time. It was very funny to hear the men in our tent last night, trying to get to sleep. There would be silence for a little while, then someone would mutter - "Damn that Doctor". Then silence, then - (but I don't think I will write any more.)

There used to be quite a nice bunch in our tent, but to-day they moved us all around, and now I sleep in a tent with a bunch of fellows who have made swearing into a fine art. Furthermore, in addition to this, they delight in telling filthy stories; in fact every word almost that they speak, is impurity. I never heard such stuff before. I just try not to listen to them, but I know that they are trying to make me say something. However they have not yet succeeded, and they can say what they like; they shall not influence me if I can help it. The extraordinary part of it is that some of these same fellows are most obliging and nice at times. I heard some fellows talking in the Y.M.C.A. the other night. One of them was saying "Well, I've travelled all over Canada, and been in some rough places, but I never heard anything to equal the stuff you have to listen to here. It's disgraceful". The others agreed with him. One of them was trying

to get transferred to another regiment, saying that he had reached the limit of his endurance. It appears that one of the fellows in his tent came home drunk one night, and was violently sick all over the others. Things have not reached this state with me yet, but if they do I may think more seriously of getting into C. Squadron. I wish a German bomb would drop upon about 13 of the Battalion. The remainder would make up for the lamented ones.

I may try and get into another tent soon but I like the corporal of our tent, though being a young fellow, he has not much influence over his men. He is clean, himself, though, and that is something. The worst of everything is that many of the non-coms. are just as bad as the men and do not mind what they hear.

To return to subjects more pleasant; - I hear from Jack's letter that Miss Bishop is leaving on Friday. I should like to see her if possible, but could not make any engagements. I am going to try and get a few days leave from Friday. We have to be re-inoculated in a few days, and also vaccinated, but we do not know when. I am going to try and get to town to-morrow, and find out from Jack exactly when he is going home so that I can make my arrangements accordingly. I want to try and acquire a "run down" appearance by the end of the week, and to ask for a few days rest. But when mealtime comes around, I always eat everything that I can lay hands on. I believe I am still thin though, because the other day one of the men said to me "Let me give you some more meat, I want to see you fill out more." I wonder if you will notice any difference.

There is going to be a celebration of Holy Communion to-morrow evening, in the Y.M.C.A tent at 8 O'clock. I think I will go if my arm is better. Church Parade here is a farce - nothing more. The other Sunday, one of the men wanted to fallout, saying that he was a Lutheran. "Oh come along" said the sergeant-major, "You won't hear anything the preacher says of it doesn't matter what you are." He spoke the truth. Dean Paget is going to try and arrange for the men to be able to attend evening service on Sundays, in town. As it is we have to be here at 9:30PM, but he wants the leave to be extended to 10:30.

There is not much more news. A new batch of recruits marched in camp this morning, and look rather bewildered yet. They will fill up the ranks from which the draft was taken. I see by the papers to day that the Russians have won a big victory in Galicia, and that a Canadian steamer has been sunk. If I can get home next week, I shall try to bring'baby a'hammer and some nails!

Now I will close up my letter. I hope you will receive it safely. I hope you are all well. Look in the papers next week for the Civil Service Results, and try and find in them the name of

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp,  
June 16, 1915.

My dear Dad;

I was going to write to Mother, but remembered that I had received a letter from you to-day; but as there are no Munroe's to come and interrupt me, I shall endeavor to make it a longer one than yours was. There is certainly lots of rain here, as in Red Lodge. I am rather tired of camp life under these circumstances. It was bitterly cold this morning at 5.30. During the morning it began to drizzle, while in the afternoon it became terribly hot. This evening it is very cloudy - 'Ab uno die disce omnes'. Some of the 56th. have received their rifles, but our Platoon has not been so favored yet. We drill without arms at present. This week we started a new form of drill - that of extended formation, or battle formation - much more interesting.

To-morrow I shall apply for a few days leave, to date from Friday, so that I can come home with Jack. I may not be able to get it so if I don't come this week, I may be up next week, or if not then, after the duration of the war (if still living). I saw Mr. Adamson on Monday. We both condemned Pat for not volunteering his services, because, as Mr. Adamson says, the Boggs are such a military family!

Mr. Adamson and a friend have agreed that if, in this war, they each lose an arm and a leg, that they will tie themselves together, and live on his homestead. He says that the noise of the gun makes him jump two feet. (They fire a cannon here at 3:30 am. and 9:30 pm.). I can imagine him at the front!

Last night one of my tent mates came in rather drunk and commenced to air his views rather strongly on this war, etc. He wouldn't keep quiet for a long time; and brought some Whisky in the tent and refreshed himself several times during the night. He began to recite a long poem on the "Sinking of the Titanic". He began - "I'll sing you a little ditty boys, on the wreck of the Titanic". When he found that no one was listening, he gave up the attempt. It was very funny. Several blankets here had to be burnt, as they "tried to walk out of the tent".

Now I will close up my letter. I have not seen the Civil Service Results out yet. I take in the Herald daily, so will not miss them. If I do not come up by the 8 o'clock train on Sat. I may come by the afternoon one. Don't wait in; I can walk out from Bowden.

Hoping to see you all soon, I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp, June 27th. 1915.

My dear Mother;

The news reached me yesterday. I thought that the cause of my failure would be Arithmetic; but I see now that I put too much time on the other subjects, and neglected French, trusting to the good marks I had received on it, at the McGill Examination. Fancy 56% in arithmetic. However I have just penned a polite note to the Secretary, of the

Civil Service, asking him if I could at some future date, take the French paper again. I wonder what he will say? Look up the Civil Service Book and see if this is possible will you please, and also will you find out what is the charge for looking over papers again? I must have made over 14. The examiner must have been of German descent to have turned me down like that. Jack gave me a description of how the news was brought (Oh, don't talk about it, I can't understand it. etc.)

Has Auntie been ill lately? Or has the war turned her head? I am certainly very pleased with the 10 pounds, and am glad to be out of debt. I took \$1.25 from your purse, not \$1.00, so you can claim \$5.25. Give Dad the extra quarter for his carfares in Calgary.

The 56th. day is on Thursday. Tell him to come down for it. We are going to give exhibitions of bivouacking, etc. I hope we do it well. Col. Armstrong's wife died the other day, and we have to go to the funeral today at 3.00'clock. It is very cold today, and rain fell in the night. We had a terrific hailstorm here on Thursday followed by heavy rain which caused floods in Calgary. A flash of lightening hit a sentry's bayonet, and gave him a severe shock. The lightening struck a corner of a building in Sarcee Town just near where I was standing. All the lights went out instantly. During the night the tent leaked just above my head. The condition of the camp is consequently worse than ever before - 3 in. of mud everywhere.

I enclose 3 photos. The photographer found out later that he hadn't spoiled my first one; therefore you can see them all. Please return them and tell me if you like them, and which one you want. 10 will be \$5.00, 12, \$6.00.

If you send the \$5.00 down soon, I will join the Y.M.C.A. for 3 months. We may not be in Calgary later than that.

Now I will close up. I will try and get up for the picnic, but couldn't you make it the 20th., instead of the 10th.? I saw George Munroe yesterday but he couldn't talk to me long, because he was going on night picket. I hope you are more cheerful now. I think myself that the Civil Service is made up of bums. Tell Jack I'll write him soon.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve June 24th., 1915.

I have arrived back safely, as this letter will testify. Directly I arrived at Calgary I went over to the Brewer studio to get the proof of my photo. It appears that the photographer had taken another photo on top of mine, and quite spoiled the film. However he made me sit for my picture again; this time he took two - one nearly full length and the other of my head and shoulders. I told him that I would like to send the proofs to you for approval before I decided to buy any more. He agreed to this. The price of the pictures is \$6.00 per dozen or 50 cents each. The proofs will be ready by to-morrow evening. I'll try to send them to you by Tuesday's mail. I asked Mr. Brewer what the other soldier said when he heard that his photo was spoiled. Mr. Brewer said "Oh, he didn't mind; he was drunk at the time anyhow!"

After having transacted this business, I went over to the newspaper offices to see if the Civil Service Results had come through, but was told that they had not yet arrived. Mr. Adshead must have been mistaken. After this I went to Mrs. Mildens. She was very nice. I got a hot bath there last night, or as you would say "got into hot water". She gave me breakfast at 10 minutes to 7 and only charged \$1.00 for the whole thing. She said she wished she could take me for nothing, as she hated to charge a soldier, but that as times were so hard she was compelled to ask \$1.00. She has nobody staying with her now; and told me how she enjoyed having you, as she said that she met very few nice people. There was a French family staying in the house a few days ago; who had lost a son at the Front. We agreed that war was very awful etc. etc. I left the house at 7:15 and walked out here from the car line, arriving at exactly 8:30. It was rather much doing a morning's drill on top of a long walk, but it had to be done.

The 20th. Battery are leaving to-day for Sewell Camp, Manitoba. All the 56th. are now attired in huge straw hats shaped thus--- giving the men the appearance of farmers. We have also got our kit bags, but not the rifles or boots. I am sending this letter just to tell of my arrival, so don't expect it to be very long. Please send my sweater, and also my toothbrush. It has a crooked handle. I forgot to bring it along. For the present then, good-bye.

With much love, I remain your loving son

P.S. The frame will cost \$1.00. The man will have to alter the name.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
July 4th. 1915

My dear Mother;

I have received your letter, and am sorry to hear that you do not care for the photographs. The photographer thought they were "just fine". However I myself think they would look better without the figure in the foreground. I shall take them down to the Studio tomorrow and get them finished off. I am feeling very dismal and sleepy today as I was on night guard last night. It is our nearest approach to sentry duty as yet. The night guard or picket, goes on at 7:15 in the evening until 7:30 the next morning. I was on guard from 9:30 to 11:30 and again from 3:30 to 5:30, so had a little sleep.

You would have enjoyed being here this week and seeing the fair. On July 1st. the 56th. all marched into Calgary, together with all the other regiments stationed here. We went down to the exhibition grounds and after marching round for a few times, were dismissed for a few hours, to see everything. Then at quarter to 6 we marched back to camp. On Friday evening, the 56th. marched into Calgary and gave an exhibition of sham battles, bevouacing, etc., which I will not attempt to describe in detail here; but refer you to the Calgary Herald. Afterwards we amused ourselves by going allover the fair grounds again. There was a magnificent firework display, called 'Forcing the

Dardanelles'. A figure of a battleship was erected, and was supposed to be firing shots at the Turkish forts. Unfortunately it began to rain very heavily which spoiled the effect. At quarter past eleven we had to march back here again, and I shall never forget that march. Several of the fellows were drunk - one man especially so, near me, in our platoon. After we had given our little exhibition, we were allowed to put away our rifles in one of the buildings, and of course we had to carry them back with us, and an awful business it was trying to find them again.

The whole battalion had to enter in a narrow door, to fetch them out, and the crushing and pushing was fearful. Our drunken friend was unable to find his rifle. "Where's your rifle?", asked the Sergeant-Major. "I'm sorry Sergeant-Major, but there was nothing doing - Sergeant-Major, I went in to fetch it Sergeant-Major," he replied something like this. Then turning to the man behind him, he began to address him as follows saying "Shorty, you're a friend of mine you are; I'd fight to the death with you my boy. I would, Shorty". Some of the other men tried to make him keep quiet but this only make him very angry - "If any of you gets between me and Shorty, I'll knock the hell out of you." Shorty was very embarrassed by all this affection, but more was to come. He produced a bottle of Whiskey from his pocket, and said "I've got a drink for you here when we get back". Now it is a very serious offense to bring liquor into the camp, and this made Shorty all the more nervous. Just after this we commenced to march, as you understand, all this conversation took place while we were drawn upon parade. It soon became apparent that the man was not in a condition to march, and so two men had to help him along most of the way. During the march one of the other men took the bottle out of his pocket when he was not looking.

After a while he missed his bottle, and was furious, and tried to fight for it, until he was finally dragged away, screaming and kicking into a street car, and soon back to camp. The rest of us arrived back footsore and weary at 2 am. Nearly all the men in my tent were drunk to the extent that they were feeling very good, and it was very funny to listen to them. Of course they insisted that they were quite sober, but when they tried to walk across the tent they fell down.

It was a sorry bunch that appeared at mess the next morning - some still under the influence of the night before. It is very unfortunate that the men are inclined this way, as the officers do not dare to trust the men down town for very long at a time, and consequently it is more difficult to get a pass. The 56th. Batt. is certainly the last word in the manner of orderly conduct.

I hope that Dad will come down for the fair - or rather the remainder of the fair. On the opposite page I shall outline the advantages and disadvantages gained by his doing so, only I am afraid that by the time this letter reaches him, it will be too late for him to decide.

ADVANTAGES OF COMING TO CALGARY
If he comes to the fair he will be able to see:
(a) Splendid musical bands (b)

(b) All the elite of Calgary (c) Side shows etc. ~.
2. He will also see (a) Sage

(b) Col. Armstrong and staff
DISADVANTAGES OF COMING TO CALGARY (c) "The Black Box" 3.
(c) Bidmede, Readem, Postlewaithe Shan, Noreen,

Staples (ask Jack about these gentlemen)
3. Finally he will be able to see the military camp at minimum expense, and take me out.

Expenses entailed - although these would be reduced at this 'time  
Of course the hotels may be rather full but he can go to Mrs. Milden's.

Please study this table with care.

Well I think I must close up this letter. Fancy Charlie Peck enlisting.  
I shall try and find him if he is in this battalion.

I expect George Munroe is at Bowden to-day. As you say the Red Cross  
Picnic is all off, I shall try and come up some time this month, before  
haying commences. They say that in the fall they are going to dismiss  
the soldiers to harvest the crops. I hope they do. I shall write to  
'dear Auntie' soon, but have little spare time.

With much love, I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
July 7th., 1915

My dear Dad:

I have received your letter, and am sorry that you cannot come down  
here just yet. It is very unfortunate that I have just told Mr. Adamson  
that the Red Cross picnic is off. However he is coming over with me to  
a concert here on Friday night, and I'll tell him about it. I shall try  
and get two weeks leave from the 20th if possible, and I think that it  
will be easier to get it this time. There have been most extraordinary  
rumors floating around here; among which are:- That we are to be sent  
to Bermuda within a month because several white uniforms have been sent  
here, to wear when we arrive; That the camp has been condemned, and we  
must all be sent out within a week, and That we are going away with the  
50th., probably next Tuesday. I do not believe any of these tales  
myself, but it is true that yesterday all our belts were taken from us,  
and I expect that they'll claim our tunics next, and so on; so don't be  
surprised if I come home clothed solely in my underwear and (perhaps) a  
short or I may come up in a white uniform.

I saw in the Herald to-night that all the soldiers were to be given  
A month's leave to help in the harvesting. They will be allowed their  
regular pay at the same time, and their transportation will be provided  
for, provided that they can show proof of going to harvest. Please do  
not, therefore, hire some one to help you this year, as I will be able  
to help you. A month is a long time. On second thoughts I find that we  
shall probably be in Bermuda by harvest time, and I expect that the  
government will be pretty well broke, if they pay our fare to Canada  
and back again. But this announcement was really in the Herald so it  
must be true.

I should very much like to come to the Nairstock Red Cross picnic with Adamson and Nethercote, and will try and persuade them to come up with me. It will be nice to have a change from this routine. I spend several "dull mornings" learning my drill, but, like Roderick Dalton, I am confident that my 'Dull drill' will prepare me for the front, and I do not think that things will be "dull" there (see Jack's story in the Review). Long lines of Khaki clan figures do not impress me so much as they used to as I am generally one of them, and even the sight of Colonel Cruikshanks reviewing a division of his new army leaves me cold. I went for a walk with Mr. Adamson last night and he was very amusing. He is going to send Monica some candy on her birthday, but don't tell her about it yet. He told me that when his regiment goes out for a sham battle, he always goes to sleep, and tells his next man to wake him up when the fight becomes too hot. He is very much amused at some of our officers and really they are born to be laughed at, at least some of them. Two of the officers have not yet got their uniforms, and come out on parade, in suits of sheep blue cloth. The men have a nickname for one of them. They call him 'Billie Ritchie' (behind his back of course). Did you hear that when the 31st. battalion arrived in the old country, the men were given 5 days holidays and told to go away and forget all they had learned over here; then to come back and learn to be soldiers. If this is true, I think it is rather insulting, don't you, but I hear that the Canadian officers are thought nothing of over in England, many of them being reduced to the ranks. A draft of about 250 men left our battalion last week, for an unknown destination, probably England, and we heard that one of the sergeants majors got drunk while they were at Winnipeg, and had knocked down a lieutenant; for which he was reduced to the ranks - an awful comedown for a man in his position. Thus does the 56th. battalion keep up its reputation, even when sent abroad. There ought to be something doing when we all leave CalgarY1 Mrs. Shenfield wrote to me yesterday asking me to come to supper with her and the girls, at the Allisons, where they were staying. She asked me to be there at 5.30 pm. but I only received the letter out here at 5:15, on the same day, and I was not dressed up for going to town, it was impossible for me to turn up. I tried to phone her but couldn't find the Allisons in the directory so I suppose I'll have to write her at Bowden, explaining the situation. I am very tired tonight as I have been dish washer to the sergeant's mess all day, from 6:30 am. to 7:30 pm., and I have also contracted a sore throat and headache, so hope to escape my 'dull drill' tomorrow. Dr. Gray often speaks to me. He thinks I have gained ten pounds, since I enlisted. I am desperately to save money this month, and have \$12.00 in hand now, (or rather in purse). Of course I shall have spent some of it on the photos.

Now I must close up my letter. Hoping to be up on the 20th. and with love to all I remain your loving son

P.S. Mr. Adamson asked me to tell Mother that he hopes to see her before he goes off for his continental tour.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve  
July 13th. 1915

My dear Mother;

I received your last letter, and one from Babs also, last Saturday. She says that they are going to have their little party on the 23rd. not the 27th, and that I am to try and come up on the 25th. Also I am to invite Mr. Nethercote and his friend to come up for the 25th. while Mr. Adamson and I are to arrive on the 20th. , at Olds by the morning train. Is that not correct? I have not been able to see any of these gentlemen lately as I was forced to go to hospital on Friday with a bad throat-tonsillitis; and am up for the first time today since then. I shall probably be all-right by to-morrow. I shall try to see Mr. Adamson to-night if possible, and get him to tell the others. It was very nice getting a few days rest in the hospital. I was sorry that I could not send Monica anything for her birthday, but will bring something up with me, for her. I think I will buy a pair of puttees to come home with.

It is raining heavily to-day, and is likely to continue wet for some time. There is great excitement here over the coming campaign of prohibition. It was thought at first that the 51st. Batt. from Edmonton and all the other non-Calgary Regiments would not be allowed to vote, except at their own home town, but I see that there will likely be a polling booth out here at camp, so that each soldier will be able to vote. I am too young to vote in any case so it doesn't worry me at all either way.

I am glad that Dad likes the idea of my coming home for the harvest. I expect that they will let us go at about the end of August, so that means only a little more than one month at camp. I shall be very glad to get cut of this place and so will most of the other fellows too. I heard a funny story about one of our new officers, from another company. He had the men outside drilling, and when the time came to take them in and dismiss, he was unable to do it. He had them drawn up in extended order, so much so that they could not enter the camp lines. Finally the captain had to bring them in himself. I wonder what will happen to that officer when he gets to England?

I think I will finish this letter to-morrow, when I may be able to let you know if the other men can come up.

Wednesday: Just came out of hospital, and happened most fortunately to run up against Mr. Nethercote. He says he would like very much to come up on the 23rd, if possible, but he is not sure whether he will be able to get away then or not. I will try and see Mr. Adamson to-morrow. Mr. Nethercote says that his friend will not be able to come up as he has just been on leave. I will try to see Mr. Adamson for sure to-morrow. I feel alright now except for a little unsteadiness in the legs. Am looking forward to the 20th.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve  
July 18th. 1915

My dear Mother;

I received your letter this morning. Dr. Gray told me on Thursday that he had spoken to you over the phone, but he must have known that I had come out of the hospital then. He is going to be transferred to the R.O.M.C. or something at the Base Hospital, if he can. I had an idea of trying to get on the machine gun section, as I hear the gunners do not have to do any fatigue work, but I think it is full up anyhow.

The weather has been awful, and the camp is again reduced to a sea of mud. Mr. Adamson called it "Venice". I am sorry that he cannot come up, or any of the other men. He is very sorry, but it is impossible for them to get leave just now, as the regiment is going to be inspected soon, by Major-General Lessard; also I think cash has something to do with - or rather, the lack of it. Mr. Nethercote has to go and see about a farm of his, somewhere out west. Mr. Adamson was going to bring another fellow in his place, - a man called Flemming, I think. He introduced me, and I think you would have liked him, but yesterday Mr. Adamson told me that none of them could get off. He is writing to you himself. He told me that he would have enjoyed the dance very much, because a visit to Mrs. Boggs is as good as a tonic. In fact we talked of nothing else but the Boggs family. He is still very bitter against Jim, contemptuous of Pat but amused at the others. It is now too late for me to get off by the 20th. as passes have to be put in two days previous, but shall try and get up by the Thursday morning train, 8. am. Can you meet it? I know I should miss the 1.50 train. Please do not alter the arrangement again. I have been quite bewildered lately.

If you think Monica would like a ball I will bring her one. I got a letter from Aunt Mary but was unable to read the writing, so will bring it home, and perhaps you will be able to read it. I also got one from Uncle Wilfred, enclosing a type written account of the Singapore Riot by Uncle Frank. I must destroy it after you have all read because, for some reason no one else is to see it. I have not had time to read it myself yet.

This morning, about 2am we were awakened by a terrific row in the next tent. It appears that nearly all the occupants were drunk, and commenced fighting and shouting like madmen. The captain and about 5 policemen came rushing up and he gave orders to arrest the authors of the disturbance; when one of the drunk men stood in the entrance of the tent with a rifle brandished and threatened to break the head of anybody who tried to take him. The policemen were too terrified to do anything, and were being urged in the rear by the captain to "Go and arrest him". Fine soldiers you make, "Go and arrest him". In the end, re-enforcements were brought up, and the tent was carried by assault, the men being taken to the guardroom, amid the most awful language I have ever heard. I am thankful that I was not on guard last night. I expect this means that those men will be kicked out. This sort of thing happens about every pay day.

Now I must enclose up my letter. I hope to be able to get up next Thursday for a few days. Tell Mrs. MacRae not to come up yet. I am thankful to say that the weather is fine to day.

With much love I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
July 28th. 1915

This is just to let you know that I arrived back here safely. I bought a lunch basket on the train and so had enough to eat. When the train got to Calgary, I immediately came straight out here. The first automobile that I took from the car line, exploded a tire before we had got very far, and so we all had to get into an other car. This one had no head lights, and as the night was very dark, we nearly ran down a horse and buggy, in addition to getting stuck twice on the road. I arrived in camp at about 10:30 pm. in a deluge of rain, which has practically kept up ever since. It has been raining hard all day, and the camp is therefore in the usual state again. As I write from the YMCA tent, the rain is coming drip, drip, through the roof on to this paper, and the water runs off my hat all over the ink. We live in stirring times.

During my absence the men have all been inoculated again, so I expect I shall get it soon. They say it is much worse this time, and some men have gone to the hospital with it. I think that I shall stand it all right though, as I am quite healthy.

I have not spoken to Huntley, re- the harvest yet. In fact I have spent most of the day lying down in the tent (tell Jack this). I think of all the hay lying on the ground and wonder if it will be quite spoiled. The men are talking about getting a job for the harvest. I think that they will all go if they can, but it is rather early to apply just yet. I will let Dad know as soon as possible.

It seems rotten to leave all the comforts of home to come back to this- nothing but sloppy mud. The 50th. Battalion say that ever since the inspection we, the 56th, act as though we owned the camp. If I had my way, we should have nothing to do with the camp at all. It is useless attempting to write any more, so I will have to close up. Anyway there is no news yet. I wish the summer were over and we were in a warm barracks, or in Bermuda, or anywhere else but here. Here is a story to liven things up a little. A soldier on leave from the front, was asked what struck him most about being under fire. He replied "the number of bullets that missed me".

Please don't forget to write. I hope to have a more interesting letter next time, but you cannot call this one dry anyhow.

With much love, I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Y.M.C.A. Calgary  
August 1, 1915

My dear Dad;

I hope Mother gave you my 'phone' message correctly last night. What I wanted to get at was this - Would you be able to have another man for a few weeks, and what would you be able to pay him? There is a very nice English fellow who asked me if he could get a job at my home for the period of the harvest. He said he would like to get on a nice place, and wished me to find out, in the event of you not needing him, if there were any other places around that way where he could go - nice places of course. I shall ask him how much he is willing to work for, before doing anything else, in fact I have done so, but he said he didn't really know. I expect its a question of "how much can I get?" His name is Fielder - Corporal Fielder, and I think he is very nice; about 28 years old. Huntly is probably going up North with his brother, who has a farm near Innisfail - that is if he goes away at all. He is very undecided. They have taken all the names of the men who want to go, and a letter has to be sent by the farmer employing, to certify that it is all correct. After that I can come home as soon as you need me - that is as soon as the crops are ready. Only men of an exemplary character will be allowed to go so I hope the others will be kept on fatigue duties at the Camp.

If you do not want this man yourself are there any places around where he could go? I have got a plan in my head which I am going to let you know about. As you know we shall not be at this camp very much longer now because when we come back from our leave, it will be broken up. Couldn't you come down to Calgary this week, as you said you would like to see it before it goes? At the same time you could see Corporal Fielder and arrange with him if you want him. You could give Jack some mowing to do while you are gone, while Arthur could be raking, and Bill and Larry hauling the hay. I wish you would consent to something like this.

On Thursday evening one of our fellows was drowned while bathing in the Elbow river by the camp, and his funeral took place this afternoon. It was the first military funeral I ever saw, or took part in. We marched behind the hearse at slow time, to the tune of the funeral march. Then at the grave a firing party fired three volleys, and the buglers played the last post. The effect was rather spoiled by the fact that the firing party had to be picked from our battalion, which of course has had very little practice in shooting. They were supplied with ammunition pouches and bayonets for the occasion and after the first volley was fired, and the command was given to re-load - present-one or two of the men after wildly digging into their pouches for a blank cartridge, was forced to shoot with an empty rifle - being unable to load in time. Another thing that happened was this. The rifles that are supplied with for drill purposes, are of an old pattern and condemned as utterly useless for real shooting. Consequently after the successful men had fired their first volley, in some of the rifles the shell refused to come out again. Then again the clergyman commenced to read the funeral service before we had moved into position, and was interrupted in his reading by such commands as "halt" "right turn" "stand at ease". Of course these are written from behind the scenes. I did not know the boy who was drowned, although he was in my own company. He is survived by a sister who lives in Calgary. I do not like going to funerals.

You may remember me writing about a man called "Shorty". Well Shorty is in our tent now, and yesterday evening he got a late pass till

midnight. It happened as we feared. Shorty did not come home sober. About 10.15 he staggered in to the tent, and began to complain that his bed was not made. Then he handed round a flask of Whiskey to everybody, and drank a lot of it himself too. Then he decided to put [missing]

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve  
August 11, 1915

My dear Dad;

Thanks for your letter. I am afraid that the mails to and from the camp are very irregular, because I have written home every mail. You say that you would rather that I came home about Sept. How would August 21st. do? Would it be too early? Anyhow let me know as soon as harvesting commences. Some of the men are going on Tuesday for their leave.

On Monday night we had another route march, and were out all that night, returning here about 3:30 p.m. Tuesday afternoon. It was terribly hot, and we had to carry our rifles, water bottle, and 1 blanket and rubber sheet. We bivouacked out near a farm about 12 miles from camp, and the enemy was kind enough not to attack us in the night. Next morning we were up again at about 5, and looking for the enemy. We did skirmishing all the morning, and went over such rough country that our transports could not follow us, so we did not have much dinner. On the way home we sent out a scouting party ahead of the main body to look out for the enemy. Suddenly we saw a number of troops ahead, taking it easy; some lying down on the grass, others washing themselves in the creek. This was the enemy. They did not try to stop us, but allowed us to walk right through their lines. What's the use of it all! Do you remember a Mr. Black, who was a baker in Olds, and who was going to take part in our play if we had taken it to Olds that time? I have just discovered that he is our Company Quartermaster-Sergeant. I was very surprised when I found out this. He is very nice, but not much good at his job. Whenever we go for a route march he rides in the support wagon, and then tries to act as if he had walked all the way. He is very fat and good natured.

Well there is not much news here. I am glad that you are getting on well with the haying. Perhaps I may come home for the end of it after the timothy is all hauled, after which I may, as Jack says "pitch a sheaf occasionally". Is the hammock in good repair? I see that a British cruiser - the India, had been sunk near Sweden and that 80 of her crew were saved. According to the latest paper, Lord Kitchener does not think that conscription will be necessary. In conclusion I add that I wish you would come down and see the camp soon.

With love to all

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve  
September 21, 1915

My dear Mother;

I arrived back here safely yesterday afternoon, and immediately went to the Orderly Room to apply for an extension but was unable to get it for this reason; A draft is to be picked out of each battalion to go to the old country and therefore they are calling all the men in so to form the draft. It is rumored that the whole of D Company 56th Batt. was to form one draft - in fact our Quarter master Sergeant told us this morning that this was almost sure to be the case. I expect we shall know for certain in a few days.

At all events our military authorities firmly and flatly decline to extend my leave, so there is nothing more to be said on the subject. But what makes us all so furious is that the men from the various other battalions have been able to get their leave extended in spite of this (at least so the rumour goes). I hope 'Fair play' will look into this matter. I bought a copy of this paper upon my arrival at camp, and was much interested therein. For some reason this paper is now engaged in pouring ridicule on Mr. Bennett, and all his actions, I may send you it next week.

Well, it is very hard settling down to the steady old grind again. The only bright prospect in view is, barracks. For, as you may imagine the nights are terribly cold in tents. We are allowed each four blankets but unless you are able to sleep with your head under them, and in a state of semi-suffocation all night, the result is that the exposed portion of your face becomes frosty. Then the water taps are invariably frozen until late in the morning, and the chances of a wash until noon, generally 'nil'. Whenever I ask anybody when we are going to barracks the answers are different. First it was 'this day fortnight' or 'by the end of the month'. Then the belief was, towards the latter part of October, and the last person I asked, said it would be 'about the 1st. of November. I am afraid that if I enquire any more it may be Christmas.

We all had to be examined by Dr. Gray, when we returned from harvesting to see that we were quite fit to return to duty. When I came before Dr. Gray, he asked me to open my shirt, - just to see if I had brought "any visitors from Red Lodge", as he put it. He advised me to have a warm bath that night, which I did and also put on a clean suit of underwear, so am ready for duty again.

I see that the Russians have hopefully lost a town called "Vilna" and are retiring in great spirits, further into their own country, with the doomed German army close behind them. This news, together with a report of a great mining disaster in England, is about the best in the papers to-night. It appears that 1250 men are to be sent over in drafts from this camp, of which our company may form a part. Quite a number of our company are thinking of joining the 82<sup>nd</sup>! Or failing that the 105<sup>th</sup>! (which is formed next month). The lines of the 12th. Mounted seem very deserted - hardly a trooper to be seen.

I will finish this letter to-morrow, when I may have further news.

Wed. - No further news to-day about anything so I will send this letter for Friday's mail. Last night we had a terrific shower of rain, and to-day is warmer than yesterday, but cloudy. Quartermaster Sergeant Black asked me to thank you for your invitation to him, but he could not accept it at the time as he was going up to Innisfail the next day. I think I will close this letter up now. I hope that I shall have more news next time.

With much love, I remain your loving son

Sarcee Reserve  
October 3, 1915

**Letter No.**

My dear Mother;

I was glad to get your letter yesterday, and to hear all the news. I can assure you that the 25 blankets which I mentioned in my last letter was no exaggeration, as I counted them most carefully in the morning. However there are more men in the tent now, and so we are only allowed four each. We have heard no more about our departure, and I begin to think that it may be a few weeks yet before we leave. The 50th. Batt. may leave at any time, and I believe that the 12th. M.R. are going to-night or Monday.

I had my first experience of sentry duty last Thursday. I had to guard the prisoners, and one of them was drunk and was continually trying to get out of the enclosure. He was very angry because they had taken 2 bottles of brandy and one of Whiskey away from him, when he came to the camp, and swore that he would get it again. I wish that they would not always put me in charge of prisoners.

Yesterday was very wet, but to-day is fine, the camp is very muddy again of course. According to the paper, the camp will break up on the 15th. of this month, and I shall be very glad when we go away from here.

May tells me that Chester Britten has enlisted as a private. It seems that recruiting is falling off considerably in Calgary, and I don't see how they are going to raise another battalion. Has Jim Boggs said anything more about enlisting? He could get into the 56th. if he wanted to, as they are going to raise another company to take the place of the draft. They have only got one man at present.

I have been trying to get down to the Bank and open an account but can never leave camp before the bank closes. I am afraid I shall have to wait until an opportunity arises.

Why don't you get the Rand girl to help you? She doesn't talk very much does she? I have not been up to the College yet, and don't see any reason for doing so yet. I ordered two more photos for you and will send them sometime next week. Thanks very much for the "Graphic" and

"War weekly". They were much appreciated. Now I will close my letter up. There is no further news. I hope that prairie chicken and partridge are plentiful this year. Tell Jack to clean my gun.

With love to all, I remain your loving son

P.S. The enclosed locket I bought in a fit of abstraction in the train. It would do for Monica.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Reserve  
October 6th, 1915

My dear Kathy;

You will perhaps be rather surprised to hear from me - by the way let me know if you don't get this letter, won't you? The truth is that in all probability we shall be going away next week towards a nasty place called the front, although I don't pretend to make you imagine that we shall go there direct, first, in short we shall leave for England next week, and so I thought that you might like to know.

Well how is Red Deer behaving? And how are you behaving? I expect to be promoted to ordinary private soon, being now a sort of sub-private. The weather is bitterly cold down here, and if you don't believe this, go and hire a tent and sleep in it for one night only. You will not then be in a position to deny my assertion. I repeat therefore that the weather is bitterly cold down here. I told mother in a recent letter that we had 25 blankets over us one night, and she refused to believe this, but it is true nevertheless.

In the mornings the opening of the tent is frozen stiff, and has to be bent back in order that we creatures should be able to get out. Then washing is terribly hard and I never wash now until noon.

If the Williams begin to talk in an unpatriotic vein, and say insulting things about the King, you should say something like this "Yes, yes, Mrs. Williams, I entirely agree with what you say - but the question is this - Was it not Zotze who said that Metamyphies had its root in ethics? yes- Well now what impulse was it that makes him utter that assertion? Don't tell me that he had an eye on mental telepathy or radiographics. No sir, the complete diagnosis, when translated into hieroglyphics, shows no more resemblance to the case in question, than a pterodactyl has to a prehistoric carnivore dinosaur". She will then be rendered speechless, and the victory will be in your hands.

Well by the end of another week I shall probably not be here to give you any more advice, but you will just have time to write and tell me the effect of that which I have given you. There is no news of importance from this quarter. I see no signs of promotion, this sort of thing being of a rather slow-motion, - in fact I see no motion at all. I hope you are progressing favorably in your studies, but trust that possible success will not make you proud, but rather humble. Be kind to Freda, and if she starts to talk in the William's vein, say "Freda, you

are an ass". She in her turn will be speechless, and you will gain the day.

Now I must close my letter as the ink is freezing. Hoping that you are well in body and mind.

Your er-relation by marriage

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp.  
October 6, 1915

My dear Dad;

I received your letter in which you said that you were hourly expecting to hear of our departure. Well according to the very latest semi-official bulletin, we shall leave here on or about the 15th or 17th of this month. It was believed that we should go on the 8th, but the date has now been set for the 15th, and may be set for the 25th next week for all I know. To-day a list of the draft was made out, and it is very probable that we shall leave very soon. I wish I could tell you the exact date but I don't know it myself.

Of course I shall be glad to leave Sarcee, and so shall we all, but I hate to think that I shall have to leave you all and perhaps never come back. However that is anticipating the very worst, and I hope I am man enough to see this thing through to the end, whatever that may be. As you say it will probably be very nice if we are sent to Shorncliffe, and the trenches themselves may not be so very bad - as the soldier in "Punch" wrote from the front, saying that things were all right out here, only for the mud and the people who lived opposite!

The 12th Mounted left for England on Monday. We were all allowed to go down to the station and see them go. I shook hands with George Munro before he got on the train. I think he is awfully pleased at going over before me. I also saw Addamson and Nethercote. We shall probably all meet again at Shorncliffe before Christmas. The 12th. Mounted will be greatly missed by all of us at home as the regiment had a good name. I shall try and come home for a few days before we leave, and so will be able to settle up everything. The Government makes us sign over everything to our next of kin, before we go to the front. We do not draw quite our full pay I believe, in England, but the rest is kept for us. I am glad that you and Mother can make arrangements to come down to Calgary. Would it be better do you think, to come down a day or so before, if I can give you the date in time? Quartermaster Sergeant Black, late of Olds will not accompany the draft, but will continue to shed the light of his countenance on the citizens of Calgary for some months to come. He will probably cross over to England for Peace Celebrations. Our Reverend Regimental and Most Righteous Chaplin stalks about camp in solitary splendor and gloomy aloofness. I do not think he intends taking in the continent just yet - this terrible war, you know - !

I think that the nights get colder and colder. I never wash now before noon, and even then the operation is a quick one. Corporal Fielder told

me that he had not washed for three days. Yesterday a bitter strong North wind raged, and nearly carried off the Mess tent. It also rained quite heavily, and to-day it tried to snow. Three of us slept together last night, with thirteen blankets and one overcoat. I went to bed and about nine O'clock, and was awakened in the morning by the Orderly Corporal, being undisturbed by "Reveille" and as warm as toast all night. We are supposed to go out on physical drill from 6.30 to 7 a.m. but the whole thing is generally a farce these mornings, as the men will not get up out of their warm blankets so early, and the sergeants gnash their teeth in impotent rage. Their one consolation is that we shall get proper discipline over the other side.

Tomorrow the whole battalion is going out for a day at trench-digging, the authorities having carefully waited for the ground to get nice and hard after these heavy frosts. It will be the first bit of practical work that we have done for some time.

I am glad to hear that Bert Clarke has not been killed. I heard some fellows say that he had. He is lucky to get a commission. What does Mrs. Adshead think of the late war news? I can imagine how she and Mother Would get excited over the phone. It is a good thing that you have got on so well with the hauling. On some of the farms around here the grain is still on the ground.

Please continue to send the Graphic etc. as long as I am here, as I enjoy looking them over.

I went to a Salvation Army meeting at camp here last Sunday. The speaker was a very excitable English cockney, who threw his "h"'s all over the place. He spoke about the war, and showed us how England was fighting to rescue the world from the 'eel of oppression', how he felt sorry for the people who had suffered, as he was a 'usband, and a father. I am sorry to say that his audience diminished rapidly during the service, especially when he mentioned something about "use of the hall required money, and he would be pleased if any of us would help in any way. Perhaps a small collection!

Now I must close this letter, as it is getting late, I will be sure and let you know, when I can, the date of our departure. I hope to be able to get a few day's leave before then. Hope you are all well.

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Y.M.C.A. Calgary  
October 13, 1915

My dear Mother;

I take the opportunity of writing a few lines to you to-night before we commence our big show in Victoria Park, where I must repost myself at 8 o'clock. This letter must be a hurried one. I will give you a resume' of what has happened since we parted on the Bowden trail. Well I walked back to town, and arrived there at a quarter to seven bought a paper

from Perrins, and sat in the waiting room until the train arrived. Several Soldiers got on at Didsbury, and one of them informed me that his pass was up that morning, and he expected to be locked up when he arrived at camp. There was a soldier on the train who had been to the front, and going to be discharged on account of ill health. He told us several stories about his experiences. When we reached Calgary I immediately set out for camp and rode in a crowded automobile, with a drunken soldier on my lap. The machine threatened to come to pieces at any moment. When I arrived at camp I found that in my absence, all the men had been moved into different tents, and it was impossible for me to know where there would be room for me. Eventually I managed to find some blankets and was allowed to sleep in the Orderly sergeants tent for the night. This was very nice, as he had an oil stove in his tent, which kept us very warm.

This morning I spent in looking for my kit, which seemed to have been scattered in all directions. So far I have collected it all right but have not yet found out where I am to sleep. All the tents seem to be full. However I hope to squeeze in somewhere or other. At about 12 0' clock we left camp, and marched into the city down to Victoria Park, for the Exhibition. I am writing this letter from the Y.M.C.A. Building in town. Our show will commence at 8.30, and we shall leave town at 11 for camp again.

The general impression is that we shall leave for England with the 50th. on Sunday night. The sergeants say this themselves but we have nothing official. I asked Mrs. Milden to save a room for you and Dad for Saturday night, (probable) and she promises to do this. (She had the misfortune to lose her sister, who died in Calgary Hospital 3 weeks ago from a goitre(?) in the neck) She leaves a baby of 10 months, whom Mr Milden is looking after, for the present. I met Mr. Adshead to-day. Also Mr. Patterson. He says that he will come to the station to see me off. No time for more.

With much love I remain your loving son

P.S. Don't come down on Saturday, until you hear definitely from me by letter or phone. If I don't phone or write, don't come.

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
Wednesday, Oct. 27, 1915

I hope you were not very disappointed at not receiving a letter from me by last mail. The truth is that we have been so very busy with numerous route marches etc, that the time has slipped by so very quickly, and I was not able to get in my usual letter last week. At all events there is very little general news, and no further notice of our departure. I believe that we shall move into barracks this week; in fact we may be here by the time this letter reaches you. Col. Cruikshanks announced at church parade last Sunday, that it would probable be our last church parade at camp. He thanked all the men for their co-operation in the work of the camp, and their general conduct, and in conclusion told them to beware of "wine and women" during the winter.

Mr. Warren sentenced Corporal Fielder to 3 days C.B. (confinement to barracks) on account of him coming out with us that evening without leave, but it appeared that he did not mean this to be taken seriously, and afterwards let him go entirely. Fielder thanked him profusely for his C.B.

I went to dinner on Sunday with the MacRaes' but did not enjoy it very much. The Dr. insisted on reading aloud from a very dry book, to us all, after dinner. Soon after he started Mrs. Bond went upstairs, and Mrs. MacRae and I had to stay and listen. I managed to get away about 3 O' clock, and had supper with Dean Paget. He was very nice, and asked me to come again and stay over the weekend. He had one of the W.C.C. boys staying with him over Sunday, a very nice English boy called Eric. Jack should get to know him. I went to church with Eric that evening, and afterwards we went to a Sunday band concert at the Lyric theatre. The Dean says that Jack must be sure to visit him as soon as he goes back to College. Yesterday afternoon we had a short route march, about 8 miles, and last night Corporal Fielder took me to a whist drive, at All Saint's parish, East Calgary. I enjoyed myself very much. There was a large crowd of ladies, and a few gentlemen. I managed to play tolerably well I think - Fielder got the "booby" or "mock" prize for being the worst player. He has been promoted to senior Corporal of our company now.

Last night the whole battalion went out to trench practice, that is to say we left camp at about 3pm. and marched over to the river to where some trenches were made, and we practiced getting in and out of them in the dark. The transport carried enough food for our supper, and we arrived back at camp at about 10 o' clock.

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Sarcee Camp  
November 1 1915

My dear Mother;

We are still out at camp, and yet November has begun. The 68th. Battalion left for Edmonton on Saturday. The 66th. left for Edmonton yesterday, and the 51st. are leaving for Edmonton to-day. We expect to move into barracks to-morrow afternoon. I hope we do, as the weather is extremely chilly out here. I have just come off guard again, and have caught a rather bad cold, so am not feeling very bright today. We have had several route marches lately and on Friday we were out nearly all' night on some sort of night maneuvers, which I cannot attempt to describe beyond stating that; nearly all the battalions in camp found themselves jumbled together in one large heap.

I received a letter from A. Jo also a pamphlet, called "Faith on the firing line" or- "Addresses to officers" which she hopes I will enjoy. I have not read it yet. She also sent me some photos of Angela and Aunt Tory. I must write several letters when we are fairly settled in town but it is almost impossible to do any writing at present.

I hope Jack enjoyed his trip to Innisfail; I may see him in Calgary yet as there does not seem to be any prospect of our leaving Canada just yet. You may be interested to hear that ex Quarter Master Sergt. Black has been promoted to the rank of Company Sergeant Major. He is fatter than ever. Our new Quarter Master has suddenly disappeared and nobody knows where he is. There is no more news that I can think of so I may as well close up this letter. I hope that the next one will be written from more comfortable quarters. I was glad to get your letter. There were 300 absentees from the 50th. this morning on account of recently being paid. Now I must close. Hoping you are all well

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
November 11, 1915

My dear Mother;

As I have received no letter from you to-day I conclude that you have been too busy, on account of threshers etc. to write. At the time of writing, there are several rumors of our early departure. It appears that orders have come from Ottawa to have us ready to leave at any time, and what this may mean is a matter of conjecture. We were up supposed to be going to-day, and on Friday, and now it is said to be Monday, but there is no authentic information at all. I think however that we shall be away this month.

I am rather undecided as to whether I should put in for a pass or not, to come home for a few days. I am not sure that it would be very easy to get off, but I will see what happens.

Is Jack in Calgary yet? I thought he was to come down on Monday or Tuesday. Last night I went up to the College to see if he had come back, but found that he had not yet reported. Mr. McNeil says that things are very slow at the College now, and thinks it would hardly be worth while for Jack to return before Xmas. I spent a very enjoyable evening at Mr. Pattersons' last Sunday. He wants me to write an article for the College Review, on Military Life. I have not decided on this yet.

We have had some very cold days lately, but to-day is warmer and the snow is disappearing. On the very cold days we did not do very much drill, but had some lectures inside which were very interesting. One of the men in our section came in late last night, drunk. He clambered up to his bunk, and commenced to roam around for a little while when suddenly he fell out, and luckily landed on his feet.

I don't know what happened to him afterwards. The other day when we were piling arms, our pile fell down on the hard frozen ground and my rifle was split all down the woodwork on the top. Happily it could be adjusted in such a way as to appear unnoticeable. One of our fellows,

when in an inebriated condition put in a pass from "noon today until noon after the war". These little items of news I think exhaust most of the stock in hand.

If by any chance we do leave Calgary next week, and I give you good warning, how would you feel about coming down once again to take another chance? Of course I hardly expect you will see your way to this, but you know, departing hero - terrible way, heavy casualties, - straight to the front - perhaps never return - awful remorse - why was I not there! Too late now - etc. etc. (Suppose the hero does not even depart this time - what then?) While you are thinking these things over I will (probably) be in a picture show.

Well I must say goodbye for now. Love to all I remain

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
Barracks November 14th, 1915

My dear Dad;

I received your last letter, in which you said that you expected the threshers on either Saturday or Monday. I expect you will be glad of the change of weather. The very latest rumor about our departure is that we are to leave this week, but I can't say how much truth there is in this. So don't come down again yet. We haven't done very much in the way of drill lately, and I believe that we are allowed half holiday every Saturday afternoon. A special class is being started in signaling, for those who care to attend - half an hour a day, for 3 days in each week. I have decided to attend this class as it will be useful to learn signaling.

I see by the papers that J. Turner Bone has been killed. He was an old college boy, and was an aviator at the front. I will do my best to get a few days leave towards the end of this week, if we are still here, which I think is very probable. Does Jack come down on Monday or Tuesday? He can come and look me up at the barracks any time, as civilians are allowed in the park, every afternoon. I live in No. 7 Building, to the left of the building where Jan used to be, which has the sign 'Pouthy', written on it. My building is marked 'Right Half D', with C.S.M. underneath, which means that the Company Sergeant Major lives there too. We are very comfortable in our quarters and would like to remain here a little longer perhaps.

Tonight I am going to supper with Mr. Patterson. He has put in an application for the position of Paymaster, or, failing that, quartermaster, in the new 89th Battalion. If he gets this position there will be another master gone from the College.

The magazine 'Fairplay' now attacks Dr. MacRae, for the reason that he advised conscription; and in a lecture, praised the German method of doing things, but said that they lacked religion. Fairplay says 'Why

does not Dr. MacRae go over to Germany, and teach them religion. We could easily spare him, and he would also be the means of making the Germans perfect". I hope he reads this.

Well I must close my letter up now, as I have no more news. I told MacAllister that McLean was coming to Calgary to study for an exam. They used to be schoolfellows up in Innisfail - McA said "A lot of studying he'll do, I know him too well!" I wonder if this is true?

Hoping to see you all soon

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
December 1, 1915

I presume you have heard from Jack lately, and therefore know most of the news. I went up with him to see the Adsheads last Sunday, and spent a very enjoyable afternoon, which might have been still more enjoyable, but for this reason, which is, sausages. We had them for breakfast at barracks last Sunday morning, and owing to the fact that we seldom see them down here, we must have eaten too many. By Sunday evening, nearly the whole Company was prostrate, I felt very sick during the afternoon, and had to leave the Adshead's house earlier than I intended.

The effect is gradually wearing off now. We saw the soldier, Vernon, also Miss Adshead, who was knitting socks for the 82nd. Later in the evening a couple, called Mr. and Mrs. Dash called in, also two of Vernon's friends, the Thomas brothers and we had a musical evening. I played the 82nd. March 3 times for them. Mrs. Adshead becomes very excited in her talk about the war.

She was very angry because, when Vernon was inoculated, he had to saw wood the same day. She said "I think it is a great shame to make you do it, and I wouldn't have done it, for the King of England - naeow" as if to defy contradiction! All her sentences have the same ending. She also told Jack - " I think the Germans are terribly cruel, yer marmar thinks so too!"

We were shown pictures of Harry, and tears were very near. Mr. Thomas, Vernon's friend, is thinking of joining the service as a motor driver. He reasoned it thus. "If I could get the son of a gun(i.e. the motor bike), started, I think I could steer". Later on Vernon gave a little lecture on the retreat from Mons, which was very instructive. Mrs. Adshead is convinced that the war will be over in 4 months. Because (she says) some Canadian officers wrote home to that effect. Mr. Adshead exclaims "But marmar how can they tell?" "Well they can, and BELIEVE ME THEY KNOW \* NAOUW". Vernon assumes an attitude of strict neutrality during these frequent little outbursts. Miss McGill is in great favor down there now. She is a "dear little girl", "so musical", etc., and she must come and stay with them at Xmas if possible!

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park Camp  
Dec. 2nd. 1915

Thursday:

I have caught a very bad cold again, and am on light duty. This gives me plenty of time to finish my letter, I am enclosing one from Jack. I met one of the Taylor boys, who has enlisted in the 89th. He says that he likes it so far, but has only been in 10 days. May is very angry because he was given two days C.B. last week, and he wants to transfer into the 89th. too. There is some talk about holding us in Canada in case of trouble across the line. We have all been given new Lee Metford rifles, in place of the old Ross.

I have ordered 1 doz. Christmas cards with suitable greetings, and a photo of myself inside of each, to distribute among all the relations for Xmas. They will be ready by next Monday to mail, and I will send you a sample. I have seen the proofs and they are satisfactory, I think. This is quite the latest idea in Xmas cards now among the soldiers. Meanwhile I am sending you a photo of our section, and one of the old D. Company, which I hope you will like.

I have collected quite a number of photos, which were taken during the "going away scare"

Jack passed on your letter to me yesterday, and I was glad to hear the news. Last Tuesday night I went down to a social given to the soldiers, when some new club rooms were opened. There are now 3 club rooms open to us in the city, which is very nice.

It is now almost certain that we shall be here for Christmas; in fact I see visions of the 56th. patrolling the border all next year. I shall get as long leave as possible. When is the Berrydale concert coming off? I suppose there will be no Red Lodge Xmas Tree this year. How is the new teacher getting on? Well I suppose I Must close up this letter now, as there is no more news. The Battalion is going for a route march this afternoon, so I am well out of it. Hoping you are all well

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
Dec. 8th. 1915

My dear Mother;

Thanks for both your letters. The reason that you did not get a letter from us last mail is because I posted the letter in barracks, on Thursday morning. I was on sick or light duty and could not leave the

grounds. I don't believe they ever collect the letters from the pillar boxes here.

I don't think I will write to Babs now, unless she writes to me first, I could not bring myself to write about such rubbish as "ruined hopes" as you suggest. Mr. and Mrs. Hodson took us out to supper last night, and on to a picture show. It was very nice of them. They are going north this week, I think.

There is a possibility of us getting five days off at Xmas. I hope we do. The latest arrangement now is this. They are going to split the draft Company up among the other companies. I think this is an awful shame, after we have been together as a company for so long. Several of us, including myself, are going back into the new "D" Company, as we were "D" before. But we shall all be scattered. So much for the Draft. Unless they give me a new uniform soon, I shall be indecent. My trousers keep on breaking out in holes, and as soon as I try and mend one hole, another appears. The tunic is in a little better shape, but very shabby.

We had a paper chase to-day. It was much nicer than drill. It lasted about an hour and a half. I think this is going to be made a regular thing. Then we have lectures every morning and yesterday we had a long route march.

I shall remember your suggestions for Xmas presents, and will order your photos on Saturday if I can find the place.

Well I think there is no more news, so I will close. Jack is writing independently this time. I hope you will get both letters. We were inspected today by Colonel Cruikshanks.

With much love to all

**Letter No.**

Sunday, December 12, 1915  
Y.M.C.A. December 12, Calgary

My dear Mother;

How did you like your little parcel of photographs? The truth was that I didn't know exactly who to send one too, and what were all addresses and so I thought that the simplest way would be to send you the whole business, and you would be able to do the rest. I hope you like them. I thought they were rather good, especially the little verse part. Don't forget to notice my new cap; also the belt, borrowed for the occasion. After a lengthy search I managed to find your photographer, whose studio is not exactly opposite the bank of Commerce. I asked him for two more photos of the two girls. He replied that unless I could get him a copy of one of them first, he would not be able to give me any more, as he seemed to have completely forgotten ever having seen you. It seems that he forgets names very easily.

I see by the papers that we are to have about 4 or 5 days leave commencing from the 23rd. of the month. So I will try and come home then, and will let you know about trains, etc., later. I believe that Jack will get away next Saturday, for which I envy him. Our life down here now, is what Kathy would call monotonous. The weather has turned bitterly cold, with fresh snow. In the morning we drill till about 11. When a lecture is given. The afternoon is generally taken up by a route march, or drill. I am glad to say that we do not make an appearance outside, before breakfast now. They used to make us run around the race track.

I made a noble attempt to get to early service this morning. Corpl. Fielder said he was going too. It is held at 8am. Well I got up earlier than usual on Sunday (about 7.20) rushed through my dressing and made a hurried breakfast. By this time Fielder was discouraged, saying that we could never make it now, but I was going to try. I had just got my coat on, and going out of the door, when our sergeant saw me, and called out "Hi, I want you to carry a prisoner's breakfast up to the guard room". By the time the prisoner's breakfast was taken up, it was too late to think of early service.

I did not go to the MacRae's last Sunday, but am due there to-night. I saw Arthur Grayburn yesterday. He is going to get his Mother to ask me up to the house soon, so he says.

Kathy's letter is full of interest. Mrs. Williams ought to be kept in a glass case labelled "A Rare Species of the genus Shufflus, Snuffles Mulier Britannica Pro-Germanica."

I must close up my letter now. There is no more news from here. Hoping you are well, I remain.

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

Y.M.C.A. Calgary  
December 15, 1915

I feel quite lost this week. They have divided the Draft Company up among all the other companies in the battalion, which is a scandalous thing to do. Just imagine; we have all been together for practically 6 months, and become well acquainted with each other; also our officers know us. Then suddenly we are all broken up and put among strangers. If you had been down at barracks this week, you would have seen nothing but men staggering under huge loads, consisting of kit bags, straw mattresses, etc, and surrounded by a halo of straw from the said mattresses; trying to find a place to lay down their burdens. Of course the wildest confusion reigns in all the companies at present. I, among others am put in D Company, which is composed mainly of recruits. This Company was recruited for the purpose of taking the place of the Draft, after it went away.

Under the present circumstances, the 56th Battalion finds itself about 100 men over strength. These guilty ones are herded together in one of the buildings, preparatory to being either transferred or discharged. Such is the condition of affairs at present. Austin May is in D company also. Last night, our first in the new Company, the man in charge of the fires at night, went to sleep and let them all go out. Consequently we were almost frozen this morning, as there are about 5 broken windows in the building. The only bright Spot on the horizon is this; we are to be given 6 days leave for Christmas, two days being allowed for travelling. Please expect me then on Thursday morning December 23rd, unless I write or I phone to the contrary. If I cannot get off then I shall get 5 days at New Years. If I get Christmas leave I shall have to return on Tuesday evening, December 28th. Needless to say I shall try and come home for Xmas I think this is very good leave, don't you. Jack and I went to supper with the Grayburn's last night, and afterwards to a concert at Paget hall. I enjoyed myself very much. Tomorrow evening I am invited to go out to the Theatre with the Riview Staff. Soldering is not so bad in Calgary just now.

I hope you received my photographs safely.

There being no more news just now, I will close up my letter. I shall be looking forward to next week, with great eagerness. I hope there are plenty of rabbits to shoot. Remember, the 10:40 a.m. train at Bowden on Thursday morning, December 23rd. Should contain

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park

My dear Mother;

I have arrived, back safely, as you see. I hope that Dad was not too cold coming back. The train was very full and we had great difficulty in finding a seat. Vernon got on the train at Olds, and soon found us. We managed to get a double seat, and Vernon brought out a pack of cards and suggested whist. But the only difficulty was that there were only three of us. However there were plenty of soldiers on the train, and we soon persuaded one to make up a fourth. Miss McGill and Vernon were partners against myself and the other fellow. They won both games (we played two). By this time Calgary was near so we put away the cards. The unknown soldier was very nice (82nd B) from Kent and I enjoyed talking to him. Then practically from Airdrie to Calgary Vernon tried to persuade Miss McGill to come up to the house and see the folks, on our immediate arrival. She protested that she could not, as some people were to meet her in Calgary at the station but he said maybe they wouldn't be there. The following is an example of the dialog,

Miss McGill "It's really impossible Mr. Adshead."

Vernon "I think the best plan would be for you to come right up to the house and have tea with us."

Miss McGill "But how can I when I've sent a telegram to Helen, to meet me at Calgary."

Vernon "But maybe the telegram didn't get there. I know the CBR are very lax about telegrams."

Miss McGill "I have not found them so"

Vernon "Oh yes they are, besides you will be ten days in Calgary to see your friends. I think the best plan would be for you - - etc. etc."

But it was no good for she wouldn't come so he had to be content with a promise that she would visit them while she was in Calgary. When we got to Calgary, "Helen" was there. Vernon and I, laden with Miss McGill's baggage were introduced. We saw them on a street car and "Helen" knew where to get out, so we went our several ways. Vernon asked me up to the house instead, and on the way up he said "I don't believe Miss McGill wants to come and see us". I felt quite sorry for him.

There was a terrible gale blowing in Calgary, and it was very cold. I had supper with the Adshead's. Cecil was there, also a cousin of theirs called "Ben". They were all very nice and we had some music. Vernon began to brag a bit about military life, and "Ben" said that he "ought to be in it by rights", he guessed, but that he didn't seem to have the fighting spirit. In fact it had no attraction for him. Then Mr. Adshead would commence to rail at the Germans in a very ... [missing]

#### **Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
January 13, 1916

Thanks for your letter. It must be very cold up at Bowden. We are having it very cold down here too - at least we read in the paper that the temperature was 36 below zero last night or 42 below this morning. As far as we are concerned it might be the warmest chinook weather. We get up at about 7, and have breakfast. The morning is generally spent by me in reading "The Woman in White" (Wilkie Collins). Sometimes a lecture takes up part of the time; the subject now being "Hand Grenades and how to use them". After dinner we are taken for a short walk (it can hardly be called a route march) without rifles. We generally get back at about half past three. This completes the day as far as training is concerned.

Our barrack room is always beautifully warm, day and night. Could even Pat wish for more than this. [?] I was very much amused at a piece of news I saw in the paper, which said "Owing to the severity of the weather, church parade is discontinued at Victoria Park until further notice. The fighting men will be allowed to attend their own church in the city." We are those fighting men.

It seems to me that I set the literature for our section. Whatever book I get is always read by the others. They are taking it in turns to read

"With the Cossacks", and those that have read, it like it very much. I have already promised to lend "The Woman in White". As I belong to three libraries at once we always have plenty of books. There is a very good play being put on at the Grand this week called "The White Feather", or "The Man Who Stayed at Home". I shall try and see it this week. I often go down to the soldiers Club, and try over some songs for the fellows who bring music. Tell Miss Bishop that the "Perfect Day" and the "Little Grey Home in the West" are great favorites. There is a man of the 89th. who has a very good voice, and plenty of songs. They had a concert down there last Sunday, and I met Mrs. Spence, who did not at first recognize me.

Most of my friends are in other battalions somehow. They sometimes ask me why I don't transfer. You were mistaken about all those men going to Red Deer. Only Lovell is going there. He has entirely reformed now and (he says) never touches a drop.

Please tell me in your next letter that the thermometer registers 50 below zero and is still dropping. The news may let some cool air into the barrack room. I can pay for that book without any financial assistance. The girl I mentioned was not Miss McGill. I know that for certain.

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
Jan. 23rd. 1916

My dear Mother;

I was afraid that the weather was too cold for you to venture out on Friday. We are certainly having a cold spell of it again. The sentries here do not hold rifles, as it is so cold. I am glad to say that I have not been on guard lately.

Jack says that the College is very cold, and that the boys spend most of their spare time in one of the stores opposite; which is the only warm place. I found him there last night when I was up near the College.

I put in for a midnight pass on Friday in hopes that you might turn up, and when I found that you had not arrived I went down to the soldier's club and played songs for some of the fellows. They are getting up a concert there this week, and have put me down on the programme for a piano solo, and also for a few accompaniments. I am not very sure of the solo. I hope that you will be able to come down when the weather changes, but don't count on seeing me at the station, unless it happens that you come on a Saturday. The Daughters of the Empire (Sir Richard Granville Chapter) are putting on a musical Revue on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.) Wouldn't you like to see that? Don't be afraid of exceeding \$10, as I have lots of vile trash and shall get \$23.10 of it at the end of the month. You must go and see the Adshead's while you are down here.

Have you heard whether they received my photos at home? It is rumored in military circles that we shall leave for England before we are many years older. Some men place no faith in this report.

I went to supper at the Grayburns' last week, but I think I told you this and am there fore repeating myself.

Well I think there is no more news just now. Can't you persuade Dad to let somebody run the farm for a few days and come down to Calgary with you. I should be willing to contribute another \$10 or \$15 for your joint expenses. Think it over.

With Much love

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park  
January 27, 1916

My dear Mother;

Thanks for your letter. It must be very trying to have such cold weather out in Red Lodge, and I expect that Dad wishes he had somebody to help him with the work. The thermometer is very low down here also generally between 30 and 40 below zero. Of course we can do nothing in the way of drill just now, and so spend our time indoors listening to lectures etc. It is very monotonous. This morning for a change we were all taken down to the Allen Theatre to see some war pictures. This was very interesting. I don't see how anybody is left alive in the trenches, what with trench mortars, hand grenades and bombs. These hand grenades are dangerous things to use. We have been having lectures on the subject lately. Some of them are timed to explode in 4 seconds after lighted, and if the unfortunate thrower has not thrown it before this he will get the full benefit of the charge. Then again a bomb thrower must be able to throw at least for a distance of 30 yards. They are talking of forming a grenadier section from our company, and I am not anxious to join it.

It must be maddening to have a broken pump during this weather as it takes a much longer time to haul the water up with a rope and a bucket - I know. I hope Miss Bishop's rendering of "Lead Kindly Light" was appreciated at Olds. It does seem funny that Dr. Stevens should be sent to Godalming. Aunt Grace wrote me a nice letter.

I have been reading several books lately, among which are - V.V. Eyes, "Stark-munro letters" (Doyle), "Westways" (Mitchell). There is really not much else to do. I hope the weather will soon break and that you will be able to visit Calgary, at my expense. The more I see of War Pictures, the less hope I entertain of coming back complete in body and mind, so we might as well spend all the money we can now. Thanks very much for the "Punches". I passed them on to another fellow - Irishman

named Crody, Rank - Lance Corporal. You would like him. I don't see much of Fielder just now as we are in different companies.

Well I must close my letter. I don't see how my chances of promotion would facilitate your trips to Calgary. Please explain by return. No news. With love to all

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park, Calgary  
Feb. 16, 1916

As I have received no letter from home this week I conclude that you have written to Jack this mail. We are having an awful time here. Just now, the 48 hours C.B. having been lengthened indefinitely. We have not been allowed out of barracks since last Friday - nearly a week now. It seems that the authorities are determined to make a complete investigation of the origin of the raids of last week. During the investigation it seems that we are confined to barracks. Instead of interning the aliens and foreigners who are at the bottom of all this trouble, we are interned instead - so it seems. Meanwhile armed guards and patrols, prowl around the streets; each company going out in turn at night. My company is going on to-night at 10. A man in uniform is liable to arrest if found on the streets; double guards are posted everywhere here; officers stalk around the guard room with revolvers, roll calls are held every hour after 6 p.m. We have no liberty at all. I feel sure that when we are released there will be a bigger row than ever down town. We might as well all get into it as we all have to suffer for it in the end. Last night the married men were allowed out for two hours, to see their wives. Thursday; There is good news for us to-night. Half of each of the companies to be allowed out to-night. Half of them were out last night, and to-night I shall get a chance to go out. It is really awful to be kept in all the time. I have applied for leave to come home on Saturday afternoon, but am very doubtful if I can get it, and the worst of it is that I shall not know until the last moment if I can come, but I shall do my best, even as far as sending a wire to General Hughes if necessary. I suppose the only thing I can do is to phone you from Bowden, if by any chance I get up there. I hear that there was a big fire at Bowden last week.

Well there is no news, beyond the rumor that we are leaving very soon, which mayor may not be true. I feel like a prisoner of war. I shall do my best to come home on Saturday.

With much love

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Victoria Park, Calgary  
February 27th 1916

Thanks for your last letter. I had make an appointment to meet George Bell yesterday evening, but he did not turn up again. I suppose he was on some duty. I was on guard myself, last Friday. We had quite a snowstorm all yesterday and to-day is clear and colder. Jack came out with me last night, to Pantages.

It seems quite probable that we shall move in about a week, but this may not be the case. I don't expect the authorities themselves know anything about it. One of the 82nd men thinks that these reports are spread abroad for the express purpose of deceiving the Germans. In his opinions, these rumors about our early departure are widely circulated and encouraged, then Suddenly the 82nd Batt. are to be shipped off and rushed to the front. The surprised Germans, counting only on meeting the 56th, will be instantly forced back, and their defeat assured. This suggestion is certainly open to comment and also to objection. It just shows up the conceit of some battalions. I should like to send you the "Eye Opener" of last week. It is very good, especially on the subject of the late riots. In the society column of its pages, appears the following notice. "Mr. John Rioux, the proprietor of a certain house in Riverside, gave a pleasant little "At Home", on the 10th which was largely attended by the military. At the conclusion of the evening, Mr. Rioux found that he had no home to be "At Home" any more. Refreshments were partaken of, on the self serving plan and an enjoyable time was reported by all present". I must send you the paper.

There is a man in D Company who comes from Guernsey, and whose people live there now. His name is Green, and his father keeps a tobacconist shop in the High street. He knows everybody in the island, I told him that we had lived there for some time, but he didn't seem to remember our name. Do you know Greens in Guernsey?

He told me that the cashier in Kolbs comes from Guernsey too, this must be the girl who spoke to Mother that time.

I have no news just now so think I will close up my letter. As soon as I know for certain when we are going I will let you know. It seems that there is much fighting on the western front just now, and the Germans have not broken through the French lines, and have lost heavily. I hope you are all well, and all the family.

With much love

I remain your loving son

P.S. I am not writing a separate letter this week. Just thought I would put a P.S. on Graham's to let you know I am alright so you won't worry. The College is much the same but things have been a little better the last few days - only had 2 mistakes in 2 days which is quite a record. Tell Mr. Bishop that Spencer Goddard has been promoted to Captain.

Yours sincerely Jack

**Letter No.**

Y.M.C.A. Camp 56  
March 1st. 1916

Thanks for your letter. I do not think that we shall leave here on Monday. We may leave some time next week, but as the time approaches and no preparations are made, it makes a person feel doubtful. I may be up for Easter yet. Jack has told me of Dad's mistake about Aunt Aggie's letter. He apparently made a mistake on the envelopes and we are imagining Aunt Aggie's surprise when she gets her letter (intended for Jack) which probably reads "Sorry to hear that you got another licking and hope that you will behave better in future etc."

I am sending back the letter which Jack received. I hope that Dad will be able to come down and see us off, but quite understand that you will not be able to come. As the time approaches for our departure(!), I begin to find that I do not approve of war at all, and begin to wonder how my principles allowed me to enlist! I can't help thinking how fortunate it is that the French, and not the Russians, are holding the western front. In the later case the Russian armies(still intact)could be strongly entrenched behind the Pyrenees, while Verdun, Paris and all France would be temporarily in the hands of the enemy. Then you would read about how this was a vast piece of military strategy on the Russian part - a trick to deceive the enemy.

I have put \$25 more in the bank, making a total of \$50. I went down to Linton's this evening to pay for the book, but the store was closed for the day. I shall have to wait till Saturday. At the very thought of dentists, my teeth ceased to bother me, and I can't very well go to the dentist and say that my teeth sometimes ache. I am very busy studying First Aid just now. We have lectures every day on the subject and I dream of my occipeteral bone, the Femoral artery; also the taros, the metatarisus and phalanges. I went as far as buying a book on the subject. It is too cold to do much drilling in this weather, and we have lectures instead.

I hope that Dad is not working too hard. The cold weather is an awful nuisance isn't it? I have not yet found a suitable appointment for him in Calgary. I looked through the advertisements of a local paper yesterday, and found that men were urgently needed to learn the Barber trade. But I thought this would hardly suit.

Thanking you in advance for the promised hamper, I will close my letter. Don't begin making the cakes yet, or they will be rather stale I am afraid. Sorry to hear of Jim and Pat's failure to enlist. Their efforts in this line were evidently strongly resisted. I have seen nothing further of George Bell. Hoping you are quite well.

I remain your loving son

Victoria Park, Calgary  
March 15th 1916

**Letter No.**

My dear Mother;

Just a few lines to say that we are off at last. I was really very sorry that Dad had to go home on Monday, and that he had a journey for nothing. It was most unusual to put off our departure like it was put off. However we shall leave to-night by G,J.P. To-day we are very busy packing up of course.

I hope you will address all my letters to Grandpapa until I can let you know my address; which of course I shall do as soon as possible. I have bought some postcards to send off from time to time. I have also bought a notebook, which I intend to use as a journal. I hope to be able to see Jack today. I saw George Bell yesterday for a few moments. He promised to look me up to-day. I believe Miss Bishop is in town too, but don't expect to be able to see her, as we are kept in barracks all day - prior to our departure for the station. I think I shall ask Jack to open your hamper, and do up some of it in a smaller parcel for me to carry, and keep the rest. It is really impossible for me to carry such a heavy package down to the station, as I have so many other things to carry. We have several articles of equipment, which have to be worn. I have put a change of socks, and also some extra handkerchiefs in my haversack together with towel and soap and a few other necessities. I am sorry that Dad is not in town, but perhaps it is just as well as they are allowing no civilians on the platform, and so I would not be able to see him at the last moments. I am sure that it is better for you not to be down. I hope that in my absence Dad will not sell the farm. I should like to think of coming back to it again. I saw Mr. Thomson down here last Saturday. Mrs. Grayburn kindly sent me a packet of candy to eat in the train.

Now I must close my letter up. I hope you will keep well and not worry about anything; and that Dad will find the work easier now. Give my best love to Kathy and Denison, tell Denison that when I have killed all the Germans I will come back again with lots of German chocolate. Tell Monica that I will bring her some Dresden china from the war. Hoping that you will receive this letter; and will continue to write.

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

On S.S. Baltic  
Halifax Harbour  
March 22, 1916.

My dear Mother;

I said that I would write a letter at the first opportunity. Well this is the first chance that I have had to write anything but postcards. I hope you received all my postcards. I will try and give you a resume of our journey up to date.

As you know we left Calgary last Wednesday afternoon. I must say that the train was very comfortable. There were three of us to one section - that is the two seats. We slept one above and two below. On Thursday morning, we had gone as far as Wainwright where I sent off a card. The same evening found us passing through Saskatoon.

At each town, of course, we made ourselves heard as much as possible and generally were given a good reception. One place deserves special mention in this respect; and this is a little town called Biggar in Saskatchewan. Here, the town band; consisting of trombone, cornet and drum (female), came down to the station and played for us. It was the funniest thing to see them playing away, amid the yells of delight of our crowd. It was a bitterly cold day, and snowing at the time, but they didn't care, but played on. We thought they were the Salvation Army at first. The scenery around Biggar is very desolate, with nothing but snow as far as the eye can reach.

On Thursday night we passed into Manitoba, and reached Winnipeg at about 2 p.m. on Friday afternoon I happened to be on baggage guard then, and was unable to leave the train, but the battalion went for a short march through the city. Of course we only saw the worst part of Winnipeg, and I saw practically nothing of it. We left Winnipeg at about 6 p.m. and by Saturday morning were in Ontario. Still the amount of snow seemed to increase. The scenery around Ontario is very wild, and thickly wooded. At a place called Cochrane, in Northern Ontario, were given some exercise. Here we proceeded by a new railroad; the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario railway. The scenery was very pretty just here. We reached North Bay, on Sunday evening, late. On Monday morning, about noon we reached Ottawa. I have always felt interested in Ottawa, and was very glad to see it in daylight. We detrained here of course, and with full harness commenced to march out of the station. Here I should like to say something about the streets of Ottawa. They are a disgrace to the Capital. We had to march up a steep hill, which was covered with ice, and lots of manure on top. We marched past the Parliament Buildings, where the Duke of Connaught reviewed us. Coming down the hill was awful, and after our long journey we were very stiff. It seems a shame that the fire at Ottawa did such damage to the Parliament Building. It has ruined them.

On our return to the station we were again inspected by His Excellency; accompanied by several "Aides". Then we entrained again. The Ottawa ladies distributed apples and cigarettes among us. From Ottawa to Montreal, the land is divided into neat fields, and looks prosperous. The little towns are all French; the principle feature of each being a fine church. We arrived at about 7 O'clock Monday evening. It was unfortunate that we were not allowed to get out of the train at Montreal. Much backing and shunting etc. was done here. We left Montreal at about eleven o'clock, that night. On Tuesday we were travelling through Quebec province. Last night we entered New Brunswick and this afternoon we arrived at Halifax. One of the things that impressed me on the journey, was the amount of snow they must have had down east. At Winnipeg we saw a snow plough at work. In some places the fences were covered. At Portage la Prairie, some of the houses were snowed in, and we saw a number of freight cars, snowed up to the tops. Then the weather was so cold. We were told at Winnipeg that for about a month the temperature never went above 40 degrees below zero. At a

place in Ontario they told us it was 40 below, the day before we came. they had to use snow ploughs all the time to keep the railroads clear. I must say that the inhabitants of the various towns were very nice. They always shook hands with us, and asked for souvenirs. Only the French-Canadians seemed rather indifferent. I will finish this letter tomorrow.

Thursday evening I will try and finish this letter to-night. I was saying that we had a good reception at any town where we happened to stop for a short time. The people were very obliging in the way in which they posted our cards, and bought stamps for us etc. But I think that we ought to have been allowed to see a little of Montreal. As it was we were not allowed to get out of the train. One of our sergeants was left behind somewhere in Ontario, and he had to come on in a freight and join us later on.

After leaving Montreal, we were on the Intercolonial Railway to Halifax. This railway runs parallel to the St. Laurence river at some places, and the scenery is very fine. I believe that there were some fellows who played cards steadily from Calgary to Halifax, with intervals for eating and sleeping. The scenery made no difference to them. All through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia the country is very pretty, but I don't care much for Halifax.

As far as duties went in the train, I was quite lucky. The method of serving meals for the first part of the journey was as follows; About 3 men from each car were told off to fetch up the rations and serve it out to their own car. Then they had to sweep out the car. The railway company supplied each man with a knife, spoon fork and plate. Then in addition to this ration fatigue, they had a man stationed on guard at each end of the car, presumably to prevent anybody from jumping out of the car. Then a number of men had to guard the baggage and ride in the baggage car. I had to go on baggage guard once, and did one ordinary guard.

At the time of writing we have been on board for one day, and the ship still remains in port. I don't know when we shall sail; perhaps we are waiting for the Russian drive on the eastern front to materialize. We are very crowded on board, and the weather is very bad; the decks covered with snow, and a blizzard blowing all day, which keeps everybody below deck, where the putrid smells alone would make a person seasick. They hold parades here twice a day. We line up on the promenade deck in such crowded order that we cannot form fours. The roll is called, and then we are dismissed. It is a matter of form. This ship is a steady one, I believe and hope. There are several sailors on board who have been taking a gunnery course in Halifax, and are going home now. They have got hold of a song which goes as follows:

"Here we are again; here we are again  
We licked them on the Marne  
We licked them on the Aisne  
We gave them hell in the Dardenelles  
Here we are again".

I was very sorry that I could not take that hamper with me, but Jack knows the circumstances. I was very glad to get the photos that Miss Bishop sent; also the joke about the Dirty Turk and the regimental goat, was very good. I will send off some postcards when I can buy them, but at present there are about 500 men all trying to get in the barbers shop at once. I hope that this letter will reach you safely. I think that somehow we are trying to lure the German navy out, by staying in Halifax. Now I must close up my letter. Hope you are all well, as I am at Present.

Much love to all  
I remain your loving son

P.S. One of the 82nd. fellows at Calgary predicted that the 56th. would only get as far as Niagara camp where they would be held on guard duty. He added that in a few days we should have the pleasure of seeing the 82nd. flying past, being bound straight for the front, where they would earn "deathless fame" and enter Berlin in triumph. As far as Niagara camp goes, he is mistaken, but, if this sort of thing does go on much longer, we may well expect to see the 82nd. batt. over there at least as soon as ourselves!

P.P.S. The steamship "Royal George" also taking troops, is lying quite close to us; also the battleship "Paesar" and the cruiser "Niobe". Our own ship S.S. Baltic, is one of the largest of the White star liners; about 22,000. She carries two battalions. We anticipate a rough voyage, as the weather is very bad at present. I have kept a Diary since we left Calgary, and hope to continue it until we arrive on the other side.

**Letter No.**

On Board S.S.  
Baltic Halifax N.S.  
March 31st. 1916

Dear Jack;

I believe I promised you a letter, or at least a postcard. Well, I now take the opportunity of writing to you, and am only sorry that I cannot give you my address, as yet. I suppose you will want to know how we have been disporting ourselves, since we left Calgary station, on that memorable afternoon. I have already written home and given a brief account of my experiences up to date.

The Grand Trunk Railway is, no doubt, very excellent in its way, but not to be recommended for sightseeing, or speed. The route traverses the northern part of Saskatchewan, and Ontario. We left Calgary on

Wednesday, and on Thursday morning, were in Saskatchewan. On Friday afternoon we reached Winnipeg. The next day found us in Ontario province, and on Monday afternoon reached Ottawa; and late that night, arrived at Montreal. Here we left the G.T.R. and proceeded on our journey by the later-colonial Railway. On Tuesday we travelled through Quebec provinces, and were in New Brunswick that night. The next day we reached Halifax about 3.30 p.m. So you see we were a whole week in the train. The principal feature of the journey was the unending snow. It seemed to be deeper as we went along. Then the cold was very intense, all the way down. Inside the train however, all was very nice and comfortable. The sleeping arrangements were as follows; three men were assigned to two berths; one above and two below (not zero). I was fortunate enough to share a lower bunk. Then the railway company supplied us all with eating utensils, and we had small tables which could be attached to the seats - but you know what they are like. A ration fatigue was detailed to serve out the stuff to the men. Then they had men on guard at each end of the car, to keep us from getting out at the stations. These were the only duties that were kept up. In fact for a while, life was quite pleasant. We had nothing to do but amuse ourselves. Magazines were distributed among us. At every important stop they took us out "en masse" for a little exercise, but no man was permitted to leave the train singly, except the officers and sergeants, who were very careful to favor every town with the light of their countenance. Of course heads were permitted to be put out of windows, and at every stop they were to be seen. Also such expressions as "Hullo City, Oh you chicken, Won't you speak to me Mabel, Don't speak to him Miss, he's a married man. I love my wife but oh you kid, Hullo gir-r-ls", might occasionally be heard as we layoff for a few minutes at some town to take on water, or change engines. In fact, the appearance of only one of the female species on the platform, was enough to cause a rush of heads to the window, be the temperature ever so low. At one place in Saskatchewan the town band played for us at the station. I happened to be on guard when we reached Winnipeg, and so could not leave the train, but the Batt. went for a march through the town. At Ottawa we were inspected by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught; in fact we stayed there for about 3 hours. The "Cuties" and "Mabels" of Ottawa were very kind. They came down to the station and distributed apples and cigarettes among us, in the train. It was quite an ordeal climbing up the slippery hill, which leads to the Parliament Buildings, where H.R.H. reviewed us, especially after our "enforced" idleness, which as Pat remarks, is very trying! One chap, behind me, fell flat down on the ice, and I staggered back into the arms of my nearest neighbor, more than once. As it was so late when we reached Montreal, we did not get out of the train at all, but Montreal came to us, so to speak. Of course at every place, the people clamored for souvenirs, a badge, flag, or anything. One of our fellows, having given away all that he had, abstracted the badge from my cap, to give as a souvenir. Luckily I was able to prevent this in time.

The journey from Montreal to the New Brunswick boundary, was very interesting. All the towns are French and generally very picturesque. At one place where we detrained, called Riviere du Loup, nobody could speak English. The names of the places were a puzzle to most of us also the people. They did not seem to appreciate the 56th. At Montreal one of our men, leaning out of the window, and surrounded by the fair sex, was giving away badges freely. Suddenly a hideous old negro came up, "Got a badge mister?, got a souvenir", he whined. "Get the \_\_\_\_ out of

here", shouted the enraged private. In New Brunswick all was British again, and appreciative, "Good-bye, boys, Don't spare the Kaiser". One old woman, about 55 was very enthusiastic. "I wish I were a man" she declared. "I'd go. You bet your sweet life". Then some girl said. "I'm glad my brother's not old enough". One girl was very busy talking to the boys, when her friend pretended to be very shocked. "Would you believe that she was a minister's daughter?" she asked us. "Oh do be quiet Mary", said this divine's daughter.

But I could write pages of this sort of stuff if I had time. However I must bring my letter to a close. On our arrival in Halifax we immediately embarked on S.S. Baltic, a fine ship of about 23,000 tons. She carries over 2000 men. The "Adriatic, Olympic, and Empress of Britain" are also here. We have been in harbour since the 22nd., waiting for sailing orders. We are very comfortable here, with practically nothing to do. We have physical drill for two hours a day, and boat drill sometimes, which consists of getting ready to occupy the lifeboats in the event of the vessel being torpedoed.

I hope to write a fuller account of our life of shipboard in my next letter, but have no room for any details here. I hope you have not had any more floggings, and that an amicable feeling prevails between yourself and your worthy preceptor. I will write again as soon as possible, but for the present ...

I remain yours very truly (is that right?)

**Letter No.**

Dibgate Camp,  
Shorncliffe, Kent, England  
April 15, 1916

My dear Mother;

I expect that you have been wondering what has become of me. I believe that I wrote last from Halifax, where we remained for 10 days, on board ship all the time of course. The reason was that we had to wait for the other ship "Adriatic" to load up with troops. We finally left Halifax on Saturday April 1st. accompanied by the "Adriatic", and "Empress of Britain" both carrying troops. The first day out at sea was very foggy, and rather rough, and most of us including myself, were seasick at first. However we had a very good passage on the whole. They gave us 2 hours physical drill daily, but we had the remainder of the day to ourselves. We were very comfortable on board ship, and not too crowded either. In fact I enjoyed the voyage very much.

When we approached the danger zone they made us wear our life-belts all the time, (each man was supplied with one). They also practiced a sort of boat drill, which consisted of falling in, at a given signal, on the various lifeboats, and being ready to get into them in the event of the ship being torpedoed. However I am glad to say that neither the lifeboats or belts were needed this time.

On April 8th. Saturday, we sighted the coast of Ireland, and on the next afternoon we arrived at Liverpool. It was generally supposed that we should have landed at Plymouth, and everybody was surprised when we came to Liverpool.

There were some rumors that we were going to a camp near Liverpool, then it was supposed to be Bramshott. However they landed us off the boat that same night, and onto the train. It seemed very funny to be on these small trains again, and most of the fellows were highly amused at the sight of them, especially the goods trains and coal trucks used in this country. I wish I could remember all the remarks that were passed. I remember hearing that "This country is 400 years behind the times," and also something about "antiquated methods". The scenery that we passed through, the roads, fields, in fact everything was subjected to much comment. By the time we were on the train we knew that our destination was Shorneliffe.

We arrived here last Monday (April 14th.) and it was a lovely day too. It was about 10:30 a.m. when the train reached the Station. We were immediately marched but to Digate Camp, 2 1/2 miles away.

Oh the first few days at camp! I shall never forget them. You must know that at present we are lodged in tents, but huts are being built close by, and they say that we shall occupy them, later on. When we arrived the tents were up, but that was all. They were not prepared for us here at all, as far as the commissariat was concerned. For breakfast on Tuesday morning we had 1 piece of dry bread each, and a little tea, minus milk or sugar. For the first few days our food was on a par with that, and was eaten in a most uncomfortable manner. They bring the food to our tents, and the ten of us sit down on the ground and scramble for it. Complaints were great about this, as may be imagined. Of course we realize that we must put up with hardships in this country, and cannot expect the same rations that we had in Canada, but after living so well on the boat, this is quite a comedown for us. Things are getting better now in this respect, Then the weather has been so bad, with rain everyday, and bitter winds all the time. The soil around here is of a sandy substance and when wet, makes the worst kind of mud. To-day we have improved on the rain; having had several terrific hailstorms accompanied by regular gales of wind.

The discipline here is much stricter. We have already noticed that.

You must be correctly dressed, down to the smallest detail, when you leave camp; you must shave and clean your buttons every morning, you must actually get up reveille (the idea); you must never fail to salute an officer anywhere in town or camp. Now in this country, even the privates of some regiments, wear the same sort of an overcoat as an officer and it is very difficult to distinguish between them. Our training hours here consist of 3 1/2 hrs. in the morning (8 to 11:30) and 4 hours in the afternoon (1 to 5). We are not allowed to leave camp before 5:30 p.m. and must be in by 9:30.

Soon after we arrived here we were inspected by the Brigadier-General of the Division, and he was very pleased with us.

It is about 1 hours walk from here to Halstead. I went down there on Monday night, and they were very surprised to see me. I stayed to

dinner; they have a son of Uncle Garnet's staying in the house. I forget his name. He is about 10 years old. There is whooping cough in the family, and so he is staying away from home. Lionel has to stay at school for his holidays. Granny and Grandpapa were very nice; and asked me to come down as often as I could manage. They have invited Donald Rasleigh, who is a drill instructor at Hythe, to dinner to-morrow, and wanted me to meet him, which I hope to do. Grandpapa wants me to get a few days leave and stay with them next week, and I am going to try and get a furlough. Auntie Dolly looks very much like you, I think. Granny says that Auntie is coming down next week, and wants to see me. I suppose I shall have to change my shirt. Aunt Torie wanted me to come up to London to-day and see her, but I could not get off. Granny also said that I should have to see A. Mary at Beaconsfield Terrace, Hythe; so if I can only get leave I shall have a nice time.

Well I must close up my letter now, as it is getting late. I have caught rather a bad cough here, and want to take care of it. I have received one letter from you since our arrival, dated March 12th. I hope that you will get this all right. I shall probably have lots of news in my next letter. Hoping you are all quite well and with best love to Monica, Kathy, Denison, Dad and yourself.

**Letter No.**

Moore Barracks Hospital  
Shorncliffe, Kent  
April 27th. 1916

My Dear Mother;

You will probably be surprised at the above address. The fact is that soon after I wrote my last letter, I was laid up with Measles. Several of our Men are here with the same thing. It started on the boat, and I suppose now, is working its way through the whole regiment. I had a bad cough for several days, and felt very seedy, and was put off duty for a day. The next morning I had a rash all over my body, and so of course went up to Dr. Gray, who told me that I had measles. I went to hospital the same afternoon in the ambulance, for I was really quite ill, and could hardly speak.

This was on Tuesday, April 18th. and I have been here ever since. It is a very nice place, this hospital and overlooks the sea. It is a very large one too, and I believe, well filled with patients.

I am able to go outside now, after being in bed 5 days. I expect to be out in another week. They are going to send me down to another hospital in Folkestone called Westcliffe, to have my throat examined as the Dr. thinks that I may have adenoids. I hope this does not mean another operation. Meanwhile I remain here. It is really a very nice place, and the nurses are awfully good. There are two patients to one ward; several 56th. men are here, also with measles. In fact there is quite an epidemic here.

I went to lunch at Halstead on the Sunday before I came here, and met Donald Rasleigh. He was very nice indeed. His wife and child are coming over and will stay at Hythe. I believe they are on their way over now.

He expects to get a commission at any time now. He said that he always had most happy recollections of the time he spent at Red Lodge, and asked to be remembered to you all. Miss Bishop and her sister also came in during the afternoon, and Mr. Bishop was there too.

I have had several letters from you and Dad lately. In your last one, dated April 1st. you did not know where I was. I wrote you a letter from Halifax, and sent Monica a postcard of the ship. I also wrote Jack a letter from Halifax, where we remained for 10 days, I hope these have not miscarried. I hope that you will come over here in the early autumn as you say, and only wish that Dad could come over too. It would be better to come by New York in spite of the conduct of the New Yorkers at picture shows. Perhaps Miss Bishop had penetrated into the German quarters. I am sorry that Jim Boggs was refused on account of his eye, I suppose he could not even go to the front as an eye-witness now! The whole fate of the British Army hangs in the balance until Pat can sell his horses. Only then can we hope for the end of the war. Denison seems to be looking forward to his trip to England. I am glad I am "some use" after all, but shall I continue so if the German chocolate is not forthcoming! Give him my love. I suppose Jack is at home now, and very busy, with the seeding operations. Pat ought to be in the region of the Argonne.

Everybody seems to wish that the war was over, even the troops themselves say so. I wish it were over too, and cannot get up much enthusiasm for killing, or being killed (especially the latter). Some of the men indulge in the most gloomy thoughts. "its no use you, thinking about ever going back to Canada," they say, "because you're not going back. I think the miserable weather is responsible for most of this pessimism, and Dibgate camp is noted for its muddy condition. One paper said that it bid fair to rival Salisbury Plain in this respect. When I left the camp to come here, the weather was very bad, but for the last week it has been glorious. The chief complaint that the Canadians deem to find with this country beside the weather is the fact that they cannot get enough to eat at the restaurants here, and what they do get, (they say) is not worth the price. They complain that they are being "done" all the time. Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe are all judged by the quality of the eating houses, and I believe that is all they look for. I suppose that prices are very high in this country, and most of the Canadians had heard that things were so cheap. I think the men want to go up to London to "get something to eat".

Of course in the evenings there are no lights in the streets, and all the shop windows are closed, and everything is quiet. It is very difficult to find one's way anywhere after dark. The Zeppelins have been active again on the East Coast but have not done much damage. A portion of the German fleet rushed out and threw some shells at Lowerstoffs, but were driven off after 20 minutes battle.

On the same day we could hear the sound of heavy firing quite plainly from here, and I have been wondering if that is what we heard. In fact scarcely a day passes but that we hear the steady rumble of artillery. What does Dad think of the "Sinn Fein" affair at Dublin? The opinion here seems to be that "what's his name" will certainly be shot.

It is certainly very nice to have a rest in hospital. Soon after,

I came here I managed to send a letter off to Halstead telling them about measles, and soon afterwards I got a bag of oranges, some biscuits and books sent up by Aunt Dorothy. It was very nice wasn't it? Auntie is staying at Halstead this week and she also sent up some things, and a letter which I could hardly read, but I gathered that she was very sorry not to be able to see me, but I was to come up to London and stay with her for a few days, when ever I could get a few days leave. I don't know when I shall be able to get leave though. I had a letter from Aunt Mary Adam soon after I arrived here, asking when I would be able to come and see her. I have not been able to answer her letter yet. She said in her letter, "What's your rank? Are you captain or major?" I don't know whether this was put in good faith, or merely sarcasm.

This evening I found another bag of fruit, which I suppose was sent up from Halstead. The other patients all wonder where it all comes from and decide to cultivate my acquaintance. I suppose you know where the 56th. is stationed now. The full address is Dibgate Camp, Cheriton, Shorncliffe. I believe that we are attached to the 10 division (reserve). I don't know how long we shall be stationed here, but expect that it will be for some months. I wish you all could come over here this summer and let the farm. If the military authorities don't pay the \$15 per month over to you, please let me know. Several of the patients here have been to the front, and they all give the same advice to us. "keep out of France". One fellow said, "By gosh if they try and send me back to the front, I'll go and get drunk". "That's no use", answered another, "they'll even take you out of the clink (prison) and shove you in the firing line." Well I think I will close up this letter now. Please give my best love to all the family. If you bring Denison over here this summer I'll try to get him a commission in the infantry. I will try to keep you informed of the principle events over here. Hoping you are all well.

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

St. Martin's Plains  
Shornecliffe, Kent.  
May 14th. 1916

My Dear Mother;

I was very glad to get your letter and Dad's last week, in which you said that you had received a letter from me at last, from Halifax. I wonder if Jack has got my letter too. How does he enjoy having measles? I found that after the first 3 or 4 days they did not bother me much, and as he has so recently had his tonsils removed, his throat ought not to trouble him very much. It must be very upsetting for you though, to have sickness in the house.

I went down to Halstead yesterday, and Granny told me the news about Jack. She also said that you had sent the other children down to stay with Mrs. Boggs; so apparently everything is friendly again. It is hard luck for Dad to have all the work of the farm on his hands again,

especially at this time. I was in hospital for 16 days, for quarantine, and I suppose that Jack will have to lead a hermit's existence, or withdraw temporarily from the world, for the same time.

Since I wrote last, we have seen some changes here. Just two days ago, a Draft of 300 men from the 56th., was sent to Bramshott, to reinforce the 50th, stationed there. I was on this Draft, and had just resigned myself to the thought of leaving Shorneliffe, when my name was taken off the list. Then I was put on again as waiting man, but when the Draft left I was not needed after all. Of course, I am very pleased at not going to Bramshott. Nearly all my company has gone though, and I expect that new Drafts will be formed from time to time. To-morrow the remainder of us will commence on a musketry course, that is to say, we shall go shooting on the range at Hythe. This is about 5 miles from our camp, and we shall have to march down, do our shooting, and march back the same day, for ten days. I hope I shall make the required score, but I find these service rifles very heavy; and we have to fire some rounds with fixed bayonets. When we have finished our shooting I hope to be able to get a weeks leave. Grandpapa wants me to stay at Halstead all the time, but A. Jo asks me to come up to Godalming for a few days. A. Torie has written to me twice, inviting me up to London; Auntie expects to see me soon; Aunt Mary Adam particularly wants to see me soon too. But Grandpapa says "When you get leave, stay here; don't go running all over the country". The problem is easily solved now, as I cannot go anywhere, but hate to remain here until the musketry course is finished. Rather a sad incident occurred at camp here the other day. A man in our hut, who had been put on the Draft, cut off three of his fingers with a hatchet, last Tuesday night. I think he wanted to stay here and not go to Bramshott, or perhaps he thought that he would soon be sent to the front. At any rate, it has been proved that he did it intentionally, and it is generally supposed that he will get a heavy punishment - probably two or three years imprisonment.

I saw Bandmaster Joiner standing in front of the canteen the other day, and have seen him with his band several times since, so cannot vouch for the truth of the rumor, that he has been shot as a spy. It is very funny that several of the fellows have had letters from Canada, as King, "Is it true, has Joiner been shot?" or "There is a rumor here that your band master has been executed", etc. But I cannot understand how the report ever came out about 400 of the 56th. having deserted before we arrived at Halifax. I suppose by this time we have greatly distinguished ourselves at the front; made a most magnificent bayonet charge captured 20 lines of trenches, and in fact done all that rumour can make us do.

We have had very changeable weather lately, but I am glad to say that the huts are very much more comfortable than tents. I went down to Halstead yesterday afternoon, and met Elaine, who is staying there now. I think that she has changed very much, but is not so tall as I expected. Aunt Dorothy says that Stella is taller than Elaine now. Grandpapa invents the most extraordinary names for her, such as "Old Swipecy - Matilda Jane", in fact he says the first one that comes into his head. Last night at dinner he announced "My inside is all out of order, I swallowed two corkscrews, and they are both stuck in my navel". "Oh Edward Edward, do be quiet". (from Granny) - "Well what's the matter now Mother. I've got a navel haven't I?" "Edward, we've heard enough". Also "I've got an unkind wife who doesn't care what

happens to me. I can feel those corkscrews all the time etc.". Elaine and I went to call on Mrs. White, who has rooms in Sandgate. As it happens Mr. White was in too, and so I saw him. He was very nice, and promised to let Mr. Adamson know where I was. Mrs. White hopes that you will be able to come over here. I saw A. Beryl and the twins. I said to Pinkey - "Do you remember Barham?" She answered, "Yes, do you remember Monica?" The other little boy, Pat I think, is rather shy. Their lodgings are just opposite a military Hospital, the Bevan, and A. Beryl takes them in sometimes to visit the wounded soldiers. One of the twins said "We saw a man with his arm off".

I hope that Jack will be better soon, and that none of the others will catch it. Tell Dad that I have saved about 8 pounds since my arrival in England, and have deposited 10 pounds also in a local bank so that I do not need any money yet. I hope you have received your monthly allowance for April.

Well I must close up my letter now; please give my love to all the family. Miss Bishop was very excited when she heard that Denison was coming over to England.

With much love  
I remain your loving son.

**Letter No.**

St Martins Plains  
Tuesday May 30 1916

My dear Mother;

It seems ages ago since I last wrote home, although compared to some things, it is not so very long. I think in my last letter I said that we were going to take a course of musketry at Hythe. Well during that week, I had no time to write to anybody. The very day after we had finished up with the range, I went on pass for 6 days and as you imagine, had no spare time then. Now I have returned from my leave, and at last find time to send a letter.

I shall start from where I left off before. We all went down to the range for a week's shooting. We used to leave camp at about 11 a.m., and arrive back at about 7 in the evening - very tired and dusty. If I had written at all at that time, I should probably have told you that I was tired of the army and hated everything military and civil, and why did I enlist. But you were spared all this, fortunately. I was lucky enough to qualify in my shooting. In fact I passed for a first class shot. This is very gratifying. We finished up with the shooting on a Friday, and on Saturday I got my pass for 6 days. I went down to Halstead and stayed there until Tuesday. Uncle Hubert was home on leave then, the hero of Gallipoli; the man who had slain his ten thousands. He is very nice I think, but looks rather thin. It is rather embarrassing for a Canadian Pte. to be in the same room as an Ordnance Officer. However, I think that he understands how things are. On the next day, Sunday, Aunt Dorothy and I went over to Lydden, to see Uncle Morrice, who as I was going to say, is stationed there. Lydden is an

awfully nice little place indeed, and the rectory is a very charming house.

Uncle Maurice [Morrice] inquired after you all in Canada, and was very nice to me. I did not remember Aunt Dora, and of course I didn't know the children. It is very confusing to have so many cousins. I am offered the hospitality of the rectory at any time. I expect Aunt Dorothy told you all about our journey through Dover, so I needn't go into details. On Monday I went to lunch with Aunt Betty at Hythe where she is staying just now. Then on Tuesday I went up to London with Miss Elaine Lewis. I must say that Elaine is a very nice girl indeed. I suppose that you do not mind me saying that. An interesting Belgian in the train, evidently thought the same as I did, for he got into conversation with us somehow, and was delighted to find that Elaine could converse in his native tongue. He talked for nearly the whole journey, mostly in French to her, and she told me afterwards that the compliments flew. Monsieur had not known that the English girls could be so charming; he had always imagined them to be cold. Ah! how he was mistaken. What a sweet smile Mademoiselle had. Can you wonder that the attraction was mutual?

I think that Aunt Jo was very amused. Jo put the finishing touch on all this, he insisted on taking down her name and address "Mlle Ele(ho)aine Loues, Surri, Godalmin", (as he wrote it). What a good title for a book. "romance in a 3rd. class carriage!") I believe that he secretly hated me. The gentleman was married however, and had a girl who was in a Folkestone school. He gave us each his card - "Monsieur Edouard Gillaume; ingenieur."

When we arrived at London, we drove "en Taxi", straight to Montague Street, where Uncle Cecil is also staying. Aunt Torie was staying down at Halstead at the time, so we had the place to ourselves. I will continue this letter to-morrow.

Tomorrow When we had rested for a little while, we walked over to the flat, and saw Auntie, who was very nice. I shall tell you more about her, later. After dinner we went to a cinema near the Marble Arch. Afterwards I went on to Rickmansworth for the night.

I found Aunt Mary staying at Oving with Aunt Grace and Cousin Maude. She was very glad to be able to see me, and was very interested in everything, and asked any amount of questions about us all. What did Kathy mean when she wrote to Aunt Mary, saying that she hated being a girl and wished that she were a man; also that if she were a man she would be a piper? Aunt Mary is very pleased, and is going to send the letter on to Uncle Frank. It is rather confusing being at Oving, because Aunt Mary and Cousin Maude generally are both talking at the same time while Aunt Grace, being rather deaf, has to have things explained to her occasionally. But they are all very nice. Aunt Mary is very anxious for you and Dad both, in fact all the family to come and live in England after the war.

I was only able to stay at Rickmansworth for one night so I took the mid-day train back to Marleybone, and went on to stay the night with Auntie at the flat. Now we come to it. Auntie is losing her memory. It is really sad. She asked me if I could come and stay with her on Wednesday night; and it was all arranged. Then on Wednesday morning she

went and phoned to Elaine at Montague Street asking what my arrangements were. Was Elaine coming to stay, or was I or were we both coming, and when? She was sorry that she was going to be full up on the following Monday, but anytime before that, she would be delighted to accommodate us. Then it all had to be explained over. I was coming for one night. Elaine would be staying at Montague Street. However we both went to dinner at the flat, and I met Cousin Flo. there. Afterwards Auntie suggested that we should drive to Waterloo Station with Cousin Flo. and then afterwards Pell should take us on for a drive somewhere in the carriage; this programme was carried out, and we arrived back at the flat for tea. In the evening Uncle Cecil came to dinner, and so I met him.

During a conversation, Auntie would suddenly turn round to Elaine and say, "Your room is quite ready for you dear", - "But I'm not staying here Auntie Graham's staying the night." "Oh but I can easily put you both up. There is no need to alter the arrangements is there" - "But its all arranged, Auntie, I stay at Montague street. Graham stays here for the night". "Oh, I see, Graham stays here. Yes. And tomorrow night you both stay here do you, or only one of you?" "Do you see Auntie, we arranged to go down to Godalming tomorrow - "Oh I see; yes, Godalming to-morrow" etc. This would have to be re-explained soon afterwards. Auntie is very pleased with something you said in your letter to her about - "I wish I were sitting in your drawing room talking to you". She told me this story; I should say regularly every hour. I don't know what she would do without Simmons. Simmons was very nice. She remembered me quite well. Before I left I gave her a "Canada badge", which I think pleased her very much.

On the following afternoon, Auntie very kindly offered to let us have the carriage, to go down to the Coliseum Theatre, and afterwards to take us to Waterloo Station, where we would meet Uncle Cecil, and all of us would go off to Godalming (By we I mean Elaine and I).

These arrangements seem quite simple, But they had to all be written down for Auntie as follows. "Pell - calls-for-us-here-at-2o'clock-takes-Graham-and-me-to-Coliseum-then-returns-for-our-luggage-and-meets-us-at-Coliseum-at-5:30-then-takes-us-to-Waterloo-station. "And then", adds Auntie, "I shall expect you both back here for tea". What can a person do?

Well anyway we went to the Coliseum, and enjoyed it very much indeed. We found the carriage waiting for us outside, and drove to Waterloo. There Uncle Cecil met us (thank heaven he some memory), and we all went down to Godalming. I seemed to get on much better with Auntie this time. She was very nice especially in the way that she allowed us to have the use of the carriage.

She did not come out at all, as she had rather a bad cold all I don't think she has a very clear idea of what the colonies are like, for this reason. We were talking about the present Government, and she asked me, "I suppose you have a Parliament in Canada". I said it was quite probable. "Oh yes, " she went on to say, "it seems that all the colonies have; for instance there's that man Hughes". (She referred to the Australian Premier who is staying in England). While I was staying at the flat, Miss Keith and Mrs. K. came in to tea. Some people do ask the silliest questions about Canada. "I suppose your father has lots of

cattle and horses, but what a bore it must be when they break the fences ". I can imagine how bored a Canadian farmer would feel, as he watched somebody else's cattle breaking into his grain field.

Well I have brought the thread of my narrative as far as Waterloo. I forgot to say that While I was in London, I wired to camp, to try and get a week-end extension on my leave. I expected to go down to Godalming that same day, and so I asked them to wire a reply c/o Lewis, Godalming. Well the reply came sooner than I expected; in fact I was in London when it came to Godalming. They could not grant an extension. When Aunt Jo got this telegram, she thought that this meant I could not come to Godalming at all. So she did just that I should imagine that you would have done. She wrote out another telegram to London, saying that she was coming up by the afternoon train, and hoped to see me before I went back to camp.

She gave this to the telegraph boy, and he went off with it. However directly he had gone, Aunt Jo changed her mind, decided not to send a telegram at all, so she sent Angela rushing after the boy to bring the telegram back. Then she phoned up the flat to find out what I was going to do. Luckily I was in then, and was able to let her know; that is in any case, I was not due back at camp until the following evening, so could come down to Godalming just the same. This phone message upset Auntie, as she concluded that all our plans were upset again. "So you're not going down to Godalming after All" she said "and you'll both be staying on here of course. My dear, I can easlly put you up. Don't think about that". We had to begin at the beginning and explain everything one more. If you stay with Auntie when you come over, I wonder what will become of you both!

Just before we left the flat, Uncle Hubert and Aunt Beryl called in to dinner. He was up in London buying Kit or something. He is very pleased that he does not have to go back to Egypt, because the War Office have given him something to do in France. I think Aunt Beryl is pleased too, because it will be nearer and he will not be in the firing ling.

Well I must get on with my letter. We arrived at Godalming at about 7:30p.m. last Thursday, and were met at the station by Stella. Now Stella is much bigger than Elaine, and has quite changed since we met before. She was very excited over something, and it appeared that the evening before, an aeroplane had fallen in a field, and had been wrecked. She had seen it all. Stella is very interested in aeroplanes, while Elaine likes the navy. Aunt Jo was very nice when we arrived, and everything was very charming. I should like to live in a place like Godalming. When I arrived Angela had gone to bed, but I was taken upstairs, and saw the lady nevertheless. During the evening we at in the drawing room and talked. The girls are very much amused at Aunt Jo: because the other day she went into a shop and asked for a "yard of fish". (Just what you might do). Then they all say she can never find her way anywhere, and gets lost even in Godalming. Then they all say that she can never remember the names of places; and says for instance that she is going to shop in Mandalay, meaning Godalming. She asked me what time I left Rangoon, meaning how long ago (Can't you see yourself doing it?)

On the following morning, the girls showed me over Charterhouse school, which is quite close. It was very interesting indeed. Later on, when we

came home, I saw 1. Rosemary, 2. Antony, 3. Chappie. I gave Rosemary a badge, in fact I distributed them freely. Angela came in for two, Stella and Elaine one each. Angela said "I shall write to you; I shall write twice a day". Stella is very fond of telling funny stories, such as the tale of the gentleman in church who found another person sitting in his pew. He said, "Excuse me sir, but you are occupewing pie but if you wait, the Verger will Sew you into a sheet. Then Elaine and I would try and think of some "Coliseum" jokes, and so the running fire of wit would go on. Uncle Cecil is rather quiet through it all, but is polite enough to laugh at the jokes.

On Friday afternoon I left Godalming, and came back to Shornoliffe, as my pass was only good until Friday night.

Such is a brief account of how I spent my leave. I needn't say that I enjoyed it all very much. It is so nice to get away from this life occasionally, and I do get so tired sometimes of soldiering. I suppose you know that our regiment has sent several drafts to the front lately. When I arrived back from my leave, I found that nearly all the battalion had been sent to France. We are only about 200 strong now, and I don't know what is going to happen to those of us who remain here. Then we have also sent a Draft to reinforce the 50th. at Bramshott Camp. I do not know at what moment the rest of us May be sent.

At present I, with eleven others, are taking a course in bomb throwing. They have picked 3 men from each company for this. I never had much ambition to be a grenadier, but it's all in the days work - bombing - marching or shooting. It is a change from our regular work anyhow. I expect they are just going to test us in this, and later on, will pick the best men.

Last Sunday Miss Bishop came up to camp, bringing with her Pte. Jim Doherty, who has been home on leave from the front. I mean that he has been to Ireland. He was due back in France that night, and so Miss Bishop asked me to come down to tea at Kyle House, while he was there, which I did. Of course I did not know Doherty very well, but they all say that he has changed very much lately. He seems to be more serious now, and not in such gay spirits. Of course he has been through the big battle of St. Eloi, where his lieutenant went crazy under fire and that must make a difference to a man. He was very nice I thought. I hope he comes through all right. After we had seen him off at the harbour, we went on to a band Concert on the Leas, and I met Canon Gardner (or Gardener), for the first time. I was not very struck with the reverend gentleman. You have said twice in your letters, that you have not yet received any military pay. Well the reason is I think that the authorities are going to send over the amount for April and May, at the same time, so you ought to be getting \$30 at the end of this month. I have saved up 10 pounds which I shall hand over to you, to help towards your passage. Would you like me to send it over, or shall I give it to you when you arrive here. I could send it over in the form of a Draft, or you could get it on this side. I suppose there is no chance of the whole family coming over, is there? The change would do Dad good. I wonder if I could get an opening in England somewhere, after the war and support you all in this country I cannot bear the thought of ever living in Calgary again, and I like this country very much.

I hope that everybody is well at home. You must make this letter for everybody, for I think it is the longest that I have ever written. How are Monica and Denison? Does Kathy drive about yet? Are the measles all gone? I had a letter from Jack the other day, after he had the measles. Is Mrs. Dort with you now? Does Dad feel very "bored" when the cattle get into the grain.

Hoping that you have a safe passage,  
I remain your loving son.

**Letter No.**

St Martin's Plains, Shorncliffe.  
June 3rd. 1916

My Dear Mother and Dad;

Thank you both very much for your "birthday" letters, and good wishes. I did get some presents too; Aunt Jo gave me a wrist watch with an illuminated dial, which will be very useful. She also gave me a new razor. I did not have breakfast in bed, on my birthday as Kathy suggested, but spent the day in learning how to throw bombs. The following day, I went down to supper at Halstead, and met a Mr. Stubbs of the C.F.A. (friend of Aunt Dorothy), and also saw Uncle Hubert, probably the last time before his departure for France. Meanwhile with us, events have been moving quickly enough. We have had to supply another Draft for the front. My name was on the list, but when it came to the medical examination, I fell down, being rejected as medically unfit for the front. Dr. Gray did not do the examining, for we have another man now; Dr. Gunn. He looked at my heart, (rather, listened to it) for quite a long time; in fact, gave me a pretty thorough examination, then said, "Reject this man". Now this is rather hard for me, as all the fellows I know, are going to the front, while I have to remain here, "medically unfit". As far as I know, I am as fit now as I ever was. But listen to the result; for some time past, the authorities have been looking for men to work up in London in the Canadian Record and Pay Office. On account of so many new troops coming in, there is a great deal of work to be done in the London Office, and clerks are wanted. Now, as I cannot go to the front, I have been thinking of going in for this. Our Adjutant says that he will do his best to send me up there, and Capt. McDonald, said that it would be a good thing for me, and very kindly offered to do his best to get me into this Office. Several other men from our battalion are going up for this job too. The very fact of it being in London is enough to make me jump at the offer. Do you think that I am doing the right thing by trying for this? I have been rejected for the front, so I couldn't be called a shirker could I? Of course it seems totten [?] to be taking up a safe job, while the other boys are facing death in the trenches. But the boys themselves all urge me not to let this opportunity go by. One very nice chap in my company, who is probably going to the front to-morrow said to me, "Don't you think about going to the front. You go to London. I want to see you get that job. You're young and healthy, and can do your duty in London as well as in France".

I have therefore put in an application to be transferred from the 56 Batt. to the London office, and I hope that it goes through. I could

not bear the thought of remaining in this battalion any longer, after this Draft goes away, as I should be practically a stranger in it. There are scarcely a hundred men in the regiment now. So that if I went and am able to hold on to this London business, you and I ought to be able to have a fine time in town when you come over. The hours up there are, I think, from 9 till 6, and the salary something like 10/ a day. They say the work consists chiefly of copying, and writing so that ought to suit me.

I was very interested to hear all the Red Lodge news. It must have been a surprise for the Lee's when their place was burnt out. I can imagine the excitement in all the neighborhood. I hope Babs and G. Bell will be married soon. When does he expect to get away? I should like to see the Hodsons'. When do they leave. There was great excitement here over the recent naval engagement. I am sorry about the "Queen Mary" going down. Haven't we got a relation on that boat? Well I will close up this letter now as I have to answer all the other letters. Monica's letter amused me very much. I remain your loving son.

**Letter No.**

St. Martin's Plains  
Shorncliff, Kent, England  
June 18th. 1916

My Dear Dad;

I received your parcel the other day. Thank you very much for it; the marshmallows especially were good. I hope that you are getting all my letters safely. I generally try and send one letter a week. You know that I am sending Mother 10 pounds to help towards the passage, etc. Well the other day I told Grandpapa about this; as I gave him the cheque to put away for me, soon after I arrived here. It happened that he had forgotten all about this; and had deposited the amount in Lloyds Bank, Sandgate, in his own name, so that now we are having great difficulty in drawing it out again. I had to write a letter to the Bank Manager asking him to let me have the amount; as he would not let Grandpapa draw it for me. I have not had a reply from my letter yet; so that if the money is a little delayed in transport, she will know the reason why. I have not yet heard anything from the Record Office, but my application has now been in for nearly two weeks, and I should have word about it soon. I have been told, from the Orderly Room, that if they do not want anymore men in London just now, the adjutant is going to get me a job at Headquarters - what sort of job I do not know. Everybody is very obliging here, and also very nice. Captain McDonald has gone to the front; being transferred to another battalion. He was invited, and went down to Halstead to tea one day, and they all liked him very much, though they said he was rather quiet; but I think he enjoyed himself. Before he went away to the front, he shook hands with everyman from his original Company "D" (myself included of course) "Good-bye old boy", he said to me as he shook hands, "I'm off to the front. Tell your Grandpa that I was sorry not to have called in before I left, but I'll send him a line". Wasn't it nice of him to say that. I quite forgave him for not extending my harvest leave last year. Somebody called out to him "Good-bye sir; don't forget to bring a V.C. back with you". "Oh to h-ll with the V.C.", was the reply, "I'm looking for a dug-out".

I met Mr. Lieut. Harold Anderson (AM.C.) last night, in Folkstone. He was on his way to a Reception or something at the Grand Hotel, and could only speak to me for a few minutes. He is being transferred to Bramshott shortly, but his present quarters are the "Napier Barracks, Shornelift", not the "Seabrooke Hotel", as Mother said in one of her letters. The 82nd. and 89th. Battalions are here. Directly I heard that the 89th. were at Westernhanger (about 7 miles from Shorncliffe; I wrote to Vernon Adshead, asking him how he was getting on etc. and trying to arrange a meeting. He replied to my letter, and seemed very surprised to find that I was still in England; as a report had gone around that all this Batt. had been sent to France. He also said that he would look me up to-day; but failed to do so. I expect he lost his way. The best way to get to Westernhanger from here is to take the train from Shorncliffe; the stations are; Shorncliffe, Sandling Junct. and Westernhanger - quite close. A Motor Bus Service also runs to that place from Hythe. However I have not seen him yet; so I think that I will go to Westernhanger myself, next week, and look him up. Vernon also wrote that a Draft had already been picked from his regiment, and that he was in it, so didn't know how much longer he would be in England. At present they are rushing Canadians over to the front very quickly. Everybody is depending on Russia now to finish the war.

In our own battalion things are very quiet; we do not hurry, (except when the cookhouse call goes; we have no quarrel with anybody; we hear that there is a war going on somewhere, but do not trouble to make any inquiries; what we say to ourselves is this. "I do not care, let other people go and get killed, for I'll not mind about other people." These are our sentiments. Most of us are on fatigue or guard every other day, and the small remnant of the battalion not on duty has to undergo excruciating physical drill, and fierce bayonet fighting, under a frightful Instructor. Once when an Instructor like this, was drilling some men, it happened to be instruction on funeral parade. He shouted "You men, you want to put some realism into it. Imagine that you're at a real funeral. Look here now; imagine that I'm the corpse". Then he glanced down the ranks. "h-m that's better; but for one thing you haven't got that look of sorrow on your faces, that you ought to have".

I must close up my letter now. Hope that everybody is well. I had a long letter from Miss McGill the other day, describing her weekend at Red Lodge, when everybody had measles. She said that Mother gave her some disinfectant which nearly burnt half her face off. Is Baba married yet? Miss Bishop told me that Sandy wants to enlist!!! And that she doesn't know when she will sew Canada again !!!!!

With love to all  
I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

St. Martin's Plains  
Shorncliffe, Kent, England  
June 4, 1916.

My Dear Monica;

Thank you very much for your nice letter. I enjoyed it very much. You and Denison seem to have had a bad time, with measles. I had them too. Wasn't it funny? Will you ask Mother to let me know how tall you are? Aunt Jo wants to know if you are as tall as Angela. Elaine is not very tall, but Stella is about twice as tall as Kathy (and much stronger). I suppose you are quite as big as Kathy now, and also much stronger. Don't forget to hit her hard every day; it will make your muscles big. I sent Angela a funny post-card, the other day. She said that she would write me two letters every day, But she has not written one yet. Do you know, Monica, I believe that the reason is this. She does not know how to write letters, but says that she will write instead. You are not like that, are you? You don't say anything about it. You just write instead, which shows how clever you are.

If your plant does not grow quickly, sit on it; or better still, ask Jimmy Boggs to let you ride Consul; and make Consul tread on it. I expect that you must enjoy riding on Consul. I am quite certain that if Angela ever got on Consul's back, (if she was brave enough to ever get on) she would scream and kick, and fall off on to the ground.

**Letter No.**

St. Martins Plains  
Shorncliffe, Kent  
June 27th. 1916

My Dear Mother;

Just a few hurried lines to let you know that we are off to the front to-morrow. A Draft is leaving from this Batt. and I have been passed medically fit at last. I expect that this will be a surprise to you, as it is to me.

This Draft is going to re-enforce the 31st. Batt. I am very glad that we are going to the 31st. because I may be able to see Jan if he is still alive. I heard that Doherty had been wounded, but do not know how badly.

I managed to go down to Hythe last night, and let the people know about our departure. Grandpapa was in London, so I did not see him. They are at present staying in Aunt Mary's house at Hythe, and I think that they are going to let Halstead for a part of the summer. Aunt Jo is coming down to Hythe next Saturday, I think, and is going to settle with innumerable children, at the Lodge.

We were all presented with our identification discs, field dressing etc; yesterday, and had to parade in full marching order, several times, for inspection. In fact it was a very tiring day altogether.

"Take me over the sea, Where the German's they can't get at me. Oh my I don't want to die. I want to go home!"

Capt. McDonald is being sent back from the front, for reasons unknown. I dare say that he objected to being constantly used as cover from shell fire, by the 49th. Batt.

Well I will close up my letter now. I think that you may take this news as final. There is a rumor around here that one man in the Batt. was found to possess a wooden leg, and nobody knew anything about it until he was medically examined for the Draft. The report goes on to say that the doctor found out by getting a splinter in his finger. I will not vouch for the absolute truth of this.

I hope that the weather will be fine, from now on, and that the summer will be fine. If anything happens to me, will you see that my swagger stick and discarded underwear and ex-socks, will be duly forwarded to my next of kin. I am very much afraid that if care is not taken they will be burned by the Quartermaster Sergeant.

With love to all

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

July 7th. 1916

My dear Mother

I hope that this letter will eventually reach you. As you now see, I am on active service now. I never want to go through the experience of crossing the channel again on a crowded troopship. Nearly everybody was violently sick, and all the vacant space below, was filled with prostrate forms. I was glad when we landed at -- somewhere, where we are at present.

There are so many men at this camp that a person has to line up for everything. When you go to breakfast, there is a line of about 3 miles, between yourself and the cookhouse door; and it takes hours for you to work your way up; then at the canteen and Y.M.C.A. it is exactly the same - you have to wait hours for your turn. In order to be ready for parade at 7 am we have to get up at 4:15 here.

I don't know how long we shall be kept at this place. They keep up very busy most of the time with route marches, etc.

I am quite well at present, but feel pretty tired at the end of the day.

It will probably be some time before I shall be able to write again. Perhaps you will be able to write to me.

We have not been actually in the firing line yet.

I shall probably die of heart failure when we march into the trenches. One fellow most kindly offered to jump on my head at any time I felt tired of life. The worst of being at the base here, is that we can receive no mail here. It all goes up to our battalion.

There are many things that I would like to say but it is difficult to put it in words. We seem to be living in a very momentous time. A fellow can not in fact dare not look into the future; the present is enough. There is a very nice Chaplain at the YMCA here; he speaks to us all every evening as "my dear boys, dear lads" etc. I think that the "dear lads" appreciate him very much.

Well Mother, for the present, good-bye. I hope to see you again, in England. I hate war and loathe military life. Sometimes during a heavy march, I feel very unpatriotic. Give my love to everybody but "God Save the King".

Your loving son

**Letter No.**

July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My Dear Dad;

It is a very long time since I have had a letter from Canada, but I suppose that it could hardly be expected that a person on active service (like me), should get mail regularly. I am now with the 31st. Batt. in France. This morning I looked up Jim Doherty and found him the same as ever. We had heard that he was wounded, but this is not true. Jan Thompson has returned to England to take up a commission. I wish him all good luck.

As regards myself, I am quite well, although rather thin, (I try to persuade myself that this is true), and very anxious as to what the effect of shell fire is on the human body, (I know that this is true). I have not yet had an opportunity to practice my French on the people here. The ones which I have come across, seem to understand our language quite easily. Whenever the troops are marching along the roads, the children all shout "Souvenir, souvenir; biscuit, bully beef," and we throw them some hard biscuit, and they all fight for it. There seem to be great numbers of poor people in this country. While we were travelling up the line, one of the fellows threw a hard biscuit out of the train window at one of the towns, and three small kids all rushed for it, and fought and rolled in the street. They must be starving.

I hope that Mother will be coming over to England next month. I may be able to get leave in a few months, that is to say I may.

I hope however that the war will soon be over. I received Jack's letter the other day, and was very much amused at it. Tell him not to be so jealous; and also you might mention to him that if he wishes to curry favor at Godalming, he ought to join the Flying Corps, or, failing that, the Naval Service. In either case I should not have any chance of a look in. I will write to him myself when I have time. He might be

interested to know that I have met Jake Vigar in this battalion. He is in the bombing section. I had a letter from Halstead to-day, and heard that Jan had called in to see the people there. He said he was sorry to have missed seeing me, and I should like very much to have met him.

A party of us were in the trenches the other night, on a working party. A machine gun nearby was being fired, but we were about 400 yards behind the front line. Our turn for the trenches has not yet arrived. The weather is very good, and we are not yet bothered by rains, (as Jack hoped would be the case.)

Well I must close up my letter now. I hope you will get this safely. I am in 11 Platoon, C com. 31st. batt. I hope .Mother will decide to venture to England next month.

With much love to all

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My Dear Dad;

I am addressing this letter to you, as I do not know whether Mother will be on the way to England, by this time, or not, and what will be her future address. Just at present, all the letters which I get from you, are referring to my supposed appointment at the Pass and Record Office. You repeatedly say that you are so glad that I have got a home appointment. Well, they did their best to send me up to London, but apparently, everybody else was trying to do exactly the same thing. Sergeants gave up their stripes to go up, and of course I had no influence, then when new Drafts were ordered for the front, they decided to give me another chance of winning glory on the field. It was Captain McDonald who persuaded Dr. Guinn to reject me, the first time. (I found this out later). He told me often that he was going to try and secure the appointment for me, but soon afterwards he himself was sent to France, and so my chance was gone. The Adjutant (McFachen) did go as far as to send me and another fellow down to the local Pay Office, Sandgate, to report for duty, but it so happened the staff was full up there, and so we came back again. Then just before we left England our Adjutant told me that he was very sorry that he had failed to get me the appointment. Had we remained in England longer, I believe I might have got something, but, as I am fit and able for the front after all it is better for me to be here. I hope you understand everything now. I know it must have been a surprise to you when you got my letter written just before we sailed.

At present I am very well. Our brigade is out of the trenches now, at a "rest camp". This word "rest" is not to be taken literally. A battalion at "rest" is liable for anything. We may have to dig trenches, carry supplies up to the front line; and if not engaged in this work, we may have route marches, close order and physical drill etc. So "rest" does not mean much here. I tremble when I think of what "on duty" may mean, judging by comparisons. Our last spell in the trenches was short, only

48 hours, and my company was in support behind the firing line. I was up in the front line for a little while, carrying up rations, and I don't like front lines. Back lines are much more to my liking, or better still, no lines at all. A few shells screamed over our heads and landed a few (hundred - omit if necessary, especially if telling anyone) yards away with loud noise. Then of course machine guns are always busy up there. Altogether I was very pleased when our battalion moved away to our present "rest camp".

I see Jim Doherty constantly, and like him very much. We talk about everybody in Red Lodge who we can remember. He says that Miss Bishop was the swellest "kid" he ever knew - some dancer too! say that girl could waltz! (I quote his words) He also heard that Bob Neilson left Canada and is now in England, holding a commission. H. never liked Bob at all, and often tells me how his(Doherty)sisters, used to refer to Bob, as "that little sawed off thing." Poor Bob, if Jim and I both are lucky enough to come back to Canada I hope you will invite him up to the house, if he is anywhere in the neighborhood. The word "Canada" is looked upon as something almost sacred out here.

Tell Jack to write some more amusing letters. I hope he got mine all right. If Mother does arrive in England, I am going to write and suggest that she and (say) Auntie, hire a "crater" out here, and live in it till the war is over. I could then see her often. Craters are very plentiful along this line, but should it happen that there are none vacant; a nice reserve dug out would be just as good. They could live very happily in one, and call it "#3 Hans Crescent". If they liked (with "Harrods" just opposite).

I am very tired tonight having just come off an enjoyable restful route march of about 12 miles. I hope that it did us good. When you are writing to me it would be as well if you addressed the letter "Army Post Office, London". I am in "C Company", 11 Platoon, 31st. Batt. and of course you would put that on as well.

Jam Thomson has accepted a commission in the Irish Guards. I hope he will get on well. Bishop Pinkham's 80n is an officer in this battalion.

Well I must close up my letter now; I was glad to hear all the local news in your last letter. Has Pat not yet enlisted? I expect he found that his Ease and Comfort needed him. I wonder if Babe is going to be married or whether all this talk is a ruse to deceive everybody.

Hoping this reaches you and all the best love to all

**Letter No.**

Shells Bursting All Around

August 8th.

My Dear Mother;

I wonder how you are getting on, and what your plans are for the future. First I hear that you are coming over at once, then you change

your mind, and think you will wait until September. The last firm date I believe is Aug, 26. Well I hope that you will soon be certain about your plans. Can you have caught anything from Mrs. Norton? You will understand my meaning. I suppose the great difficulty is to let somebody to take your place at home.

I had a letter from Miss Bishop yesterday, and she said that she had been urgently requested by you, to come out to Canada next month and minister to the wants of the family, while you are away. She says, however, that this is impossible as she has other plans. (Query - What right have other people to make plans, which do not conform with our own?) Why don't you get hold of Miss McGill? There was an idea of her taking over the Red Lodge school at one time wasn't there? I wonder if she got my letter. Failing all these possibilities, I should think the only thing to do would be to bring the whole family along with you.

I am glad to say that things are very quiet along this front just now. The weather has been very good, but Oh, I hope and pray; then pray and hope again and repeat at intervals that we shall not be called upon to go through a winter campaign. The long, long nights must be awful. I thought that they were bad enough now. Of course one has to be on the alert all night, and the time seems endless. When dawn breaks, and the sun begins to come up, the order "stand down" is given. One man is left to keep guard, the others may endeavor (sometimes) to get a little sleep, but nobody is allowed to take off their equipment, and there were no dugouts in our front line, so it is necessary to be down along the bottom of the trench, with one's body following the bend of the same trench and (generally) the top of one's water bottle seems to be boring a hole in the small of one's back. If anybody wants to pass along, the trenches, you have to move out of their way. The men tell me that I walked in my sleep last time, and went up to the sentry asking him for a supply of bombs to take up to the front line. He even knows what I should have done with them if he had given them \* to me. A Mills bomb is a dangerous thing for anybody to handle at the best of times, but for a sleep-walker - Perhaps in the middle of the day everything seems quiet, and you find a nice warm corner of the trench to lie in. Scene II - yourself fast asleep underneath a large overcoat. But not for long - some body taps you on the shoulder - "Better come up this way sport, the concert is just beginning". You sit up sleepily and wonder if it is really worth while to move. Suddenly, a "coal- box" explodes, about 20 feet behind the trench. This would be enough even for Mrs. Norton. You leave your overcoat, rifle, everything (at least this is what I did), and rush for the nearest bay, where the other men happen to be. They laugh and say, "Why what's the matter, that was nothing at all. You don't call that a bombardment do you? Wait until- Rum Jar Coming Right Overhead Fellows!" yells the sentry. "Oh my Lord where? Down everybody". A sickening crash away to the left. All is over. Then you say to the others " W-w-w-ha-ts the m-matter?" "That's n-nothing, at all". and so on.

Well I must close up my letter now, but first of all I must tell you the story about the truthful private who wrote home and said, "Dear Mother, the other day I thought I was buried beneath ten tons of earth, but I found out later that it was only five tons".

I hope I shall never have to write anything like this.

I hope everybody is feeling well at home. I am sorry that nobody believes that Jim Boggs tried to enlist. As you say, it is quite possible that he may have really tried. How nice it must be for Pat to feel that nobody need doubt his word about enlisting. I should imagine that it would be quite safe to enlist now though. Just about the right time for some people. Most men think I am very young to be out here. They say "What made you come over here. Should have stayed in Canada". And sometimes I think, "Perhaps you are right, in many respects Canada is away ahead of this. The name of the nice man who spoke about me getting the London job is Vernon (last-name). He is now in the P.P.C.L.I. I never saw the other Vernon at all, while I was in England. I heard that Capt. Goddard was coming over here soon.

I always get several letters from the people in England. Tell Jack that Elaine often writes to me (ahem), and I to her (ahem again). The other day I received two very nice parcels, containing jam, cake etc. One was from Auntie Jo, the other from Aunt Mary.

Did you see much of the Grayburn boys this summer? I expect they often came up to the house. We have a Lieut. Toole in this Batt. I am afraid that I have not made a very good impression on him, for he chocked me up once for not having my rifle cleaned one morning. I had cleaned it every morning that week, except on this fateful day and they had not looked at their rifles at all. Of course on the day that I missed; omitted to clean it, all rifles were rigidly examined.

Well it is getting late, and we have to move out to night so I will close. Best love to all, and hoping to see you soon somehow or other.

I remain your loving son

P.S. We are not allowed to seal our letters. Perhaps we shall not be able to address them soon!

**Letter No.**

August 13th., 1916

Dear Jack;

I thought perhaps you would like to hear from me; at any rate I owe you a letter. I enjoyed your last one very much. You were very angry because I had managed to get 6 days leave, and was going up to London with a certain person. When I got your letter I was out here with no prospect of any leave for months - and the prospect has not improved since then. I expect that, by the time this interesting epistle reaches you, Mother will be on her way over to England.

Do you wish that you were coming over too? I wonder what the special work on the farm is just now - haying probably. As I recline at ease in my spacious (if somewhat cool) dug-out, near the front line, I think of you pitching huge forkfuls of hay up on to the stack, under a scorching hot sun, and I think myself lucky, until, without the slightest warning, a German. "coal- box" explodes (apparently) just outside the entrance of our cave, sending a shower of dirt all around. Then I begin

to wish I was back on the farm, doing anything, even road-work, with a baulky team.

We have just come back from doing ( ) days duty in the trenches. Out of this period we spent ( ) days in the very front line that ever was invented (curse the inventor). I did not rush out, screaming with terror, the first time, nor did I, single handed, capture an enemy trench, including 300 of the enemy, and thereby winning honorable mention in dispatches, and a probable V.C. No - I just stood in the trench with the others, feeling very shaky (How do some people itch to get at the foe?) I did not fire a single shot either - there was nothing that I could see worth shooting at. When the shells started to come over, thank goodness there were not many, there was not very much of yours truly, visible to the naked eye, and what was visible, wished that it were invisible. I envied the feelings of one of our sergeants, who stood upright in the trench and said "Hullo; there's a "rum jar", coming right into the trench too", without showing any concern. When we went back into the support trenches; things were a little bit better. I felt a little bit braver here - more inclined to make a bayonet charge. (Problem; If a person's courage rises 10 degrees for every mile he travels from the danger zone, how brave would a resident of Calgary feel? Work this out in your spare time. In the support trenches, you are not exempt from shell fire (I found this out at once). I suppose I could say that I have had some narrow escapes, but the mere thought of it makes my hand t-r-remble (remember we are not so very far from the front just now, so I will desist. However, I am brave enough here to clean my rifle ready for our next trip. I have spoken to your friend Jake Vegar, several times. He is in the bombing section (bombs are nasty things). He certainly lives up to the soldier motto "Keep smiling". We talk about Dr. McRae, and the College sometimes. Jim Doherty is in the same section. He looks very funny in the latest style of pants that he has adopted. He has them cut off short, above his knee.

I wish I could get certain people that I know out here. For instance I would crowd the whole Thompson family without any hesitation straight into the front line. All the Fosters would be there too, if I could manage it. I should love to see Fream under shell fire. I should make Pat sit on our barbed wire entanglement all day, to keep watch-- but what's the use of even thinking of such things- they never will happen.

Well I must close up this letter. Tell Kathy that when we are a little further away from the front line; I will write to her too. Meanwhile I should like to hear from any of you at any time. Tell the Grayburn boys that one of their uncles is an officer in my company. Mrs. Grayburn was very good to me - she gave me a box of candy to take in the train before we left Calgary.

Pour maintenant - au revoir  
From yours - as - before

**Letter No.**

August 19, 1916

My Dear Dad;

I wonder how you are all getting along and whether Mother has started on her journey across yet. In the last letter which she wrote, she said that a bad hailstorm had destroyed half of the standing crop. How unfortunate it is! but I suppose some other people were hailed out too. This is always a comfort isn't it? At present I am very well, having come through our last trip in the trenches all right. Yesterday afternoon we were inspected by General Sam Hughes. The inspection was to take place in a certain field near our encampment. A Belgian farmer, who owned this field, evidently objected to his land being used for such purposes by the military, for he dug a deep ditch around it thinking by this to keep us out. He did not keep us out however; a bridge was soon made across, but we had to post a guard there to see that he did not attempt anything else, in that line again. The inspection itself did not amount to very much. The General gave a speech at the end of the tour of inspection. In this speech he gave us to understand that when the Grand March to Berlin commenced, he would be on the spot, to lead on his brave troops. I was glad to be able to see him, as one hears so much about him.

I wonder if George Bell is married yet; and whether his regiment has sailed. Is there not a possibility of Mother and Babs coming out together? I expect that George will soon find himself at the front; they evidently do not keep troops in England very long now. I suppose Babs will have to look out for rooms.

I hope what you will not sell the place just yet. I should like to see it again. When I come back, which I hope will not be very long. Has Pat enlisted yet? It will soon be too late, unless we adopt some form of compulsory military service in Canada. Mother says that nobody seems to believe that Jim ever tried. Do you think he did? If he didn't, I hope that everybody's cattle get into his grain everyday of the year, and that Pat has to chase them out.

Our Platoon Commander is Lieut. Toole, and our Company Commander is Capt. Pinkham. Nearly every regiment that I have come in contact with, has a Toole in it. There was a Lieut. Toole in the 56th, who went over in one of the Drafts and I think there was another Lieut. Toole, in the 50th.

Do you remember when you came down to Calgary to see me off last winter and we did not go after all? I sometimes think of the performance we saw at Pantages - "September Morn" or something, wasn't it? The next day I was on fatigue, but managed to get out and see you and Jack; and we all went up to the Bridges house that evening. The next day you went home, and the battalion left on the following Wednesday.

With love to everybody  
I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

Somewhere about Sept. 11, 1916

My dear Mother;

I hear that you are already in England. Well I hope you had a pleasant voyage. I hear also that Denison is looking very well. Ask him if he doesn't feel ashamed of being in mufti at a time like this. You must excuse a short letter, as life is too exciting just now to settle down to any thing as peaceful as writing. We have all been very much disturbed just now by five or six shells which have exploded quite close to our dug outs. Somebody says that they were dropped by an aeroplane; but we could see no sign of any aeroplanes overhead; and there must have been to drop them. Anyhow the fact is they came. We have been engaged in digging deep dug outs - about 15 feet deep. The soil is composed of lime, and our dug out looks like a quarry. We have been working 8 hour shifts - from 12 midnight to 8 a.m. of course we have had all day to sleep. There is a fair size town not far off, where those who have any money, may get supplies. I like being with the Engineers better than with the infantry, although the work is pretty hard.

I have found out during the last two weeks that a shirt (especially if worn continuously for about a month) can contain a lot of sweet little things. They must be killed whenever possible. One was overheard the other day to say, "My dear, I think we had better move out of this infantryman's shirt. His language is too awful for the children to hear!"

If I cannot find time to write letters very often just now, I'll try at least to send you a "whiz-bang" (field post card). I had a letter from Miss Bishop yesterday. She said she was hoping to see you soon. Please let me know if you were sick, coming over. I suppose by this time you are rather sick of hearing from me (as Stella says), so I will close directly. We see several Anzacs around here. They shout out to us "Are you soldiers or Canadians"? and we all yell "Canadians"

I have not been very well lately, but am better now. Please tell Auntie Jo that the papers arrived safely the other day. I enjoyed "Blighty" very much. I must write to Dad now, so Goodbye. Give my love to Denison, and ask him why need Britain tremble!

With lots of love from your loving son.

**Letter No.**

Sept. 27 1916

My Dear Mother;

Thank you very much for the parcel. The socks were just what I wanted and it was very nice to see "Punch" again. I hope you have got my other two letters safely. Please don't worry at all. Let me do that, because I know just when to do it. There are times when it is not necessary to worry at all, and I know just when and you don't. That's my advice.

We have not been doing very much lately, except certain little odd jobs.

I had a very nice bathe yesterday in a lake near here. I felt cleaner afterwards and that is the main thing. We have been supplied with a blanket each, now and the weather turned warmer at once. Please send some magazines soon, as we have nothing to read, except "Tit Bits" and Lloyds Weekly News (about 2 weeks old now). Example of 'Tit Bits' Gentlemen in the "Pugsbury Arms" holds forth as follows. "War" he cries "War is a curse and an abomination. War", he continues, thumping the table with his fist, "is a blot on civilization. The very name of war", he snorts, sweeping two glasses and a pint pot off the table, in his excitement, "the very name of war is enough to make a respectable man go and hang himself out of pure disgust". Having thus delivered himself, he rises and leaves the room, his face showing signs of strong emotion. A Commercial traveller, who had been listening to this harangue, remarks to one of the natives of the place, as follows; "Gentleman seems to feel rather deeply on the subject. "He do" assented the other. "Has he lost some near relative at the front?" continues the commercial "He have" replies the native oracularly. "Who was it?" asks the querist " 'is wife's first husband"• Example of 'Blighty'. Auntie is showing Bible pictures, and reading to the children. "And the Lord told Lot to take his wife and children, and flee." (pointing to the picture), "Now this is Lot and this is his wife, and here are his children". One of the Children, (deeply interested!) "Yes but where's the flea!"

Well I hope you appreciate all this. I thought that these two jokes would just suit you. I will close my letter up now. I have calculated that the one present rate of giving out leave, you may expect to see me in about 500 weeks. How is Denison getting along? Give him my love. I had a letter from Angela the other day. For the present good bye.

With much love,  
I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

My Dear Mother;

October 3, 1916

Since I last wrote I have received your parcel, with the shirt, scissors and handkerchiefs. I have also got the two books, a magazine, and the 'Vermin Killers'. The only thing that seems to have gone astray is Mr. Lee's chocolate, which has not yet arrived. Probably it did not pass the Censors. Please thank Aunt Jo for the box of Vermin Killer. I use it every night. I believe that, although it may kill a great many vermin, a few survive, and even thrive on the deadly powder, as I have since caught a few huge ones. But as a Preventative its merits are undoubted. At present we have moved a few miles back from the firing line, for a little while. I was sorry to hear that Captain Goddard has been killed in action. I wonder if Miss Bishop knows this. I have not yet seen the Emery boy.

Thanks very much for the shirt and also the socks and books. I'm very interested in 'Chicot the Jester'. I had a letter from Dad the other day, in which he said that he had not been well, but was better now. Kathy also wrote a few lines. The weather has been very bad lately with incessant rain, and we have been on the move generally, for the last few days. At present we have come to a nice place where there is a YMCA, and lots of shops etc; quite out of range of German guns. I am glad that you like Godalming. Have you been shown over Charterhouse yet, or climbed the "Hog's Back?" And have you tried the swing? You ought to take a trip up to London, and go to the Coliseum. If I ever get leave, we both must go, and listen to that new song "When the Moon Shines Bright on Charlie Chaplin".

Thanks very much for sending "Charles O'Malley." I hope it arrives safely. They say that the stage has deteriorated so much lately that the soldiers are shocked. Even the "Sketch" is becoming too fast for us, and the "Tatler" is worse! So if I ever do get back to Blighty, you had better go to the Coliseum first, to see if the performance is fit for me.

I was very glad to hear of the two Zepps being brought down - one near Dover wasn't it? I wish I could have seen it

Well I must close up my letter now. I hope that you are having a good rest. Please give my love to everybody.

From your loving son

**Letter No.**

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My Dear Kathy

Thanks for your letter. I hasten to answer it. I wonder what kind of a time you are having just now. Would you not rather be living at Red Deer with Mrs. Williams and Freda? I thought that you were going to ask Freda to stay with you; did you ever do this?

Mother says in her letters to me that she is having a very nice time at Godalming, with the "dear girls" ; "so sweet", you know. Yes I know all about it. Godalming is a charming place, and Ellesmere still more charming. I wish that I were at Ellesmere myself, then we would all be happy together. I expect that when Mother goes up to London, she will drive around the park in the carriage (like I did, but not with Auntie) and go to picture palaces, and see Charlie Chaplin's films all the time.

I wish I could get leave myself and go to London for another visit. Please continue to train up Sonny, in the war he should go, so that when I come home, he will do as I tell him. See that he gets his rations regularly. Of course he will not, look at me, when I come back - bad dog!

Well I will say goodbye at last. Take care of yourself, and don't read too much. Do as Monica tells you and you'll be all right.

Yours affect,

**Letter No.**

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My Dear Dad;

Thank you very much for your letter. I was glad to hear that you were better and able to get about a little. I was very much amused at the way Will Reinke spent his harvest leave, by nearly killing his father. Such men as this would be very useful here.

Mother is now staying at Godalming until October 18th. when she will go to Hans Crescent, and later on I suppose she will be at Halstead. Everybody seems to be making a great fuss over Denison. They sent me some photographs of him, and I was surprised to see how big he had become. I also have had a letter from Aunt Mary, written from Scotland. She expects to be in London shortly, where probably she will meet Mother.

As for myself, I am feeling quite well, and, if not exactly enjoying myself, at least seeing a bit of life. I heard that Captain Goddard had been killed lately. He had not been to the front for very long, I was sorry to hear of his death. The "college Review" arrived safely. We were very much amused at a story in it, by Alfred McCauley - a thrilling, but rather impossible tale of the front. I caught sight of George Munroe for a few minutes, the other day. He was riding and could not stop, so I did not get a chance of saying much to him, he seemed to be very well. I have not met Mr. Adamson yet, but would like to.

The weather has been very bad lately, but is better to-day. Whenever any rain fall occurs here, the mud on the roads becomes just like Soap. You have no idea how sticky it is, and how difficult it is to make any progress through such slime. Then of course the constant traffic makes things worse. The amount of heavy traffic on these roads is enormous. Sometimes a "block" occurs, and you are absolutely held up. The big motor lorries often get stuck in the mud, and it is very difficult to extricate them. They are like Mr. Lee's old engine, in this respect. I saw three of these machines get stuck successively, in a muddy corner of the road, the other day. All traffic was held up of course.

I wish I could be at home now to shoot duck and prairie chicken. I suppose that Jack will shoot enough for both of us. I wonder if the season will last for two months this year. I saw in the paper, some time ago, that Sarcee camp might be closed up, on account of unsanitary conditions. I wonder if this is true. Tell Jack that his old friend Lovell is here, with the 8th Battalion. He is at present doing a course in detention again for being drunk.

Well I will close up this letter now, as I have no more news to give. I hope by this time that you are quite well again. I have written again to Jack and enclose a letter to Kathy. Give my love to Monica. Does she go to school now, or not? I hope that Sunny is getting on well.

With love to all  
I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My Dear Mother

I suppose you have been expecting a letter from me for some time past. At last we are out of the trenches for a 'brief season' and I find myself with a perfect host of unanswered correspondence on my hand, which I propose to answer 'by numbers', beginning with you.

I think that I have received all your parcels. The parcel from 'Harrods' was very much enjoyed; then A. Mary sent me another one, then came the sweater, also I have received numerous newspapers and magazines from time to time. I enjoy reading the "Times" especially Mr. Curtain's articles which you mentioned. I always pass these papers on to somebody else. Please continue to send them. I am very much looking forward to seeing the "News Telegram" which accepted extracts from my letter. I have some letters from Dad lately. He says that he took all the children to the Bowden Fair and they seem to have enjoyed it. I was surprised to hear that Donald Rasleigh had been wounded at the Somme. We have a very tall man in our platoon, 6ft. 10 in. He has an awful time in the trenches as you can imagine. They carried him out, after a few days, but he is back again now. I expect you must be having a very interesting time in London. For instance, you might write in your diary for one day as follows; Monday 9a.m. got up. 10 a.m. breakfast 10:30 I went for a walk in Park, and did some shopping. 1:30 dinner, 2:30 Intercession Service. 4 Charlie Chaplin Film Comedy. 6 pm Early dinner 7-8 Splendid Sermon by Bishop of Somebody; subject "The necessity of Spiritual Intercourse in Wartime". 8:30 Theatre Piece "Oh Ye Gods" super beauty chorus, etc. etc. Although not having so joyous a time as this, I am feeling pretty well. The only thing which I dislike more than mud, is more mud. The weather on the whole has been bad. I did catch a very bad cold last week, and got three days off duty. I hope you got my postcard, which was all that I could send at the time. For the last few days we have been living in a deep dug-out, which has fallen in, a little, every day. Big chunks of rock would come crashing down from the sides, during the night and once we had a regular landslide which completely buried all one man's bed and kit. If you coughed, something fell down, and in addition to this, the place was crowded to excess. There was of course no daylight so we burnt candles when we had them, and when they ran out, we manufactured a lamp out of an oil tin and some fat, which sometimes gave us light for quite 3 minutes at a time. To enter this place it was necessary to walk backwards down the stairs, and if no. 1 coming down, met no. 2 going up (with tea), well a "slight loss of tea" was generally reported. Then the roof began to leak, and this put the lamp out. We would be on our backs in the dark, and feel the raindrops. We would then wonder how long the War was going to last. Well I will try and write more regularly in future, but you will understand that correspondence is rather difficult under service conditions, such as I have described. Thanks for everything that you have sent. I expect you will enjoy being at Lydder.

P.S. I have been promoted to Sanitary Policeman!

Very much love,  
I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1916

My dear Mother;

I am glad to learn, from your last letter, that you have at last received my long-delayed letter. You may be sure that I shall write whenever possible.

I got the parcel containing the muffler and balaclava cap, safely, also a tin of shortbread, all of which reached me in the front line. Your letters generally reached me in the evening and as soon as daylight appeared I would read them. We had a midnight feast over the shortbread, in our particular sector of the trench.

By the time I have finished dressing up for the front line, I can scarcely move for weight. In addition to the garments provided, such as overcoat, thick waistcoat, sweater etc, (I wear the sweaters you sent, also the muffler), one service cap, balaclava and helmet, and a legion of sandbags tied all around my legs and feet, also, of course, the necessary equipment, which includes 120 rounds of ammunition. If circumstances should demand a hearty retreat or a spirited charge, I should probably arrive on the following week. You ask if there is anything else I need in the clothing line. Well I should very much like a pair of warm gloves. They do provide gloves for us, but I have worn through mine, I might also add that anything in the eatable line is always welcome. While we are in this world we like to enjoy the comforts thereof. I had an amusing letter from Jack the other day. He says that there is [missing]

**Letter No.**

November 30, 1916

My Dear Mother;

I expect you have been looking for a letter from me again. I give the usual excuse - bad weather, trenches etc. I am glad to hear that you received my card.

The parcel of eatables arrived safely. Thank you very much for it. I could not wait for hot water to dissolve the tea and coffee tablets, but chewed them up as they were, and they were very good too. We were in the front line at the time, too, so you can imagine how acceptable everything was.

At present the weather is almost artic. I did not imagine that it could be so cold in France. It is very nice on a cold and frosty morning, to take a towel and soap to some shell hole which may contain water, and

to enjoy a good wash (after breaking the ice first). Of course, one such wash does duty for all day and one shave lasts me a week.

I noticed in your last letter, that you ask me if I cannot obtain leave soon as you will be going back to Canada in January. This was quite a surprise to me, as I thought that you would be in England until the spring. Of course I should like nothing better than to get leave. It seems too bad that you should come out all the way from Canada and then have to go back again without seeing me. But as things are, at present, I really do not see how I can ask for leave, just yet. I have only been out five months, and there are some men who came over with the battalion who have not yet had a pass - that is for about 15 months. Naturally these men would expect to get leave first, and they are getting it in their turn one man went away this week, he had been out here 14 months. Can't you wait until the spring before you go back? If not I think I shall leap over the parapet one night, and try to get wounded enough to send me back to Blighty. It is the only way that I can see to get over by January but there is the possibility that Fritz might do his job too thoroughly. It would be better and safer for you to return to Canada in the spring. At present the submarine menace is at its height. Have you any special reason for returning so soon?

Please let me know by return, what you have decided to do. Tell Dennison that I will send him a card as soon as I can get one. Tomorrow if all is well I shall be at the dentist. My teeth are giving me trouble. I hope you do not take me too seriously when I say that I am getting so thin etc.

What do you think of Sir Sam Hughe's resignation I wonder who is the new war Chief. I heard somebody say that, whatever may be his faults, we ought to give Sam Hughes the credit for raising and equipping the first Canadian Contingent, in such a short time and I daresay he deserves some credit after all. What a lot of Hughes there are too. We have Sam Hughes, and the Australian Premier Hughes, also the American Hughes, who was nearly elected, but not quite. I have following up the news of the world lately, thanks to the "Times". The mere fact of possessing a copy of the "Times" seems to make one feel important. It is such a respectable paper isn't it? I enjoy reading the leading articles. The Germans seem to be furious with Mr. Curtin for giving away state secrets. I follow his writings with great interest, and should like to hear him lecture. Lord Northcliffe announces cheerfully that we need not look for peace within five years. I should like to give him five minutes of the Somme. What does he think men are made of? I enjoyed reading about the Lord Mayor's banquet, where everybody said nice things about each other, what we have done, are doing, and will do; our splendid army, (see Lord French's speech), our ever vigilant navy (Mr. Balfour) our own selves, in fact. Then the Lord Mayor proposes the health of the Lord Chancellor, who in turn says nice things about the Lord Mayor and everybody goes home very pleased with himself and herself.

The Daily Mirror is very entertaining. Do you ever read the "Society" or "around the town" column, written one by, who styles himself the "Rambler" (I wonder if he is of military age, but of course, he would be indispensable) You learn that Countess Somebody spent a very busy afternoon shopping yesterday, or that "I met Mr. So and So walking in the Park last week, he seemed much aged. He informed me that it was his

birthday and I could not help remarking that he looked quite a year older than when I met him last year, etc." Do you ever read it?

Well I must close up this as the candle is going out. I shall be glad to get the gloves.

Hoping you are quite well. I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

December 2, 1916

My Dear Dad;

I am at last able to write a letter to you again. I have had several letters from you since I last wrote, and in your last, you said that the threshers had come and gone; but the result was not very good. I am sorry about this, but of course the hail must have been responsible. We are having very cold weather just now. It has not rained for some time, but a cold spell has set in. Nearly everybody has got a cold or a cough. I have got a very bad cough, and I make the trenches ring again with the noise of it. It is very annoying.

Mother is very anxious for me to get leave before January, when (she says) she will be going back to Canada. I am afraid however, that at present, it is out of the question for me to think of getting leave. I am sorry, as I should like to see her before she goes back. I have never received a copy of the "News Telegram" which you sent off. It may come later on. Please excuse such a short letter this time, as I have no more place to write, and am nearly frozen also. I will try and write fully next week.

Hoping that all the family are well

I remain your loving son

**Letter No.**

December 18 1916

My dear Dennison;

Thank you very much for your nice letter. I hope you enjoyed being at "Bish's" house. The Germans have not said that they are sorry yet, and I believe that they are glad. I am glad that you waved to the soldiers that you saw, but I hope that you would not wave to a German. If you hit him with your engine or threw him into the sea, he might be sorry and then the war would be over, wouldn't it?

I hope you got the card which I sent you last week. It was not a very funny one, but I couldn't find any funny ones. It was the picture of a French soldier and he is writing on the wall, "On, les aura", which means to say that we shall make the naughty German say that he is

sorry. I hope you liked the care. I hope that I shall see you and Mother before you go back to Canada; tell Mother that she must not take you back until the spring.

It is very muddy where I live and I am writing this letter in a hole under the ground, called a "dug-out". There is no 'lectric fire' in the dug-out, and no cat called Jeilicoe, but there is a very big rat, called Kitchener who fights all night with all the other rats, and they make lots of noise. In the daytime, Kitchener generally stays in his hole. He does not mind the war.

**Letter No.**

Dear Mother

December 11, 1916

Just received your last letter, and Denison's. I see that you still intend to leave England next month. Well something may turn up before then. Anyway I'll let you know all my arrangements.

I have received 2 parcels, (large size) and 2 (small size), since I last wrote. The gloves were just what I wanted at the time. They tell me here that I shall have to hire a special postman to carry all the mail that I receive. One of the parcels was from Uncle Frank (sent by Auntie Mary) which contained a can of prepared coffee, which was enough for all our platoon. The coffee-tablets are the best though, as they are easily made up. I also get all the papers regularly, I must try and acknowledge all the parcels at once.

Dad has sent me the "News-Telegram" and I enclose the letter, in case you might care to read it. Remember it was not intended for publication when written.

There is absolutely no news this week, so please excuse a short letter. I should like to see Jan Thomson again. Does he look smart? I hope he manages to qualify as an infantry officer. We are having better weather just now thank goodness. It was awful, last week.

With love to all

**Letter No.**

My Dear Mother

December 23, 1916

Thanks very much for the parcel, which I received about a week ago, and also for your letters. I am afraid that, if you must return to Canada on Jan. 20th., I shall not be able to see you after all. It is a great pity, and I am very sorry about it and am thinking of writing to John Bull on the subject. I expected that it would turn out like this. I am glad to say that we shall not be actually in the trenches on Xmas day. The YMCA here has the following words emblazoned on a banner, hanging on the wall, "Christmas greetings to you, may you next be with the folks at home" but as somebody remarked, "They had the same thing up last year, and will probably have it next year as well". It is miserably cold and damp here, and we have to go to bed to keep warm.

I had a short letter from Jan the other day. He said that he was sending me a cake for Xmas, but it has not arrived yet. Jan expects to be out here again in a couple of months, but I suppose that this depends on whether he qualifies for an infantry officer, or not. Dad writes that he has asked Perrin to do up a parcel for me too, so that I shall do well. Also I forgot to day that Miss Alice Bridges has written me a "sweet little letter", in which she informs me that she is sending a small gift, in the form of eatables too. The Bridges have moved to Vancouver from where she writes.

Xmas Eve. Yes it is Xmas Eve to-night, so we are informed. A voluntary concert is to be held in this hut to-night at 7 p.m. Everybody is asked to help. I may add, that the "Beer alert" is on, so we may expect anything. The weather is very bad; it blew a regular gale yesterday. A favorite game here, when nothing is doing, is to form a Cabinet among ourselves; each person taking the name of some M.P. These Cabinets are marked by violent quarrels, and somebody's seat always falls vacant. Peace terms are discussed; and if our decision carried weight, we should have peace tomorrow. One of the fellows is trying to arrange for a separate peace between himself and the Central Powers. He will agree to evacuate every foot of foreign soil, (if the authorities will allow him). Who could refuse such terms? More of this here agree [?]. But seriously I think that all things are pointing towards an early settlement. We are very angry with such papers as the 'Daily Mirror', which always depicts us soldiers as wearing a perpetual smile, longing to be in the trenches, and hoping that the war will "carry on". It is so untrue. For instance, I read in the "Around Town" column, about an officer who had returned from the "Somme", and who states that our "Tommys" were just "getting their tails up" and were as "Jolly as sandboys enjoying the mud" etc. I have not yet heard of anybody who has enjoyed the Somme. I hope that you have received my Xmas present. Thanks very much for your book. I shall enjoy reading it. We live a life of extremes out here. There are days and days in the trenches when we have nothing to eat (outside of army ration of course) and nothing to read. Then we come out to billets, get paid, rush over to the Canteen or YMCA and buy everything in sight, and go sick the next morning with "a bad pain sir". I shall be glad to settle down to a normal existence.

Did Denison get my letter safely? I had a letter from Monica the other day. She says "do I shoot many Germans or do I lie down at the bottom of the trench whenever a shot is fired?" This reminds me of a fellow in our platoon, who pretended to be very brave the other night, when Fritz was doing a little strafing. He would say "What's the matter with you all? Why are you ducking your head so?" etc. The other night as we were coming along a communication trench, some shells came over and burst quite close, closer, in fact than I like to think of. When we had reached comparative safety, the Sergeant of the party called out "How is that brave man, so and so getting along?" "Oh", replied a Corporal, "he's all right. I found him under a trench mat." (A trench mat is a sort of side walk out down in the trenches for us to walk on).

Tell Uncle Garnet that I will write to him, and I must also write to Babs as soon as I get these Xmas letters off my chest. I reslly do not know of a single man in our platoon who does not receive parcels sometimes, but I have my eye on one man, who has had 6 parcels coming

for the last 2 months, but none have yet arrived. I will give you his name and no. to send to Miss Knollys, if he does not get one soon.

A merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all. May we will all meet again soon. This is a heartfelt wish

Yr Son

**Letter No.**

May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917

My Dear Mother;

This being the third Sunday in the month, as they announce from the pulpit), is to have the additional distinction of being known as 'Mothers' Day'. Hence this sheet of paper with such inspiration as can be found in this letter. I think that the authorities ought to set another day distant from the others and let it be known as Sergeant-Major's Day! The above verse would need no alteration whatever. Be that, however, as it may, this day is wholly yours, my dear Mother so please accept this letter from your most unworthy son on active service. Yesterday I received a letter from you dated somewhere about April 22nd. You mention that Uncle Harry was in the house and everybody was very happy in consequence. I see that the usual formula was carried out in regard to visitors at Red Lodge - that is to say that Uncle Harry was paraded for the inspection at the Boggs. The Boggs seem to occupy the position of Headquarter Staff for the district, whose duties consist of inspecting new Drafts as they arrive. I am glad to hear that he liked the Thompsons, a sort of Clearing station through which (via the mail man) all Units must pass. (The Intelligence Department is located here.) I wish I could have been at home just then. The same old routine of duty is very monotonous, but it might be considerably worse. I am very sorry that Dad has decided to rent the old place after all. I hope that Henry Schrader is a loyal citizen and has ...

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