

This camp was until recently
used by British troops but is to
be taken over by the Canadians
especially this week nearly
all the Canadian Artillery are
here or at Harsham, 8 miles away.
There are also some infantry.

I haven't made arrangements
to go to London yet as I've said
before all to get leave at the
end of the week & I want to wait
until my civilian clothes arrive
as I think I will have a
better opportunity of a
personal interview with Genl.
Corson if I do.

We have beautiful weather
all the way across, only one
day of fog off Newfoundland
& the ~~rest of the~~ time. Water
as calm as the Hudson River.

The day we spent coming
across England with the train I
was fine & we had a good
view of the country. The country
with the Midlands & the South

(3)

is very beautiful everything
next to all the land under
cultivation but it seemed to
me that everything was on
a smaller scale than in
Canada.

I will write you again
from London let you know
how I came out

Your affectionate son
John.

my address is still

c/o C. B. G. B.

24, Lombard St.

London E.C.

Witley Camp
Oct 13/16

Dear Father:

As you see I am still
at above camp. We were all to
go on leave tonight but I was
suddenly cancelled. We have to
stay here until Oct 18 when
we move to Horsham. I then
go home. I'm sorry I haven't
had the chance to see Genl Carson
but think a personal interview
will be best & Fred writes me
they have fixed it up for me in
the 73rd so I guess I will be all
right.

I had a letter from Stanley
yesterday. He is getting on fine
he says will be discharged
from hospital in 2 weeks (over)

I am a
member of the
Royal Air Force
I am in the
73rd Squadron
I am in the
73rd Squadron
I am in the
73rd Squadron

I will then² get 4 or 5' medals
have which he certainly
deserves. We are doing no
artillery work here, just work
to hold us up - physical drill
& infantry drill in the morning
& a route march every afternoon
I am getting into fine shape

I have had a little more
chance to get round to see the
country about here & it is
entirely very beautiful. It is
quite noticeable that in the
villages & little towns there is
nobody but women about. I
guess all the men have
gone to the war. The best
thing over here is the roads
all asphalt. It is a good

3
thing as after the rains we
have here roads such as we
have in Canada would be
impassable & a days rain makes
no difference here.

The 148th Bn. arrived here
the other day. I went over to
see Capt MacKeechie the L. master
whom I used to work with & he
said Col. Magee wanted to see
me. I saw the Col. & he said
he was short of officers & wanted
to know if I would have to come
with them. I told him I was
fixed up with the 73rd & he
said "Well, keep in touch with
us anyway in case I should not
work out". Very nice of him & sent
it. Your aff. son. John.

France, Jan. 5, 1917

Dear Father:

I received your letter yesterday. The socks arrived safely also the box in good condition. Both came in very handy and I appreciate them very much. I am writing to Mother thanking her for them. Will also write Nellie as soon as I get a chance and send it through you.

Since Dec. 31st I have been away from the 73rd at the Canadian Corps Officers Training School taking a course and it is a welcome change. We work from 8.30 A.M. to 6 P.M. and are pretty busy but have good huts, ~~xxxxxx~~ to sleep in, good meals and shower baths, all of which is better than the front line. I was only in for a week. It was fairly quiet where we were but weather conditions very bad, some of the trenches being over knee-deep in mud and water. However, I am in good condition and feel fine. Fred is also O.K. He ought to get his leave soon now unless they cancel all leave which they seem to have a habit of doing just when it is coming your way.

There has been no cold weather here as yet this winter although it is nearly always dull and rainy. The country hereabouts is very nice but not as pretty as some parts of England I was in. The roads show the result of 25 years war traffic and the small towns and villages are very dirty all the men being at the war. You seldom see a young or even middle aged man in civilian clothes here--all gone to the war. France has made far more sacrifices than any other country and I hope she gets the lion's share when the big real estate deal sometimes known as a peace conference, comes off.

Your affectionate son,

John

Please send my mail thro C. Balf, 2 Lombard St., London, E.C.
all my mail comes through them.

Read my mind
I know you'll
like it
all my love
and
them

Trance
Jan 5/17

Dear Father -
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There has been no cold weather here as yet this winter although it is nearly always dull and rainy. The country hereabouts is very nice but not as pretty as some parts of England I was in. The roads show the result of 2 1/2 years war traffic & the small towns & villages are very dirty, all the men being at the war. You seldom see a young or even middle aged man in civilian clothes here - all gone to the war. France has made far more sacrifices than any other country & I hope she gets the lion's share when the big real estate deal sometimes known as a peace conference, comes off.

Your affectionately son
John

Halifax, Aug. 20, 1916

Dear Father:

I wired you early last week in regard to telegrams which had passed between me and 5th Highlanders, Montreal. I also received your reply saying that Fred was in France. I see in the papers the 4th Division have gone over and all the Canadians have been withdrawn from the Ypres salient and transferred to the Somme front.

I have since received a letter from Col. Mansarrat of the 5th which however, was rather ambiguous. He confirmed his telegram saying my name had been cabled to Col. Davidson. He then went on to tell me about the reinforcing company which the 5th are raising under Hayles and went on to say that if I would return to Montreal I could be attached to it for duty without pay and would then be in line for an appointment to the next company raised when the present one has gone forward. This, of course, is no use to me, as it would be months before I got away so I wired him again saying I wanted to get into the officers draft leaving immediately and asking for a reply by wire, but have not as yet heard from him.

The McGill Battery is simply marching time until we go away. We expected to go on the Olympic but apparently there was no room so she sails to-morrow. The week was spent in route marching, etc. I am sending you a wire tonight in regard to above. My vaccination has taken like a house afire so I expect to have a sore arm for a few days.

It is very kind of you to offer to use your influence to procure me a commission and I am very grateful. I think, however, that perhaps I had better wait and see how this application to the 5th pans out. I would certainly like to get into the 73rd. If nothing comes of it I can perhaps get something on my arrival in England. We will likely be here a week longer and perhaps more. We had an inspection last week and although the inspecting officer said the usual nice things, we made a very poor showing. All the troops in Halifax are to be inspected by the Duke Friday.

Your affectionate son,

John



HALIFAX HOTEL



E. L. MACDONALD,
MANAGER.

Halifax, Can. Aug 20 1916

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19

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 inspected by the Duke Friday
 you all saw I hope

From
John

Witley Camp
Surrey, England
Sep. 27, 1916

Dear Father:

As advised in my cable we arrived safely Sunday night landed early Monday morning entrained immediately & reached this camp about 3 P.M. The camp is about 32 miles S.W. of London quite near to Aldershot & Bramshott. There was some ~~blunder~~ blunder on the part of the transportation officers as we were booked for Shoreham & on arrival here found nothing ready so had to sleep on the floor but have got piled up fairly comfortably now although our meals are uncertain but we are able to eat at the canteen & at a small town 3 miles away. We haven't done any work yet & the authorities didn't expect us. In fact we are officially lost

France
mch 27/17

My dear Father - I have
received the letters from
you in the last few
days and am pleased
to hear you are feeling
more and more well again.
Regarding my insurance
premiums, I arranged
with the National Trust
Co before leaving Montreal
to pay them as they fell
due. I hope you are
happy with the
results. I must end the
letter as my time is
going along. I have
the pleasure to tell you
that the other two letters

60

2.
This morning just after
dawn a man who was
and doctor in the line a
German crawled through
our wire and gave himself
up. He was a scratch
operator and said he was
sick of the war. This
made four who have
resented to us on our
immediate front in
the last few days.
Two who came in a
week or two days ago said
they believed the
whole battalion would
desert if they got a chance
but were afraid of being
shot by their officers.
I don't know how this
is to believe that one of
these days there is going

61

to be the ³big blow-up
perhaps we are near
the end of the war
than we think.

It has turned wet
and has been raining
for the past few days so
perhaps we will be in for
it now for a while. It is
hard on the men as they
believe of a chance to
get their clothes dry.
Well it is all in the same
they say we'll be getting
some fine weather

Your affectionate son
John

COPY

France

Apr 1/17

My Dear Father:-

You will have received the cable sent by Stanley and I announcing poor Fred's death and I know how you must feel his loss and wish I could be with you. I find it hard to realize that Fred is gone - he grew accustomed to death out here and in that way it seems to lose some of its sting - but it came as a great shock. We have the satisfaction of knowing however, that he died without pain and doing his duty just as he always did.

Fred was in the orderly room dugout on March 29th, about 1 P.M. working during a heavy bombardment. The dugout was not what is known as shell-proof - dug deep into the ground with 10 or 30 feet of overhead earth cover but was dug into the side of a hill. The roof was heavy iron covered by a foot or so of sand bags. A dugout of this kind is known as "anti-air-proof" that is proof against anything but a direct hit from a shell. A heavy 4.2 inch German shell landed square on top and the whole thing collapsed and from what the Medical Officer and those who dug him out told me there is not a doubt that Fred was instantly killed, not knowing what hit him. There were five in the dugout at the time and only one escaped. The shell did not hit Fred but one of the heavy iron sirders struck him on the head crushing his skull. Otherwise his body was not mutilated and he had a peaceful look on his face, as if he were asleep. Going to the bombardment I did not receive a message until about three quarters of an hour after the shell hit after he had been dug out of the ruins.

I took his body out that night meeting Stanley the following day for the funeral. He lies buried in a Military Cemetery near a little Village about six miles behind the line. The usual battalion cross of the 73rd. is being made and Stanley is making arrangements to have a stone put up. The name of the town will be notified to you by the Graves Registration Committee. Stanley wished me not to mention it owing to the Censor. A Church of Ireland Chaplain from the Casualty Clearing Station in the same town conducted the service.

Poor Fred, I will miss him more and more as time goes on. He was always so cheery and was very popular with all the Officers. But as Stanley says, we must go through with this business and all we can do is to "carry on". The big bring operations must come now before very long and I have no doubt we will have our share in them, and I promise you that when my turn comes to go "over the top" I won't forget Fred.

The battalion came out of the line the following day and owing to a mistake Fred's bed-roll containing all his kit etc. was left behind. It will be impossible to get it out now till we go in again but I will have it packed up and sent on to you at 120 Stanley St.

Now Father you must not worry about Stanley and me. I know how much harder it is to be at home than to be out here. Those at home have the hardest task, but we are winning now and I hope it will not be many months before we are back with you again. I wish I could see you to-night but we must simply go ahead and leave the issue in the hands of Providence. I am in good health and Stanley looks very well. Will write again soon.

Your affectionate son

John

2nd Western Genl Hospital
Manchester
Apr 16/17

My dear father: I wired you
on the 14th that I had arrived
here and was getting on well.

I was hit about 3 PM on
April 9th, the day of the
capture of the hill of Redoubt,
our Canadian ~~troops~~ were
on the extreme tip of the
whole movement and our
objective was the Boche
front line. We had no trouble
in taking it as they put up
hardly any opposition but
about an hour later he
started to shell us and from
then on life on that particular
ground was decidedly unattractive.
The trench was pretty well
covered by gas so our men
dug little holes under the
saccharine to get down in

I was in an ^{2.} trench with
four others when a German
shell (which I think was (19/10/18))
hit not more than five feet
away. Only my head & shoulders
were above ground. It knocked
my helmet off, covered me with
mud and I got several small
splinters in the back of my
left shoulder. They were
X-Rayed yesterday & I guess
will be taken out when the
wound gets clean. The one
in the left shoulder fractured
the "acromion" which seems
to be a bone in the shoulder
but did not displace much.
~~So~~ I cannot use my left
arm & the right is also a
little stiff. I am very
tired & I probably
won't be long in hospital
although my left arm
will probably be stiff for
some time. When I am
discharged I am going to
apply for leave to Canada

3
My aim is still to get
out to stand a good chance
of getting it, so will be prepared
to wait for you before I leave.

The Canadian certainly
did well, although I am
afraid our medals were
heavy especially amongst
officers. I heard Stanley
was hit when I came
out from one of the roads.

As I was getting off
the ambulance at the field
ambulance station, I saw
Col. Baggins by. I called
to him & he got inside
and stayed with me till I
was sent onto the clearing
station, and was very
pleasant throughout.

Over on the heavy shells
we had been unable to get
them out of the line,
but I saw the transport
officer that night before
I left to go to the front to

Soon after I send I sent to
London with mine. The sum
has been considerably
advanced. It is no doubt
it has since come out OK

It will go to the Bank
of London together with mine
Would you please me to forward it
to the Bank of Montreal or wait until
I am able to be around & go through
it first? I am going to the
get transferred to a hospital
hospital later on. He had
100 francs in money in his
checkbook. I have the papers
I would want out to about
\$1900 in Canadian money
You might notify the
National Trust Co & have
them enter it as a debit
against me. I have not
the same now money for
the hall

That is you can see me
well. I will drop you a line every
few days unless I get busy. Send my
love to the folks. I am
yours truly
John

2nd Western General
Hospital, Manchester
May 19, 1917.

My dear Father:-

I am still
in Manchester, although
my application for transfer
to 10 London Lodge, with
doctors opinion that I am
fit to travel went in a week
ago.

I will only be in hospital
a couple of weeks more
as my wounds will be
healed up then, after which
I suppose I will be
transferred to a convalescent
home. I only all the
stiffness in my arm from
my right arm but the
left will take a while.

2.
Longer. The King & Queen
visited Manchester this
week & paid a visit to the
hospital on Tuesday. It
was a rather perfunctory
affair, the party walked
through the ward speaking
to one or two here and there.
The only touch of color
was provided by a Canadian
officer who had been hit
in that portion of his
anatomy which might indicate
that he was running away
at the time. The Queen
stopped at his bed & asked
where he was hit, so he
said "On the Army ridge".
She said the Queen "but
whereabouts on your body?"
So he said the leg, at
which the Queen passed

On expressing the hope that he wouldn't have to lose his leg.

He had a few fine days here sometime ago, but the usual 'dark dreary' English weather is against the rule. I go out for a walk every day from 2 to 6.

There is a big stream on in this district over 35,000 trained mechanics being out. The British Govt. shows a very weak attitude towards these men, as they are holding up war supplies. Whatever the grievances of these men they are being not to be at the front, and they have no right to strike during the war. The application of a little military discipline and the

Use of a firing squad instead of issuing "appeals" might do some good.

I had high hopes when Mr. L. George formed his govt. but they seem no better than the last. They issue food regulations one day & cancel them the next, seem afraid to touch the Irish question & so on. There are altogether too many civilians walking about here especially in Manchester. In France you seldom see a civilian over sixteen or under sixty, but then in France a govt. such as we have here would last about 10 minutes. Manchester is very prosperous as a result of war business & it will probably be a sad blow to many when peace is declared. Yours affectionately John

2nd Western General Hospital
Manchester, May 19, '14

My dear Father:

I am still in Manchester although my application for transfer to London together with doctors' opinion that I am fit to travel went in a week ago. I will only be in hospital a couple of weeks more as my wounds will be healed up then, after which I suppose I will be transferred to a convalescent home. Nearly all the stiffness has gone from my right arm but the left will take a while longer. The King and Queen visited Manchester this week and paid a visit to this hospital on Tuesday. It was a rather perfunctory affair, the party walked through the wards speaking to one or two here and there. The only touch of color was provided by a Canadian officer who had been hit in that portion of his anatomy which might indicate that he was running away at the time. The Queen stopped at his bed and asked where he was hit, so he said "On the Vimy Ridge," "Yes," said the Queen, "but whereabouts on your body." So he said the leg, at which the Queen passed on expressing the hope that he wouldn't have to lose his leg.

We had a few fine days here some time ago, but the usual dark, dreary, English weather is again the rule. I go out for a walk every day from 2 to 6.

There is a big strike on in this district over 35,000 trained ^{weak} mechanics being out. The British Government shows a very ~~mean~~ attitude towards these men, as they are holding up our war supplies. Whatever the grievances of these men they are lucky not to be at the front and they have no right to strike during the war. The application of a little military discipline and the use of a firm squad instead of issuing "appeals" might do some good.

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