

A LETTER FROM
BRIG.-GEN. F. O. W. LOOMIS, C.M.G., D.S.O.

[The following letter from Brig.-Gen. F. O. W. Loomis, C.M.G., D.S.O., has been addressed to Lieut.-Col. W. F. Gilson, D.S.O. for publication in the Christmas Issue of the "Listening Post."]

HEADQUARTERS,
WESTERN CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

18/10/17.

LIEUT.-COL. W. F. GILSON, D.S.O.,
Commanding 1st British Columbia Battalion.

DEAR COLONEL GILSON,

The LISTENING POST, through merit, has outgrown the local and prescribed functions of a Regimental Journal, and even of a Brigade Publication. It is known and read not only throughout the Western Canadian Infantry Brigade, but circulates widely in Canada.

With your kind permission, I wish to convey through the medium of the LISTENING POST:—

First, a message from every member of the Western Canadian Infantry Brigade to anxious hearts at home, to assure them that they have our constant love and devotion, our daily thoughts, and our wishes for a Merry and Happy Christmas. Keep the Home Fires burning. Keep our places in your hearts and in our homes fresh and fragrant, for though long years and long leagues separate us, our love and loyalty know no space of time nor distance.

Second, a message to every Officer, Non-Commissioned Officer and Man of my Brigade—the Brigade which I am proud and fortunate to command. Loyal, faithful and true, courageous and able, you have seen your duty—you have done and are doing it. I wish you all a Happy and Merry Christmas.

I wish to assure all of my appreciation of their good and faithful work during the almost year and a half that I have commanded the Brigade. During that time we have been up and down the Line, from Belgium to the Somme, and have taken part in many operations. Deeds have been done and scenes witnessed which will remain for ever deeply engraved in our memories.

We have seen the enemy driven in disorder, bombed, bayoneted, and shot—till their bodies lay piled in heaps, and almost every shell-hole held its quota of their dead.

We have lived amid the scattered ruins of ancient cathedrals and chateaux, among the twisted iron vitals of monster industries, and in the cellars of shattered and deserted homes. We have seen the household treasures, the children's toys strewn, broken and abandoned in hurried flight.

We have laid the bodies of many of our best under rows of little wooden crosses. We love those comrades who have fallen; we remember their deeds, and recall

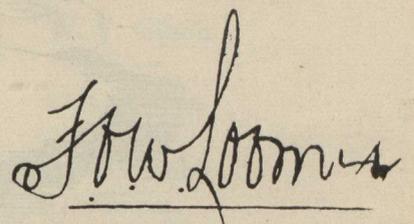
their deaths with pride and joy, and we know that their souls go marching with us. We know that the spirit of devotion that animated them remains with us, and we feel that the enemy has no battalions, no gas, guns, shells, nor bombs which will dampen or deter this spirit of determination—the Canadian Spirit.

We remember, when we first came to France, the Men usually sang on the march. But for some time back marches are mostly made in silence. We have listened to the metallic "clack, clack" of our Men marching in regular cadence on the pavé of the Grandes Routes Nationales; to the "crunch, crunch" of their feet on the metalled roads; to the soft "tamp, tamp" on the clay lanes; to the "suck, suck" on the sticky and slippery mud, and to their march in single file over shell-holes and grassy tracks when on their way to the trenches. We have heard them go by in their thousands—and silent. Why is this? What are the Men thinking about? Has their enthusiasm diminished? Is the spirit changed? No! The Old Spirit is with them as strong as ever. Their faces in the sunlight, their shadowy forms in the moonlight, if you watch them, will tell you this. The swing of their bodies and the sound of their feet speak of confidence and determination.

It is three years, over, since the First Canadian Contingent sailed away from Canada, and they now march silently over the roads and lanes of France and Flanders because their thoughts are of Homes and Loved Ones far away. They know that Fathers, Mothers, Wives, Children, and Sweethearts are also thinking of them and working for them.

Happy Canada which possesses such well-loved Homes! Fortunate Country with such loving Fathers and Mothers, such faithful Wives, such devoted Children, such affectionate Sweethearts! So long as Canada possesses such as these, her Sons will be ready to go to the ends of the world to fight for them, to die for them, and they will love them forever.

Yours sincerely,



Brigadier-General, Commanding the Western
Canadian Infantry Brigade.