

FROM MONTREAL TO VIMY  
RIDGE AND BEYOND

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF  
LIEUT. CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS, B.A.  
OF THE 8TH BATTALION CANADIANS, B. E. F.  
NOVEMBER 1915—APRIL 1917

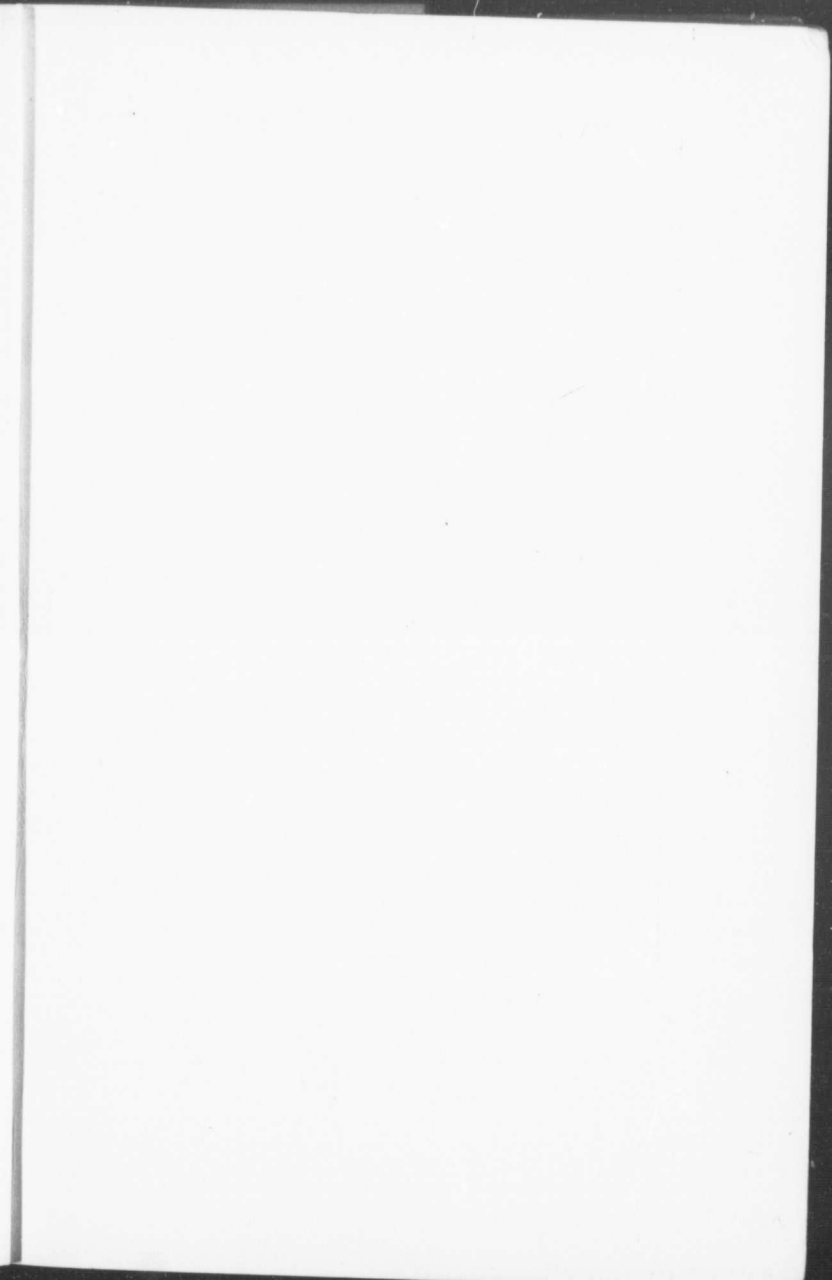
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*Edited by* O. C. S. WALLACE, D.D., LL.D.

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Raymond D. Rust  
Merry was 1919  
uncle John & Aunt Mary







LIEUT. CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS. 8TH CANADIAN INFANTRY,  
FRANCE, SUMMER 1916

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EDITED BY

O. C. S. WALLACE, D.D., LL.D.

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF WESTMOUNT, DISTRICT  
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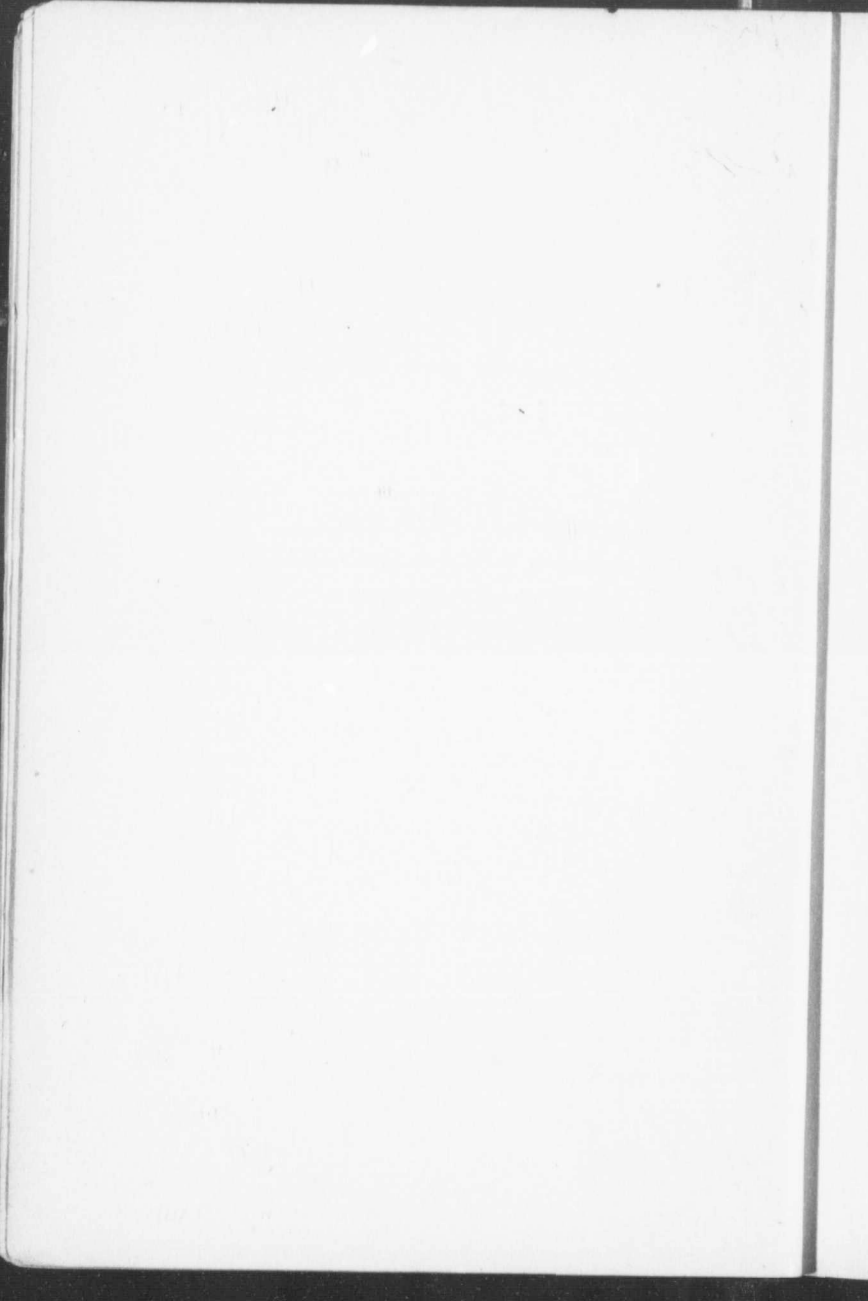
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INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF  
FRANCES BARBARA MOULE WELLS-WALLACE

THE INCOMPARABLE MOTHER OF  
ONE OF THE NOBLEST OF SONS





## BIOGRAPHICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTE

Clifford Almon Wells was born in Toronto, Canada, March 12th, 1892. He was the youngest son of Professor James Edward Wells, M.A., LL.D., and Frances Barbara Moule, his wife. Professor Wells, educationist, editor and publicist, died when Clifford was six years old. When he was twelve years old his mother became the wife of the Reverend O. C. S. Wallace, D.D., LL.D., at that time the Chancellor of McMaster University, Toronto. When he was eighteen years old he enrolled as an undergraduate of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, his stepfather being then the pastor of the First Baptist church of that city. Four years later, when he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts, his ability in the acquisition of knowledge and his skill in teaching having given a clear indication of what his vocation should be, he entered upon graduate work in the department of Archæology in his Alma Mater, in preparation for the degree of Doc-

tor of Philosophy and to qualify for university teaching. In 1915, on the completion of one year of graduate study, he was awarded a Fellowship, and so marked had been his progress, and so evident his exceptional ability, that his future seemed especially promising. During the summer of 1915 he decided that it was his duty to relinquish his Fellowship, abandon his studies, and take his part as a Canadian in the European war. In September he enlisted as a Private in the 4th University Company, one of the reinforcing companies of the famous Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Although without previous military training his advancement was rapid, and when his company went overseas in November he was a Platoon Sergeant, and two months later received his commission as a Lieutenant in the P. P. C. L. I. Later he was transferred to the 8th Battalion. His perfect health, physical strength and endurance, exceptional intelligence, and great diligence and conscientiousness in whatever task he undertook, may be regarded as the explanation of the quick transformation of the quiet student and book-lover into the efficient soldier.

His letters cover a period of eighteen months. They were written in railway cars

and on board ship; in tents in England, Belgium and France; in huts, shacks, furnace rooms and ruined houses; in London boarding houses and hotels; in French farm-houses, and German dugouts; in the midst of the awful clamors and crashings and thunders of artillery, and within sound of the coughing of a sick German in the front line of enemy trenches.

He wrote of things which others have written about; of things which pleased him, and of other things which displeased him, most of these relating to the commonplace of life. But in addition to the commonplace there will be found in these letters a surprising variety of topics, and withal such graphic descriptions, thrilling or amusing stories, and information on many matters of interest to all who have friends overseas that the letters will both entertain and enlighten.

His last dated letter was written the 20th day of April, 1917, eleven days after the battle of Vimy Ridge. Thankful because he had had a part in that battle, exultant and confident in view of the great victory, he bade his mother not to be disquieted or alarmed for him. Before this letter reached her she had received official notice that he had been killed in action the 28th day of April. Eight days later she,

who had always been the embodiment of health, strength and an abounding and radiant life, was fatally burned in a tragic accident, which could not have occurred had not her mind been pre-occupied with thoughts of Clifford. She died in Montreal, May the 20th, twenty-two days after the death of her son in France.

No son can read these letters without finding in them a call to nobility of character and heroism of spirit; and no mother can read them without realizing that such letters could be written only to a mother who represented the highest type of patriotic and Christian womanhood.

The letters, other than those addressed to his mother, are of two classes. There are letters which, though addressed to other members of the family, were intended equally for her, and a number of letters of a different character addressed to his brother George. The latter are inserted in order that a more complete picture may be given of his experiences on the battlefield than he wished his mother to see.

To make certain allusions intelligible to readers outside of the circle of the family and intimate friends the following information is given: Professor Wells had a family by his first wife, of which Emma, Frank and Arthur

were living when these letters were written. Dr. Wallace had two children by his first wife, who are referred to by their abbreviated names of Rae and Croy. He refers to his own brothers, the sons of his mother, as George and Ned. "Molly" was his pet name for his mother.

He and a Hopkins classmate spent their holidays one summer as deckhands on a freighter on the Great Lakes: this explains his reference to his "life as a sailor." Other allusions relate to a visit which his mother and he made to England, France and Germany during his summer holidays in 1913.

For the editor to have used a heavy hand upon these letters, cutting out personal allusions, and the expression of opinion and criticisms which later might have been modified, would have been to rob them of much of their piquancy and human quality. This is why they are published as they were written.

Westmount, P. Q.

July, 1917.



## ILLUSTRATIONS

LIEUT. CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS, 8TH CANA-  
DIAN INFANTRY, FRANCE, SUMMER, 1916

*Frontispiece*

CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS, B.A., JOHNS HOP-  
KINS UNIVERSITY, JUNE, 1914 . . .

PAGE

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FROM MONTREAL TO VIMY RIDGE  
AND BEYOND

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NOVEMBER, 1915

In Montreal—Montreal to Halifax—Perplexities of a Platoon Sergeant—"Till the Boys Come Home"—Apples and Enthusiasm in the French Villages of Quebec—On the S. S. "Lapland."

*Montreal, Nov. 2nd, 1915.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Just a note to let you know that the 4th University Company, being recruited overstrength already, has received orders to be ready to sail on the 11th. I believe we shall leave on the 13th, but no one knows the time definitely yet, except that it will be some time after the 11th. Thousands of troops sail from Montreal every month without any one being any the wiser. Trains come in at night, stop on the wharf alongside the transports and by daybreak the men are on the way. So it will be with us. We shall slip away some night and Montreal will wake up in the morning and find us gone.

There have been no anti-recruiting riots here. I am surprised at your question. At one French recruiting meeting some time ago, there was a slight expression of hostility at the idea

of conscription which one of the speakers was supposed to be advocating. As I remember the incident, the crowd, learning or guessing that the objectors were followers of the Nationalist Henri Bourassa, who lifts up his head and yelps against Canada's participation in any Imperial activities, started to storm the printing office of Bourassa's journal, *Le Devoir*, but were driven off by the police. Possibly a distorted version of this incident is what caused your question. I believe that the French Canadian battalions fill up more slowly than the English, but that is not to be wondered at. A great impetus has been given to recruiting in Canada by a recent regulation that troops will be trained in every centre where a certain number are enlisted. That is, men enlisting in small towns and country places will not immediately be moved off to large cities or camps. In the first three days after this order was promulgated by Sam Hughes, 15,000 men enlisted in Canada. Canada has just decided to raise 100,000 more men, and cities all over the country are asking permission to raise battalions. The large number of men enlisted from the far west is surprising to me.

I am no longer a private, but have been

made Lance-Corporal. I hope to be Corporal or Sergeant before sailing. On Monday I was transferred to the Machine Gun section. After thinking the matter over, I went to the Lieutenant in charge of the section and told him that as I had no special liking for mechanical work, and as I was hoping to get a commission later on, I would prefer to continue in the ranks. He agreed that chances for a commission were not so good in the M. G. section, as of course fewer officers are required there, although the importance and the number of M. G. sections is continually increasing; and so he transferred me back to the ranks. Although my rank is only that of Lance-Corporal, I act as Sergeant every day, and often as Lieutenant. The N. C. O.'s for the company have to be obtained by promotion from the ranks, and being made a Lance-Corporal simply means that if I make good there I will be further promoted.

The city just swarms with soldiers at present, as two full battalions have been sent back from the camp at Valcartier, which is closed for the winter. The 60th which was recruiting when you were here sails this week. The 73rd is up to strength also, and the 87th has begun to recruit. The battery in which Gordon

Crossley is, is also up to strength and will sail with the 4th University Company. They will go to Aldershot to be trained in the use of heavy artillery. They are not sending any more 18 pounders from Canada.

There are a hundred other things I should like to tell you, but must stop now. My whole energy is devoted to my work, and my only ambition on earth is to win a commission. If I don't get one, I don't want to come back. If I do get one, I shall be better pleased to have earned it by rising from the ranks than if I had obtained one before leaving Canada.

Recruiting is brisker to-day in Canada than it has been since the first months of the war. Canada is doing her full share and so is England. Do not let any one make you disbelieve that.

By the way, one interesting fact a wounded officer told us yesterday in a lecture: He saw captured German gas helmets with the date 1911 stamped on them. You know the Germans claimed that the use of gas by them had not been contemplated or even thought of before the war; that the French began it and they simply imitated them—most accomplished liars they are.

Well, I must zu Bett gehen. Give my love

to Mildred and Barbara, and write when you find time. Send your letters care of Dr. Wallace until you get my address at Shorncliffe, England. CLIFF.

*Friday, Nov. 26th, 1915, 7.20 P. M.  
Near Campbellton, N. B.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

You probably are thinking of me as in Halifax, but we shall not be there until 10 o'clock to-morrow morning. We did not leave Montreal until nearly 11 o'clock, as we waited (in the yards near St. Henry) for several carloads of troops from Winnipeg to join us. After I got on the train, I was very busy for nearly an hour. I should have had 48 men in my car, but found 49, and it took a long time to find the extra man who had sneaked in from another car in order to be with his brother. I had no sooner got him routed out than I found only 47 in the car. This made the whole company a man short; but finally I found that a man had got permission to distribute parcels, the Lieutenant supposing he meant in his own car, but he thinking he had permission to go through the whole train. Finally we got everything straightened out, and sentries posted at the doors, no one except the Officers and Pla-



toon Sergeants being allowed to pass from car to car without special permission.

My breakfast this morning was eaten with the men. I had to appoint 6 Mess Orderlies to go for the food and bring it to our car. We had porridge, fish, hash, coffee, baked potatoes: not elegantly served, but wholesome. Lunch and dinner I ate with the other Sergeants in the dining-car. The train stopped long enough at Rivière du Loup this morning, and at Mont Joli this afternoon, for us to get half an hour's exercise out-doors. I had quite a fine dinner to-night—soup, fish, turkey, mince-pie, coffee: the men had soup and beef stew and rice pudding. It is not so bad to be a Sergeant.

I miss home, of course, very much, but have been so busy to-day that I have not had much chance to be homesick. The officers ride in the Pullman, leaving the Platoon Sergeants to look after the cars. I am being called upon all the time to settle some question or other, appointing sentries, etc. Private Jones wants to get out at this station to meet friends; private Smith at that; private Jackson has an ingrowing toenail and must see the doctor; private Robinson has been on fatigue three days this week and wants to be relieved, etc., etc., *ad infinitum*.

Will you ask Croy to get a copy of the song, "Till the Boys Come Home," and send it to "Jimmy" Brown at the Fraternity House, 1420 Madison Ave., Balto. Tell him that I have left, and that this is the favourite marching song of my company, which the boys might like to add to the list of songs which they sing on Saturday nights at the frat. house. The song in question ends with the words: "Turn the dark clouds inside out till the boys come home." It is a fine marching song.

Last night, sleeping without mattress or blankets, reminded me of my sailor days, which will prove a great help to me.

I suppose you all miss me a great deal, and, of course, I shall miss you. But I think I made no mistake in enlisting when I did, and in enlisting in this company. Another Sergeant has been appointed in the company, a qualified lieutenant.

Well, good-night, Mother. Love to Father and Rae and Croy.

CLIFFORD.

P. S. There is a lot of snow in this part of the country—splendid sleighing. The little French villages thro' which we marched when exercising to-day were very quaint, and very enthusiastic, giving us lots of apples, etc.

*Transport "Lapland"*

*Sat., Nov. 27, 1915.*

*4.30 P. M.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

We reached Halifax about 2 hours ago, and came aboard the "Lapland" almost immediately. I have very comfortable 2nd class quarters with 3 other Sgts of the company. There are many other troops on board, over 4,000 it is rumoured.

The journey to Halifax was very interesting—some beautiful scenery. Did you get a letter mailed in Campbellton? I do not know how many minutes I have to finish this letter; our company was the last to come aboard; so perhaps I had better close in order to make sure of mailing it. It is just a note to let you know I am safe aboard ship, and in excellent health.

With love and in great haste,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. After I boarded the train the other day, I was so busy that I had not much chance to see if you were still there. When I did look I could not see you and supposed you had gone home. I was glad to see you and father there.

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DECEMBER, 1915

2000 Troops Aboard—Seasick Sergeants—In the Danger Zone—At Shorncliffe—Disappointment—Sergeants' Mess—Busy and Contented—Reminded of Dante's Inferno—Guarding the Folkestone Reservoir—Description of Landing at Plymouth—Church Parades—Rain, Mud, and more Rain and Mud—Handling the Hard Drinkers—Commissions by "Pull."

*S.S. "Lapland"*

*Dec. 3rd, 1915.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

One of the things I forgot to bring with me is note paper, and so I am writing to you on the company's stationery. If mother received a letter written on the train, and another written just after boarding the "Lapland," there is little additional news to tell. We reached Halifax Saturday afternoon, and boarded the transport almost immediately. There are about 2,000 other troops aboard. The 37th Battalion from the West, the 92nd Highlanders, units of the A. S. C., Cyclists, etc. The Sergeants have first class staterooms and grub, and so I am living very comfortably.

In the presence of the other units, the distinction between N. C. O.'s and privates is more marked than it was in Montreal, also the distinction between Officers and N. C. O.'s. Many of the men and three of our six Sergeants have been sick. I have not been ill at all, and consequently have been doing double duty as orderly Sergeant.

To-day we are fairly in the danger zone. Our company's machine gun is mounted aft, while other guns are mounted forward. The decks are lined with men armed with rifles. So we are all ready for submarines. To-night every man must sleep on deck by the life-boat or raft to which he has been assigned. All portholes are darkened at night and every precaution is taken to render the ship invisible. In spite of all precautions I learned something not generally known aboard, viz.: that rockets were set off from the stern by parties unknown two nights ago. Thus, it seems, we have spies aboard—not in my company, I believe, although spies were found in the 2nd University Co.

I do not expect to have any further opportunity to write until we reach England; so I shall close and seal this letter now, and mail it at the first opportunity. I have been so busy

since leaving Montreal that I am homesick only at odd intervals. It is a good thing to be kept busy when away from home.

Will you please buy and mail to me as soon as possible, a book by Major Papineau called "Quelques Notes à l'Usage des Officiers d'Infantry." It was published originally in French, but there is an English edition ("A Few Notes for the Use of Infantry Officers") by the Imperial Publishing Co. of Halifax. I should prefer the English edition, which I think can be obtained at any book store. I should like mother to paste an envelope in the back of the book for notes as she used to do in my school-books. With it I should like also the "Oxford Book of English Verse" from my book case. This last is a valuable book, but I think that it will be doing more good in providing literary recreation for me at the front, even if subject to hard usage, than in resting on my shelf at home.

I hope every one at home is well and happy.

With love for all, I am,

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

I enclose a five dollar bill to cover cost of book and postage and provide a little Christ-

mas present for mother, whatever you may select.

C. A. W.

I also enclose a few pages of my diary, which I wish you would read and keep for me.

*St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, England,  
December 9, 1915.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Please excuse pencil, as I am in haste and have not my pen with me at the moment. I have been here since 2 A. M., Monday morning, but this is actually the first opportunity I have had to write a letter. Platoon Sergeants are kept very busy here, not a spare moment from Reveille at 6.30 until Lights Out at 9.45. The N. C. O.'s of our company are in an N. C. O.'s class, and each must qualify for his rank over again.

It has rained steadily, with an intermission yesterday, ever since we reached Plymouth Sunday morning until now. The camp is one sea of mud—such mud as I never dreamed of before. I never shine my shoes now, as the first step out of the hut buries them in 3 or 4 inches of slime. We are quartered in huts which hold about 40 men each. I have a little

room to myself in the corner, and a Corporal is in charge of the hut and is responsible to me for its good order. The streets in Shorncliffe are very dimly lighted by night on account of the danger from Zepps, and every window in every hut is covered with a blanket when the lights are switched on. Outside it is pitch dark, and one wallows in mud and water when compelled to go out at night. I have not had time to go to the town of Shorncliffe, or to Folkestone (close by), and have not set foot outside the camp since I have been here.

I have bad news in one respect. An order has been passed by which no more Canadian soldiers are given commissions in the Imperial Army except when a Colonel applies to have a certain man as an officer in his command. There is consequently a good deal of dissatisfaction in our company, as many of us were practically promised commissions when we enlisted. If Major Hickson is still living, and you could write him in my behalf, it might help me, also any one else whom you or father may know, who might have influence. Another cause of dissatisfaction is that our officers are going to be taken away from us and sent to a training school. We are attached to the 11th Reserve Battalion and drafts of the best quali-



fied men will be picked out from time to time and sent to reinforce the P. P. C. L. I. Thus we have lost our hopes of getting commissions straightway, and are going to lose our officers and our individuality as a Company. However, we must make the best of it. Many men are in the same fix as I am, and are writing right and left to try to get the pull which they formerly were led to believe was unnecessary to get a commission.

I shall write again as soon as possible, and shall send some sheets of my diary (I am several days behind at present), which will give a better idea of my surroundings. We get plenty of sleep and have good food. Corporals and privates eat in the huts, Sergeants in the Sgts Mess. I would much rather eat in the hut with the men, as they are much more congenial than the Sgts with whom we eat. The Sgts are mostly much older than our Sergeants, and are inclined to look down upon us as kids, and to be jealous of us as belonging to the University Co. at the same time.

I have many things to tell you, but as I want to mail this to-night I must close now. I am in perfect health, and am too busy to be unhappy. In fact I am enjoying many things very much, and when we are thoroughly set-

tled I shall have more time to write and to enjoy myself here. I have been expecting a letter for some time, but none has arrived yet. You had better address them:

Sgt. Wells P. P. C. L. I. 475272,  
St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, England.

With much love to all, I am,  
as ever,  
CLIFFORD.

P. S. Of course I might get a commission after being at the front, even if I go there without one.

*St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, December 12, 1915.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

It is 12.30 Sunday afternoon, and at last I have a chance to write a letter. This has been the busiest week of my life. From Reveille at 6.30 until Lights Out at 9.45 I have been continually on the go. A great deal of executive work falls on the Platoon Sergeants. Each evening I hoped to be able to write, but as soon as I would settle down, something would turn up to prevent me from completing the letter. I told you in my hastily penned epistle a few days ago that the wholesale deal-

ing out of commissions which Capt. Eve told us would take place when we reached England is not coming to pass, and that I would like you to write to any influential people you may know in my behalf. I did this on Mr. Higgin's advice. It is true that probably none of our company will get commissions during our stay in England without the exercise of "pull," but it is also true (as I have learned since) that several members of previous University companies have been sent back from the front after "making good" there, and given commissions in Canadian forces in England. So, if you have not found any influential people to work on, as you probably have not, do not worry about it. I shall be quite content to go to the front as an N. C. O. and a commission won on the firing line would be more desirable than one gained in any other way. It was disappointing, however, to have the commission, which was practically promised in Montreal, and on which I counted, snatched out of my mouth at the last minute by the new order, the reason for which I do not know. If Canadians may not become officers in the Imperial Army unless specially asked for by a Colonel, it means that far fewer Canadians will become officers at all.

My diary, if legible, will give you a general



CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS, B.A.,  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, JUNE, 1914

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idea of what I have been doing since we reached England. The arranging of the men in the huts, furnishing guards and picquets, and establishing the general routine of camp life has kept me busy. The Canadian mail has just come in and I received father's letter dated Nov. 29. I have not heard from you yet, but suppose I shall in the next Canadian mail.

Although it is mid-December the fields here are green, and many vegetables and flowers are growing in the gardens. Where we drill we have a beautiful view of the North Sea (or is it the Channel? I really do not know where Shorncliffe is on the map). As the herbage is so green, it cannot be very cold; but it certainly feels cold. The fog and continual rain make it very different from a Montreal winter.

I had intended to send in this letter a sum of money to be expended by you in getting Christmas presents for the family, but the amount of my assigned pay is deducted from this month's pay to be held as a guarantee; so I am short of funds. If you would get a remembrance of some sort for the family for me, for New Year's, if this letter does not reach you in time for Christmas, I should be much obliged.

I have been having a much better time than I expected to have. I hope things are going well at home. I wish you, mother dear, and father, a happy Christmas and New Year, and the same to all the rest. I shall try to send a card to each, but should like you to get a little remembrance beside.

Remember Emma especially,

CLIFFORD.

*St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, England,  
December 15, 1915.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your letter dated November 25 reached me the day before yesterday, two or three days after your letter of the 29th. I do not know the reason for the delay. I have not yet received any message from mother since leaving Montreal.

This week our company is doing "brigade duty," *i. e.*, is furnishing guards, picquets (police) and fatigues for the camp. On Monday I was sent with a Corporal and 12 men to guard a large store house containing government stores of hay, straw, etc. For the guard house we had a little shack about 7 ft. square, with no light, and heated only by a large

bucket of coals suspended from the roof in the centre. This brazier smoked so terribly that I recalled the habits of our Saxon forbears, and sent a man up on the roof to chop a hole to let the smoke out. Before I did this the only exit for smoke as well as men, was the door. At night those who were not on "sentry go" at the time sat along the walls, around the fire, and told stories, etc., until about 10 o'clock, when I sent some of them to the barn to sleep. I had to stay in our official guard-room. I visited the sentries two or three times during the night, and toward morning got a couple of hours sleep. When I woke up, I found that the men who had gone to the barn had come back to get warm. They had built up a blazing fire in the perforated bucket, and the room was so smoky that I could not see the doorway. When I opened my eyes (my face being toasted and my back numb with cold), the sight that greeted my eyes—the lurid flames from the pot, the rolling choking clouds of smoke, and the muffled figures crouched around—looked so much like a corner of Dante's *Inferno*, that when I pointed out the resemblance every one had a good laugh, which did us a lot of good. When we were relieved by the next day's guard, we were



a very smoky, muddy, unshaved guard. Every guard that is sent to the place complains about it, but nothing is ever done to improve conditions—perhaps because the training is good for us. Our shack must resemble a trench dug out in many ways. To-day I have the responsible duty of guarding the Folkestone Reservoir and Water Works. I have a Corporal and 24 men under me. I am writing this letter in the engine room of the pumping station, which is warm and dry. I am sending a card showing the Reservoir. We have about 400 rounds of ammunition here, and are all ready for any one who might try to tamper with the water supply of the town and camp. It rains almost continually, and the cold is very penetrating, although the temperature is not low. The people here say it is the rainiest season in 40 years, and attribute the fact to the continuous heavy gun fire across the channel, whence the clouds come. The food they give us is excellent—not daintily served, but good in quality. The meat always tastes fresh and wholesome, and for dinner we usually have a rice pudding, or something of that sort, which is at once substantial and appetising.

I am more than ever glad I enlisted when I did. In England one rarely sees a young man

in mufti. I would not like to be one of the very last to volunteer. I think I waited just about long enough.

Aeroplanes often fly over the camp. They are used to detect and destroy submarines. The North Sea is so shallow that a submarine, even if resting on the bottom, is easily visible to an aerial observer. The aeroplanes, after locating a sub., proceed to drop bombs which burst thirty feet under water.

It was an inspiring sight the day we landed to come into Plymouth Harbour, where Drake was bowling when told that the Spanish Armada was in sight, and see it crowded with vessels of all kinds. Little tugs with machine guns in the bow, and mine sweepers going out in pairs; submarines were buoyed here and there, and destroyers anchored around. The "Lapland" anchored in mid-harbour; the troops were unloaded in tenders. I shall never forget seeing tender after tender leave the ship, each crowded with troops, and every man among them a volunteer who had come thousands of miles just to fight for old England.

Well, I must close now as it is time to inspect the next relief before they go to their posts. Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

*St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe,  
Christmas Day, 1915.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

It is the evening of Christmas Day, and I must send you a note before I go to bed. I have your note of Dec. 3rd, and also Dec. 8th, which arrived to-day—a welcome Christmas gift. This morning we had Church parade. There are always 3 parades to Church—one to the Church of England, one for the Roman Catholics, and one for Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, etc. To-day the “Presbyterian” parade went to the Baptist Church at Cheriton. It was the first Church service I have attended since leaving Montreal, having always happened to be on guard or some other duty on Sunday hitherto. After Church parade we had a real turkey dinner; and no parade this afternoon, when I enjoyed the luxury of a nap. To-morrow I go on guard again at the Forage Barn which I described to you in a former letter. I had applied for leave of absence next week, and had hoped to get up to London for a few days to get clean and dry once more, but my leave was cancelled on account of our company furnishing the Brigade guards, etc., again next week.

It is still raining here and I envy you your snow in Montreal. I have been thinking of home to-day—as every day—and hope to spend next Christmas there. There is nothing that I need especially. Parcels are very slow in arriving here. All the men are expecting parcels which they believe are on the way. By the way, I received Mrs. Bates' book, and will send a card thanking her for it.

Well, good bye, Molly. Much love and a Happy New Year to all,

CLIFFORD.

*St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe,  
December 29, 1915.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your letter of Dec. 7th reached me safely. The "Lapland" sailed from New York to Halifax, and then from Halifax to Plymouth; hence the announcement that she had arrived "from New York."

We are having another week of "brigade duties," and I have just returned from guard at the Folkestone Water Works again. I had applied for leave to visit London this week, but my leave was cancelled on account of being on various guards all week. Next week we

shall begin our course of training in musketry, and I shall not get any leave till that is ended. If I have an opportunity to specialise in any line, I shall choose musketry. It is very interesting, there being far more to learn than I ever imagined: the various kinds of fouling that may befall a rifle; the numerous elements which tend to deflect the bullet from its true course, etc.

We expect to be here about 10 weeks, after which drafts will be sent to the front as they are needed.

For several hours yesterday it did not rain. A high wind sprang up, and to-day things are noticeably drier. In places about the camp, however, one sinks into mud over one's boot-tops.

On Christmas Day I went to church for the first time since leaving home. Every Sunday hitherto I have been on duty of some kind or other, and unable to go to church. To-day I received a copy of the *Montreal Gazette* from you. I have Mrs. Bates' book also; but apart from these (and a copy of the *Mail* received some time ago), no parcels of any sort have reached me. It is reported that a carload of Christmas mail for soldiers was accidentally burned, and possibly some mail intended for

me was destroyed. Many of the men in my hut are expecting parcels which should have reached them some time ago.

By chance, most of the hard drinkers in the company sleep in my hut. My experience on the Great Lakes three years ago is invaluable to me. I have practically no trouble with the men. Drunk or sober they obey me promptly, and apparently willingly.

Several of the privates in the company have secured commissions already through "pull," but none of the N. C. O.'s have done so. Those who have thus become officers are not all of a very efficient type. The N. C. O.'s of the company are merely Acting-N. C. O.'s over here. Our rank will not be confirmed until we have "made good" at the front.

It is amazing how dark Shorncliffe and Folkestone are by night—all windows covered and the street lights very dim. Outside the huts, the windows of which are covered with blankets as soon as the lights are turned on, the camp is pitch dark by night.

I am glad things are going well at the Church. You may be sure I still take an interest in it, and often remember it.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

JANUARY, 1916

On Leave in London—Dark Streets—A Zepp Alarm—  
The Question of a Commission—Luxury of Sleeping  
Beyond the Sound of Bugles—An Indignant Young  
Lieutenant—Christmas Parcels—Canadian Fists for  
the Taming of Recalcitrant German Prisoners—  
Proficiency of British with the Rifle—  
Frozen Mud—Canned Heat—Spies on Ships—Sub-  
marines—Musketry Practice—Captain John Collins'  
Vocabulary—"Imbecile Sons of Montreal Million-  
aires"—Commissioned Without "Pull" in the Prin-  
cess Pats—A Call for Hair Brushes.

*London, Jan. 7th, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have secured five days' leave and have come to London to get clean and dry, and rested once more. I am stopping at a nice boarding house off Russell Square (not very far from Miss Jackson's where we stopped two years ago). I have a clean airy room, well lighted and with a fire-place. For bed and breakfast I pay two shillings. What makes it so cheap I cannot understand. I have better accommodations than I had at Miss Jackson's, and pay less than half as much. Bed and breakfast by the week here is only ten

shillings. If I remember aright I paid 26 shillings a week at Miss Jackson's for an unattractive room on the third floor. The food here is quite as good as at Miss Jackson's.

It is reported that two carloads of mail from Canada were accidentally burned. I have received only one letter since Christmas; so perhaps some of my mail was destroyed; although it may have only been delayed by the Christmas rush.

London is the same as ever, except that it is full of soldiers, and is very dark by night. So many accidents occur in the darkened streets that people complain they would be safer with the streets lighted in spite of the danger from Zepps. Raids by Zepps seem to be more numerous than the Canadian papers would lead one to believe. Almost every day one hears of some new raid, but the damage done is usually slight, and little alarm seems to be felt. Last Wednesday I was Orderly Sergeant for our Company. About 7.30 in the evening the bugle call for all the Orderly Sergeants sounded from the Battalion headquarters, followed by the call which means "at the double." So I ran down to headquarters, and there the Orderly Sergeants of the various companies were told that Zepps were on the



way to England, and might visit us, as they had been there before. I had to go around to see that no lights were visible from the eight huts occupied by our company, and to give instructions as to what to do in case the alarm sounded. The Zepps did not come our way, however, and the alarm did not sound. I slept in my clothes all night as, in case of alarms, I should have had to see that all the men were out on the parade ground in three minutes, ready to march off in different directions.

I went to see Lieut. Mitchener, the senior officer who came overseas with us, the other evening. I told him that, as he knew, we had been assured over and over again in Montreal that our company was an Officers' Training Corps, and that capable men would receive commissions in England; that, apparently, all this was a mistake, and that we were going to be drafted over to the front in small bodies like any ordinary infantry draft, with the exception of a few privates who were getting commissions through "pull," and that consequently I should like to be transferred to the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps in London, as I felt I could be of more service as an officer than as an N. C. O. He said that

a transfer to the O. T. C. of the Inns of Court was difficult to obtain as it is not an overseas unit, but that he would look into the matter and let me know about it. He advised me, however, to wait awhile before applying for a transfer. Captain Eve sent a list of men whom he recommended for commissions overseas with us, and this list, I understand, has been forwarded to the War Office. Mr. Mitchener read me part of a letter from Col. Buller, O. C. the Princess Pats at the front, which said that when our company went to reinforce the old Pats in France, our men would be junior to those who had been there longer than we, and consequently would not be next in line for promotion. All men, therefore, Col. Buller said, who were fit to be officers should be picked out before the company left for France. Mr. Mitchener assured me that he and our other officers were doing all in their power to get the promised commissions for the efficient men of the company. The War Office, he said, was bringing men from Canada to be trained for officers, and it was merely a question of bringing their demand into touch with the supply our company can afford. A vast amount of red tape is the chief obstacle. On the whole, the interview was encouraging.

I told him the men were dissatisfied at not finding things as they were led to believe they would find them, and that, if nothing happened, a large number would soon apply for transfers to other branches of the service. Many would prefer to belong to the Motor Cyclists or the Army Medical Corps, etc., if they are to remain privates, and indeed, those with technical training in these various lines would be of more service in them than as privates in the Infantry. Lieut. Mitchener advised me to exert any personal influence obtainable in my own behalf, but to wait a few weeks before applying for transfer.

I am sitting in a room in my boarding house this evening with John MacNeill, the son of the Baptist minister at Salisbury, N. B. We have a cheerful grate fire, and are very comfortable. Several of the boys of our company are stopping here this week, but all the rest are out. I consider it a great treat to stay in and write, being warm and comfortable and dry. To go to bed with the thought that no bugle will rouse me at 6 A. M. with the dismal "Reveille" is a luxury so great that you cannot realise what it means.

I heard of the Inns of Court O. T. C. from an Edmonton lawyer in our company who is

applying for transfer to it. If he gets in, he can get me in. It gives a thorough course of training for a period of from ten weeks to three months, after which a man is fully qualified for a commission. While in the Corps the pay is that of an English Tommy (1/2 per diem with a small subsistence allowance), but after completing the course I should receive, of course, a subaltern's pay. If, after a few weeks, no commission is in sight, and it is possible, and seems advisable, to transfer to this unit, do you suppose father could help me support myself (as the pay will not be quite sufficient) during the course of training? I hate to suggest even the possibility of calling on you for money, but I think you would rather have me an officer than an N. C. O., and I think I could be of more service as an officer. Before I enlisted I was afraid of the responsibility entailed by a commission, but have gained self-confidence enough to think I would make a better Lieutenant than many whom I meet. If I do not get a commission in England I may go to the front as a Corporal or even a private, as I understand N. C. O.'s like myself, who have never seen active service, lose one or more of their stripes when they first go to the trenches. I should expect, of course,

to regain them in a short time, but I do not like the idea of making any retrogressive steps. There is nothing to do, however, but to make the best of the present situation and to hope for the best in the future.

A few days ago I was on guard at the Water Works (which I think I described in a previous letter). Grant was one of the men with me. During the afternoon I let him go to town for some extra grub. He came back with some beef steak, cheese, jelly, etc., and we had a most elegant supper. The steak was the most delicious I ever tasted, and Grant cooked it perfectly. I hope to have him on some of my guards in the future.

A company on the parade ground recently was practising passing orders from man to man by word of mouth. This has often to be done in battle. It is amazing how a sentence becomes changed by passing through two hundred mouths. In practise the men are inclined to treat the matter as a joke, and make intentional changes. For example, the message "Enemy pressing hard. Send up two platoons" was started at one end of the line, and emerged at the other in the form "Enemy pressing hard. Send up two balloons." Result, one very indignant young Lieutenant.

I must close now, Mother. Write often. The happiest moment of the day in camp is when the Canadian mail arrives.

Love to all,

CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, Jan. 14th, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

On my return from London on Tuesday I found my Christmas parcel containing socks, soap, chocolate, etc., waiting for me; also mother's letter of Dec. 24th, and Emma's of the 23rd. Yesterday I received the *Literary Digest* of Dec. 18th, and a clipping in regard to John Canadien, the Indian pilot. All these are very welcome gifts, and I thank you and mother for them very heartily.

I had a pleasant six days in London. I did not do much sight seeing, but had a delightful rest and recreation. The first day back in camp was dismal by contrast, but now I am reconciled to this life again, and am feeling refreshed by the trip to London.

A second list, giving fuller particulars of men recommended for commissions, is being sent in to the War Office, and something may come of it ultimately, although the men recommended may go to the front with the company

first. It is being rumoured that we are going to Egypt and not to Flanders. I shall be much pleased if this prove true, as I shall see more of the world, and find things less monotonous than the trench warfare on the Western front.

We have a number of wounded in the camp here, and often meet men back from the front on leave. Nearly every one of them is confident that the German line in the west will be smashed in the spring. They seem to feel that the French and British have the upper hand now. Whether their estimate of the military situation is correct or not, it is of importance as showing the optimistic spirit of our men, which is in itself an important military factor.

An interesting story was told by a Sergeant at the Mess the other day. A small batch of Germans had been captured, and was given in charge of about an equal number of Canadians who happened to be leaving the trenches for the billets. After leaving the trenches with their captors, the Germans refused to go along with them. It did not occur to the Canadians to stick their bayonets into the prisoners, as Germans would have done in their position, but instead they tossed their rifles aside and

went for the prisoners with their fists. After a rough and tumble fight, they were able to proceed with the Germans, and finally turned over a bunch of captives with black eyes and bloody noses, and very submissive. The prisoners were brought along as if in the hands of the police, while two of the Canadians followed behind carrying all the rifles of the party.

I have been moved into a different hut, and now have a very comfortable room, with plenty of shelves, and two boxes on which I place my bed boards, so that when they are covered with blankets it looks like a real bed. There is also a table and a chair—luxuries to which I have not been accustomed recently. I have also a nice room-mate—Gordon Patterson by name. He came over with the Third Company, but was transferred to the Headquarters' Staff here. He is expecting a commission as Interpreter, as he speaks several European languages with great fluency. The interesting fact is that he remembered me as soon as he heard my name. We used to go to Rosedale School together, but I had not seen or heard or thought of him since then until we met here. I now have a very well behaved hut, and am more comfortable in every way than I was before.



We have to pass a large number of tests in musketry—rapid loading, rapid aiming, grouping of shots, etc. These are very interesting. Our instructor yesterday gave us an exhibition of rapid shooting, getting off thirty well-grouped shots in a minute. He loaded the rifle with clips of five cartridges each, starting with the six clips on the ground beside him. The British regulars have weeks of practise in rapid loading, and it was their proficiency in this respect that saved the line in the first few weeks of the war. The Germans thought the British were well supplied with machine guns sometimes when they had none at all, so rapid and concentrated was their fire. The importance of machine guns is being recognised. At the beginning of the war the British had 2 machine guns per battalion. The number has been steadily raised until now the official number is 16 per battalion.

To-day it is quite cold, and the mud is frozen, which is a great boon. I hope the rainy season is at an end.

I hope everything is going well at home, which is never out of my thoughts.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*Shorncliffe, Jan. 15th, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have just received two letters from father dated December 27th, and 28th. He made some enquiries which I am answering on a separate sheet enclosed herewith. The letters which I send home I regard, in general, as sent to the family, so I may give information asked for by father in a letter to you and vice-versa.

I received "Papineau's Notes" and the "Oxford Book of English Verse" a couple of days ago. Thank you very much for sending them. The socks, etc., in my Christmas box were welcome, although I am still well supplied with socks. I received from Emma a canned heat chafing dish which she no doubt described to you. This will be most useful for the front. I shall try to take a couple of the little cans with me to warm up the food in my Mess tin when I have a chance to do so. The contents of the cans burns for a long time and gives off a great heat.

My work has been considerably lighter since the rush of the first two weeks was over. I have some time for reading and writing letters in the evening now.

In regard to the rumours of spies on our ship,

I have come to believe that every transport that sails is afflicted with reports of that sort. In regard to the rockets, I cannot speak with certainty. I was told of them by one of our officers, but Sergeants who were on active service when this particular officer was in the nursery pooh-poohed the idea, and said it was ridiculous. It does not seem probable that spies would fire the rockets when we were two days' sail from the war-zone.

I was weighed in London in my uniform, without cap or great coat—154 lbs.—more than I ever weighed before. I have a new tunic of the English type—loose fitting, very comfortable, but not so neat as the Canadian tunics. I feel that I look almost as broad as long when I wear it.

It is my impression that German submarines in the North Sea are quite negligible now. I have not heard of any ships being torpedoed there since I came to England, although I did hear that two captured submarines were brought into Dover a few weeks ago. I think it is wonderful the way that danger has been disposed of. Swift launches, torpedo boats, aeroplanes (which can spot a submarine even on the bottom of any part of the shallow North Sea) and submarine nets have accounted for

scores of the submarines. Aeroplanes carry bombs which burst thirty feet under water. We see many aeroplanes flying over the camp toward the sea, and occasionally a dirigible balloon. Zepps are reported to be on their way to England every ten days or so, and on these occasions special precautions to conceal all lights are taken.

It was very interesting in London to meet on the street soldiers of many different countries—hundreds of English, of course, and Canadians, Boers, Australians, New Zealanders, French, Belgian, etc., etc.

On Sundays there are three church parades—one for Catholics, one for Anglicans, and one for Presbyterians, etc. I am "etc." We go to the Baptist Church at Cheriton. There is a special service conducted by a chaplain at 10 o'clock. There are usually two or three hundred soldiers present—more than the church would hold in addition to its regular congregation—hence the special service, which lasts only 45 minutes. The only regular church service I have attended since leaving home was last Sunday in London, when I went to Stroud Green (Dr. Brown's) Baptist Church with Mrs. Wigfield, at whose house I had tea, and supper after church. I had a very pleasant

evening there. Dr. Brown was not the preacher I heard, as there was a general exchange of pulpits among the Free Churches of London last Sunday.

Tell Rae I was pleased to receive her letter yesterday.

With much love,  
CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, Jan. 20, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

The box containing the fruit-cake, candy, socks, cocoa, tooth-paste and foot powder came two days ago. Everything in it was welcome. The fruit cake was delicious, and I enjoyed it very much. I am well supplied with socks now, but it is good to have an extra supply on hand. One pair had slightly smaller feet than the others, and I find that pair the most comfortable, as no lumps can form in my boot.

I see the English papers, so there is no need to send me any. If I think of anything I want I shall let you know. One thing I do want is my housewife. The one you made is much better than the one I have, so I should be glad to receive it in the next box you send. If I get a commission, I shall want a lot of things.

This week our course in musketry is in full

swing. We march off at 6.45 every morning to Hythe (4 miles away) to shoot on the ranges there. I have not been doing very well, as I find it difficult to accustom myself to the Lee-Enfield Rifle. Every day we fire two or more tests. A certain standard must be attained in each or else one fails in the course which must be completed before one can go to the front. I failed in one test the other day, but will have a chance at it again. That was shooting at a disappearing target at 200 yards. To-day, however, after doing fairly well in the first two tests, when I came to the most difficult one we have yet tried, I made a record which surprised every one on the ranges. The range was 400 yards. We had to load and fire 5 shots in 30 seconds. At the end of thirty seconds the target disappeared. There was a strong wind blowing at the time, which made it a difficult test. In less than the allotted time, I got off five shots, three of which hit the bull's eye, and the other two were inners close to the bull—a total of 18 out of a possible 20. The crack shots of the company, who had done far better than I on every previous test, were content to get 10 or 12, while some missed the target every time, or made only 3 or 4. I do not know how to account for it; whether it was

mere luck or whether I have gained the mastery over my rifle and its peculiarities (it shoots low and to the left), for no two rifles shoot the same. I shall find out to-morrow. If I could shoot like that every day, I should soon be famous. The wind was so strong that it was necessary to aim away off the bull.

The O. C. of the company now is a Captain John Collins, an Irishman with a truly wonderful vocabulary. He has been in the army for 29 years, rising from the ranks, and has great contempt for school-boy officers, and school-boy N. C. O.'s. Some of the expressions which he uses are really classic. It is a pleasure to be "called down" by him. A poor young Lieutenant made a mistake recently. John's comment, loud enough to be heard by the Battalion, was, "for goodness sake, put some intilligint private in charge of that platoon." An expression which he used of one of our men was: "that imbecile son of some Montreal millionaire." We are "imbecile sons of Montreal millionaires" to the rest of the camp now. Every sentence he utters is picturesque and shows the Celtic imagination, and his brogue is delightful.

The rainy season is apparently coming to an end. It only rains every other day now. I

hope you are having the clear cold weather I am so fond of.

Harry Nesbitt and Grant wish to be remembered to you and father. They are both in my hut now, and often drop into my room.

With love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. The Toronto *Star Weekly* for Dec. 18 contains a much better picture of the 4th University Company than the one in the *Standard*. Will you please get and keep one for me.

*Shorncliffe, Jan. 23, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Some day you may receive from me a cable announcing in the fewest possible words that I have been awarded a commission, and giving my address. As soon as such a cable arrives (if one should arrive) will you please forward to me the articles enumerated on the enclosed list? If I were to receive a commission, I should have to turn in most of the articles which have been issued to me, and those on my list would help to replace them. A cable announcing that I had obtained a commission would probably contain a request for money too. I should be able to pay back later any



sum I might have to ask for, as the Government makes a grant sufficient to cover the initial outlay for uniform, etc. This letter and the enclosed list are sent merely by way of precaution. I have not received a commission yet, and, perhaps, none will be forthcoming, but, if I should get one, I should be sorry not to have planned such a course of procedure in anticipation of the happy event.

With much love to you and father, and the family,

I am,

Your son,

CLIFFORD.

GREAT NORTH WESTERN CABLEGRAM

Received at

f87 NY MN 13

Folkestone Jan 29—16

Rev. O. C. S. Wallace

Westmount

Commissioned Lieutenant Princess Pats  
Shorncliffe

CLIFFORD WELLS.

10.10 P. M.

<sup>1</sup> Received in Montreal, Jan. 30, at 9.30  
A. M.

<sup>1</sup> Note on cablegram in his mother's handwriting.

*Shorncliffe, Jan. 30, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I suppose that by this time (4.30 Sunday afternoon here) you have received the cable which I sent yesterday, announcing my promotion. I have been wonderfully lucky in being commissioned with the Canadian and not the Imperial Army, and, best of all, in being attached (for the present anyway—I may be transferred to some other battalion before going to the front) to the P. P. C. L. I.

This is how it all happened. For some reason or other a sudden shortage of officers occurred in the division, and the various battalions were asked to recommend for promotion a certain number of "N. C. O.'s not below the rank of Sergeant." The 11th Reserve Battalion was asked to recommend four. I was one of the four, two of the remaining three also being Sergeants of the 4th University Company. Last Sunday the three of us were called away from our dinner to go to the Orderly Room, where we had to sign a formal application for a commission, and then undergo the Medical examination. We were warned that nothing might come of the applications, and were advised to say nothing

about them. I wrote a letter to you, however, giving a list of things I should like sent to me in the event of becoming an officer. From Sunday till Friday we went on parade daily and heard nothing of our applications. You may imagine our mental state during this period of waiting. On Friday at 3.30 P. M. Harvey (one of our Sergeants) and I were called off parade to go before the Adjutant, who told us that our applications had been accepted. Instead of giving us a week's leave to get our uniform, he said he wanted us to get fitted out with all essentials before Monday, as he wanted us to go to the Canadian Military School here for a course in Bombing which starts Monday. At the end of this course (which lasts two or three weeks) we shall get leave to go to London to complete our outfit. The other two Sergeants promoted to Lieutenants from this Battalion are getting their week's leave now. Harvey and I hurried down to Folkestone and got Semi-ready Uniforms, which were altered to fit us, Saturday morning. In the afternoon we changed from our Sergeant's into our Lieutenant's uniforms at the store, and came back to camp in a taxi. Friday night we were Sergeants and slept in the huts. Last night we were officers and slept in

the Officers' Quarters. Harvey and I have a nice room, with a stove, writing table, etc., and have a servant to wait on us, clean our boots, etc. It is a very unusual thing for officers promoted as we were to be attached to the unit to which they formerly belonged. I am glad we are going to school for a couple of weeks before we have to appear much about the camp to be saluted by our former companions. A number of officers were ordered away to France this morning, so we were able to move right into a room, and into places at the Mess, without any delay.

I expect to enjoy the Bombing Course. It is necessary to be a specialist and Bombing is one of the branches which appeals to me most—more than machine guns, signalling, etc. The officers, especially those of our own company, have welcomed us very cordially. This afternoon I went for a walk down the "Leas" at Folkestone, and had the pleasure of returning many salutes—so many that it ceased to be a pleasure.

The Government grants 50 pounds for the purchase of the necessary equipment. This seems like a great deal, but when you consider that everything I shall use must be bought with this—2 or 3 prs of boots, two uniforms,

revolver, underwear, shirts, neckties, overcoat, raincoat, etc., etc., it appears that there will not be much left when I have everything.

The other two Sergeants promoted from our company were both qualified Lieutenants when they enlisted. I hope we shall be sent to a regular school of training after we finish our Bombing Course. My military knowledge has been picked up in a haphazard kind of way, and there are gaps in it which make me wish for a regular officers' training course.

I shall be glad now to receive things like my hair brushes, etc., which I could not carry as an N. C. O. It is a great pleasure to feel that I can meet any one now without feeling embarrassed on account of my rank. I am a full Lieutenant with two stars on my sleeve. There are no Second Lts in the Canadian Army. London is full of English 2nd Lts with one star. A week ago I should have saluted them. Now I can treat them with calm indifference.

It is a great piece of good fortune which placed my name among the first three on the list of recommendations sent over by Capt. Eve. That is responsible for my being recommended as one of the four N. C. O.'s from the whole Battalion. It is delightful to be

"Mr. Wells" again; to wear comfortable underwear; to eat with gentlemen; to wear pajamas when I go to bed. On the whole, I am pleased to be a Lieutenant, although I am glad to have been a Private, Lance-Corporal, Corporal, Sergeant, and Platoon Sergeant before.

I received father's letter of Jan. 11th last night. He speaks of your Christmas cable. I received it early in the morning of the 24th, and was very happy to get it. The letter in which I acknowledged it must have gone astray, for I am sure I spoke of it in a previous letter. I hope you are well, mother dear, and are not working too hard, and are not worrying about me. I am happy here; not that I would not rather be at home than anywhere else, but this is where I belong now, and I would be unhappy if I had not come. When I come home, you will be glad that I did not stay home when I knew I ought to go.

I enclose a few snapshots taken last week at a Miniature Machine Gun Range, which is being built near here. I had charge of the Fatigue Party (40 men) which did the work under the direction of a Corporal from the Engineers. The man in one of the pictures is the biggest man in the company. I felt a mere pigmy standing beside him. In civilian

life he was a contractor and builder. It must have seemed strange to him to work as a common labourer when he is used to superintending construction. I enclose a copy of the Company Daily Orders for Friday in which my promotion was announced.

With much love to all, I am,

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

No. 4 Company

28th January, 1916

11th Reserve Batt., P. P. C. L. I.

Details for Saturday, 1916

Duties for Saturday, 29th inst.

*Duties.* Sergt. Turner, Orderly Sergt.; Sergt. Benzie, Assistant Orderly Sergt.; Corpl. Duthie, Orderly Corpl.

*Parades.* 8.00 A. M. to 8.30 A. M., Physical Training; 8.30 A. M. to 9.30 A. M., Bayonet Fighting; 9.30 A. M. to 11.00 A. M., Musketry; 11.00 to 12.00 noon, Section and Platoon Drill.

*Interior Economy.* No. 7 Hut in charge L. S. McDonald, 4th University Coy, was to-day judged to be the best arranged. Major A. A. S. Law, Royal Canadian Regt., who with the O. C. Company inspected the huts, stated that he had never seen cleaner Barrack accommodation during his service.

*Cleaning of Web equipment.* Blanco for Web equipment is on sale at the Regimental Institute (Grocery Bar). All N. C. O. and men are instructed to provide themselves with this for use in cleaning their equipment. The best results are obtained when the preparation is applied with a nail brush. When purchasing specify "Web equipment Blanco" Not Khaki.

*Promotions.* To be Lieutenants:—and posted to their respective Units. 25-1-16.

475272	Sergt. Wells, C. A.	} P. P. C. L. I. 11th Battalion.
475482	" Millett, R. M.	
475266	" Harvey, J. I.	
475463	L/Cpl. Bethune	
475316	Pte. Nash, R. H.	P. P. C. L. I. to be L/Cpl.

J. Collins, Capt.,  
Commanding No. 4 Company.



FEBRUARY, 1916

Learning to Throw Bombs—Athletics and Religion—  
Former Tennis Expertness Useful—Ne Lisez pas la  
Bible—"Private X"—The Capture of a Submarine—  
John Ridd, Batman—Nephew of Rider Haggard—  
1070 Shots per Minute—The "Silver Queen"—Tea at  
the Rectory—The Ever-welcome Handkerchief—The  
J. H. U. Sweater—The Sham Fight, Ending in a  
Snowball Fight—Germans in Canadian Uniforms—  
Another Visit to London.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 1, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

Just a note to say that I received your kind cablegram this afternoon. I am naturally much pleased at having been made an officer, especially as the commission did not come in a general distribution to the company, but because of a special call on the Battalion for four officers.

I received mother's letters of January 12th and 17th to-day. One of them enclosed a letter from Carl Weber, son of Dr. Weber of Baltimore. Carl learned from the enclosed clipping which was contained in his letter, that

I had enlisted. I hope to see him before leaving England.

Hoping you are well, and with much love, I am,

YOUR SON,  
CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 6, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have finished my first week at the Canadian Military School—Grenade Course. This is a four weeks' course. We have lectures every day in regard to the construction and use of the various kinds of bombs or grenades, and then practise throwing bombs by hand and by means of catapults, spring guns, etc., which throw them two hundred yards or more. I have been throwing pretty well this week. In practice we use dummy bombs of the same size and weight as the real ones. There are thirteen officers taking the course. One or two can throw farther than I can, but none has been throwing more accurately. I shall send you a copy of a magazine called *Canada* which describes the Grenade School, and contains photographs of a previous class there.

Our officers have been very kind to the newly promoted Sergeants, and have made

us feel at home right away—more at home than we used to feel at the Sergeants' Mess. We have excellent meals, well served, comfortable rooms, etc. My uniform is very comfortable, and fits well. Rae will be glad to know that my legs look much thinner now than in my Sergeant's uniform—although they do seem fatter than the average officer's legs.

I had intended to go by bus to Canterbury to-day, but it is very windy and rainy, and so I have postponed my visit. I have received an invitation from Carl Weber to spend a weekend at Oxford with him.

Some time I wish you would send me my hair-brushes, stud-holder, and other little things like that, that you may think of. I can make use of that sort of thing now, and can store them here when I go to France.

I suppose you have received the letter which I sent two weeks ago to-day saying that, if I should receive a commission, I should like certain things sent to me. When I wrote that letter I had just been called up to the Orderly Room with regard to a commission, but was by no means sure of getting it. I did not know for sure until the following Friday. I cabled the good news Saturday morning from Folkestone, and received the answering cable Tues-

day afternoon. My cable was of the "Deferred Message" variety, and cost only 3/6, but it was evidently delivered pretty quickly.

As an officer, I have now no Regimental Number; my address is simply Lieut. C. A. Wells, 11th Reserve Battalion, P. P. C. L. I., Shorncliffe, Eng.

I have no especial news to-day. This is simply a note to let you know that I am well, and comfortable.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I received letters from Ned and Rae this week. I enclose the negative of which I recently sent you a print. I shall soon send you some snapshots of my new uniform with me inside it. I also enclose a clipping from the J. H. U. News Letter which was sent to me some time ago in a letter from Frank Davis. Who is the person at McGill who named his child after me? I can recall no one of the name of White there.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 8, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your letter of the 18th January reached me a couple of days ago. I am always very glad to hear from you, and to get the Montreal

papers which you send. The English papers do not contain so much news as the Canadian, and besides there is something very attractive about a home paper, which gives news of various little local happenings (hockey games, etc.) which it is nice to keep in touch with. Our conversations at the Mess and in the evenings deal with a multitude of happenings beside the war. Athletics and religion are two of the favourites. The eight officers connected with our company consist of three Baptists, two Anglicans, two Presbyterians, and a Methodist, and many are the heated discussions that occur with reference to our various doctrines.

I have grown quite accustomed now to being an officer, and returning salutes of those who were formerly my equals or my superiors. The bombing course is extremely interesting—much more than a machine gun course would be to me. I throw bombs with the same overhead movement of the arm that I used in serving a tennis ball. This enables me to throw accurately, and I have no trouble in throwing the distance necessary in the daily competitions which we have at the school. The bombs must be thrown with a stiff arm, much like bowling a cricket ball, as they are too

heavy to throw like a base ball. I should think a lacrosse stick would be excellent for throwing them, but I suppose there is not room enough in the trenches to use one.

I have mailed to mother an envelope containing some picture post cards of the camp and places in the vicinity.

We are beginning to get short periods of beautiful springlike weather now. There are some lovely landscapes about here—the sea, and the chalk cliffs, and the green hills—many of them covered with tents or huts, form pictures that I shall not soon forget. But after half a day of sunshine, back comes the winter rain and mist.

I am entitled to six days' leave in order to purchase my equipment. As I have already bought most of the necessaries (being unable to get my six days until the completion of the bombing course), I shall be able to do some sight-seeing in London, and perhaps also to visit Carl Weber at Oxford for a couple of days.

Your letter and mother's, both of January 26, have just been handed to me. I am very sorry that you have had to give up swimming. You will probably be able to play tennis in the summer, however, and we shall expect to win

the Men's Doubles at Knowlton the next time we enter it. Swimming and running are both very strenuous exercises, as the exertion in each is continuous, while the exercise lasts, not with numerous short intervals of rest as in football or tennis.

I hope everything is going well at home, and that you are having some of the beautiful winter weather which is associated in my mind with Montreal.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I shall read the tract "Ne Lisez pas la Bible" this evening. I am glad to be able to review my French, as I shall need it some day.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 9, 1916*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I wonder if the letters that I send to you are as irregular in their time of arrival at their destination as those I receive. Three days ago I received your letter of January 26. To-day that of the 21st arrived, also Father's of the 24th. I believe some of my letters have gone astray. Father says in his letter that I have not acknowledged the Christmas-box from the Church. I wrote a special letter asking him to convey my thanks to the Church.

This letter I sent shortly after my return from London. Perhaps it has been received by this time.

My letters from home are still addressed to Sergt. Wells, No. 475272, who no longer exists. I have to send my servant over to the hut where I used to reside to bring my mail each day. I am looking forward to getting letters addressed to Lieut. Wells. These will be delivered at the Officers' Mess.

I am sending you a copy of *Canada* which describes the Grenade School I am attending. Let me know if you receive it. Your letter of the 26th contained paper for my note book, a handkerchief, and some sticking plaster—all of which I was glad to receive. I have not received all the packages you have sent—I feel sure of that. It occurs to me that possibly the initials P. P. C. L. I. are misleading, and leads to the parcels being sent to France. I belong now to a Reserve Battalion from which the Pats are reinforced from time to time. If in future you will address me as

Lieut. C. A. Wells,

11th Reserve Battalion,

St. Martin's Plain,

Shorncliffe, Eng.,

it might possibly make delivery more certain.



"Private X" is a former newspaper correspondent named M——. He came over as war correspondent with the First Contingent, but for some reason was sent back or returned to Canada, and enlisted in the Fourth University Company. He is perfectly harmless, except that his imagination is rather too vivid for my liking, and leads him to believe (and to state, both verbally and in print) many things that I do not think are as he describes them. The last time I saw him, he was fully convinced that an aeroplane which flew over Seabrook (a couple of miles from here), where he was one of a fatigue party working under my charge at a new machine gun range, was the German seaplane that attempted to raid Dover that day. Some vivid description of this incident will probably appear in his next effusion. So many aeroplanes are in sight every fine day that I did not pay any attention to those we saw that day. But M—— saw one, which he noticed at the time was different in colour from the rest, which flew at a high rate of speed, circled about uncertainly over our heads a few times, and then flew off in the direction of Dover, half an hour before the reported time of the raid. Selah!

I am not writing any more of my diary in

my little note book. I am saving it for more important notes. I have a regular pocket diary instead, and if you will send back the few sheets I sent you, I will copy them in my diary, so as to have it all together. The best diary, however, is the letters I send home, as I give fuller details of interesting things in them than anywhere else.

Will you please see that all the numbers of the *History of the War* come? And is *Art and Archæology* still reaching you? I ordered it for 1916 before I left home.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 15, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have a couple of interesting things to tell you this time. First, last Saturday when going for a walk along the shore to Folkestone with a couple of other officers, I saw a number of ships (apparently trawlers, with a few larger ships farther out) a couple of miles out from Hythe, a village near here. We wondered what they were all doing, as they appeared to be stationary and doing nothing. About eight o'clock in the evening there was a grand tooting of whistles apparently in cele-

bration of some event. Later, we learned what had happened. A German submarine (the first I have heard of around here for weeks) had been detected (probably by an aeroplane or dirigible balloon) and cornered in some way. It may have become entangled in one of the nets which are spread for them. These nets have a twelve foot mesh into which the submarine runs. The propeller, before it can be stopped, usually swings the boat around, so that it (*i. e.*, the propeller) is also caught. We cannot find out much about what happened Saturday, except that the ships rounded up the submarine, and the whistling was to celebrate the capture when they finally landed the big fish. Before morning trawlers and submarine were gone.

The other interesting thing is this. My batman is John Ridd from Devonshire. He claims to be a descendant of John Ridd of Blackmore's "Lorna Doone." He says that his great-aunt was housekeeper for Blackmore, and told him the traditions about the famous Ridd which were woven into the novel. He says the descendants of the Doones occupy a small island in Bristol Channel called Lundy Island, and still have a very bad reputation for smuggling, and for plundering the

numerous ships which are wrecked on the island each year. My Ridd is a very interesting fellow, and is much ashamed that he is not a giant like his ancestor.

One of the other batmen in this hut is a poet. He writes quite good verse. I shall send a sample some day, if I can obtain a copy. The last occupant of the room in which I sleep was a nephew of Rider Haggard. So you see I live in a very literary atmosphere. Yesterday I received your first letter (of Jan. 30) addressed to Lieut. Wells, and also Father's of the 29th, addressed to the Sergeant of the same name. My expenses will be somewhat heavier now, but I think the increased pay will more than cover the difference. There is still a possibility that a number of members of the Fourth University Company will receive commissions in the Imperial Army, but it is a greater honour to have been one of four recommended by the Battalion in response to a special call, than to share in a wholesale distribution of commissions. I have been wonderfully fortunate.

It will be very nice for Father to have Norris Tibbetts next summer. I should think you would be glad to have him too, as he is a good boy. Does Victor still come around and make

the toast for you? Remember me to him, and tell him I should like to hear from him.

I must close now as it is dinner time.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I enclose a couple of snapshots taken at the Bombing School, showing me in the act of throwing a 2 pound "jam-tin" bomb (a dummy). We have daily competitions in throwing these dummies. The target is a basket (like the one in one of the pictures) and the distance thirty yards. We have frequent practice in throwing live grenades as well as the dummies.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 20, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Last night I received the Montreal *Standard* of January 29th, and a couple of copies of the *McGill Daily*. I was very glad to get them. To-day some copies of *Punch* came, which I am also glad to have for the sake of some of the pictures in them to adorn my room. I am able to see *Punch* and other English papers, however, each week at the Officers' Mess. It is the Montreal papers I enjoy especially.

The Bombing Course will end on Friday,

and then I hope to get to London for a few days. To-morrow we have to turn in our note books on the course, and to-morrow and Tuesday we have the final tests in bomb-throwing. On Thursday we have the written examination. The note books count 10 per cent., throwing 10 per cent., and the written exam. 80 per cent. A certificate is granted to those who pass the course.

The English papers contain a good deal of discussion of the possibility of the German navy being equipped with 17-inch guns. Very likely this is for the benefit of the Germans themselves. An officer at the Bombing School who claims to be in touch with naval affairs says that, although the papers are not allowed to mention the fact, it is well known among naval officers that England already has a battleship afloat armed with 18-inch guns. George would be interested in this. We hear a good deal about a wonderful new machine gun invented by the Australians which fires with marvellous rapidity—1070 shots per minute the report says. Stories like these give one the impression that the Naval and Military authorities in England are by no means asleep. It is unfortunate that England has not made the same efforts to influence the American

press that Germany has made. I understand that the Germans manage to present their case very strongly in the U. S. A. while England takes it for granted that Americans understand what we are fighting for and what we are accomplishing.

Three aeroplanes were flying around together this morning. At present the "Silver Queen," a British dirigible, is flying around near the camp. It is said that this dirigible was chased for a long time by a Zepp on one occasion. I wish I had been there to see the chase. It occurred somewhere out over the North Sea.

I received a cake from "B. McTavish" on Friday. I shall write and thank Mrs. McTavish (for I suppose it is she) this evening. Enclosed with it was one for Gordon Rickert, which I am forwarding to him at the Canadian Convalescent Home, Bear Wood Park, Wokingham, Berks, where he is at present. It is very kind of Mrs. McTavish to remember us.

Last Sunday I was invited by one of my brother officers to have afternoon tea at the Rectory of Trinity Church, Folkestone. The Rector and his wife were very kind, very English and very dignified. They have a beautiful home, and are evidently doing a great deal for

the soldiers of all ranks who are in the neighbourhood. Last Sunday they had three officers and two privates in to tea. It reminded me of home in many ways.

This is a beautiful Sunday afternoon and I am going for a walk with three or four others. We shall have afternoon tea in Folkestone, as we do not have much of a supper at the Mess on Sunday. When we come home we shall have some cake and lemonade in my room. We live a very luxurious life.

I hope you are well, mother dear, and are not working too hard, and that you lie down whenever father tells you to.

With greatest love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. Thanks for the handkerchief and for the N. C. O.'s Handy Book, both of which will come in very useful.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 22, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have just received your letter of Feb. 7th, and the ever-welcome handkerchief with it. It was very good of you to go to so much trouble about my commission. When I first spoke of the matter I had Major Hickson especially in mind, thinking he might be a Staff Officer



now, and able to recommend me for a commission in one of the new Derby Battalions. I am sorry to have caused you so much trouble for nothing. My commission was granted to me because I was a Sergeant recommended by Capt. Eve before leaving Montreal, and by our company officers here. I am glad it came in this way without any "pull" whatever about it.

At physical training in the morning the officers have a class to themselves, and many wear college or athletic-club sweaters. That is why I want my J. H. U. sweater with the H on it.

I spoke of my diary in a previous letter. I am noting anything special that happens in a little diary which I have. I use the note book for military notes, and would like you to keep on sending me paper for it.

To-day we had the first part of the examination on the Bombing Course—the tests in throwing. I do not know exactly where I stood in the class of thirteen, but was certainly among the first three. In two of the three tests, I was tied with one other (a different one each time) for first place. I did best in the throwing from a kneeling position, dropping nine out of ten bombs square into

a trench twenty yards away. The tenth struck the parapet and rolled in. The other contests were (1) throwing thirty yards into a trench from standing position, and (2) throwing from within the trench into the bay beyond the second traverse as if we were "bombing out" the trench.

To-morrow we have to hand in our note books. I shall not do so well there, as I am not an artist, and have difficulty in making neat and accurate drawings of the intricate internal mechanism of the various grenades. Thursday we have the written examination. This counts 80 points, throwing 10, and the note book 10.

I must close now in order to do some "plugging."

With love,  
CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, Feb. 25, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I had a visit from Reggie Jones a couple of weeks ago. He came to my room early one morning before I was out of bed. He had got back from France the day before, and was going up to London that morning, hoping to see his father. He looked rather pale and

thin, I thought, and according to a card which I have just received from him, he has since been sick in bed for a week in Coolbrookdale, Salop, wherever that may be. His father has been with him. He wrote the card to give me his father's address in London. I am expecting to go to London to-morrow for a few days, and shall be pleased to see Mr. Jones if possible.

I have finished my Bombing Course, and have five days' leave, which I am going to spend in London. After my return I shall be one of the regular officers of the Battalion until my turn comes to be sent across to France. The finale of the Bombing Course was very interesting. A grand sham fight was planned, and it was expected we should have quite a number of spectators. But during the previous night several inches of snow fell, and the fight took place during a severe snow storm, which was sufficient to keep away any fans who might otherwise have come. The fight took the form of an infantry attack upon a redoubt defended chiefly by grenadiers. The attackers numbered about 200, the defenders about 50. As the attackers advanced in short rushes, we opened fire with our few riflemen (firing blanks of course) and then with our 3

catapults, and 2 spring guns firing bombs, which weigh 2 pounds, about 200 yards. The attackers, of course, were out of range, so no one was hurt. I had charge of a West Spring Gun. The gun crew consists of five men, three to compress the spring, one to place the bomb in position, and light the fuse, and one to fire as soon as the fuse is lighted. The bomb would burst  $4\frac{1}{2}$  seconds later, usually just after striking the ground. It would throw up a shower of snow and mud. Then, as the attackers drew nearer, we threw hand grenades toward them, not reaching them, of course. The noise was deafening, as the 200 or more rifles were cracking all the time, and the bombs made a tremendous noise as they burst.

Then, finally, when our bombs were all used up the enemy made the final charge up to our redoubt, and the manœuvre was at an end—supposedly. The enemy paused after reaching our trenches to get their breath, and during the pause some one threw a snowball. The next minute something like 250 snowballs were flying through the air. Officers and men acted like schoolboys, and for the next fifteen minutes one of the greatest snowball fights that ever occurred was raging. It is my private opinion that about thirty men of the Fourth

University Company who happened to be among the attackers chose me for their particular target, but I may have got this impression simply from not making good use of the available cover. Altogether, it was the most enjoyable quarter of an hour I have had for some time. When it was all over, the men picked up their rifles, and the officers picked up their canes and their dignity, and tried to look as if they had never thrown a snowball in their lives. The whole thing was spontaneous, unpremeditated by any one.

Last night, coming home from Folkestone, I was halted by a sentry on the road near the camp. Information had been sent from Brigade Headquarters that Germans wearing Canadian uniforms were believed to be going to make an attack of some sort on the camp. Nothing came of it last night, however. Only occasional reports like this prevent life from becoming intolerably monotonous here. I believe the extra guards will be retained for a while.

I think you must have received word about mother's Christmas cable by this time, but in case my letter went astray, I will state again that I received it early in the forenoon of the 24th. My cable in regard to my promotion

was sent about 11 o'clock Saturday morning, and your answer was received Tuesday afternoon.

The snowfall to which I have referred is the first we have had here this winter. It is snowing again to-day, and the country looks quite like Canada. I enclose a couple of snapshots of myself and a brother officer, Lieut. Cheney, of Ottawa.

Your affectionate son,  
CLIFFORD.

*London, W. C., February 29, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am in London again for a few days, and am enjoying myself greatly. I wish you and father were over here, too. As you see, I am stopping at the Imperial in Russell Square, about one hundred yards from the modest boarding house where I stayed when I was a mere Sergeant. Canadian Officers are well treated here. Yesterday my friend Harvey (who was promoted with me) and I went to the Houses of Parliament and were admitted to the House of Lords, where the Court of Appeals was sitting. It was most interesting to see the lawyers with their wigs, but the case which was being tried was extremely uninter-

esting, and we did not stay long. To-day Parliament is sitting and we hope to be admitted to the gallery to hear some of the great men we have heard of so often.

On Saturday I went to the Kenilworth Hotel where Mr. Jones was staying, but he had left the day before, and was not expected back. I should have liked to see him.

After to-day the British Museum is to be closed to the public indefinitely. The Elgin marbles have not been accessible for some time, and have been taken down or else protected by sandbags where they are. The streets of London are extremely dark at night, even the lights on the busses and autos being dimmed. I suppose it is necessary, but it makes the streets very dangerous by night. A single bomb, however, dropped on the Houses of Parliament or on the Abbey would do irreparable damage.

I received a nice long letter from Arthur the other day, and one from Frank about the same time. The family is very kind in writing to me.

Mr. Edmonds wrote to me recently, too. He is very anxious that I should meet the 2 sons of the Rev. Mr. Shakespeare who are in the British Army somewhere. It would be far

easier to find a needle in the proverbial haystack than to locate some one in the British Army, with no further particulars to guide one.

I had my photo taken yesterday. If the proofs are good, I shall have a dozen printed, and shall send them all to you to distribute to members of the family as you see fit.

To-morrow I return to Shorncliffe. For the present I am attached to a company of the 44th Battalion of Winnipeg, which, *i. e.*, the company, forms part of the 11th Reserve Battalion, although I was gazetted as Lieutenant in the P. P. C. L. I., and shall probably go to that Regiment when my turn comes to be sent across.

I hope everything is going well. Don't think of me as suffering many hardships, as I am very comfortably situated for the present.

With love,

CLIFFORD.



MARCH, 1916

A Draft for France—Measles—First Day on Parade as Regular Officer—Orderly Officer—Women as Bus Drivers, Barbers, etc.—Fellow Officers—Casualty Company—Meeting Old Friends—A Company of Black Devils—West Sandling and Quarantine—Beautiful Kent—Eager to Go to France.

*March 4, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

The first draft (50 men) from the Fourth University Company has been called for. This means that the fifty most efficient men of the company will be sent over to France shortly. They will not go direct to the trenches, of course, but will relieve other troops at the base near Havre, and will be employed there for a while. The men whom you know—Grant, Nesbitt, and McKenzie—are practically sure to be included in the fifty. There is great competition for the honour of being chosen for the first draft. Unfortunately, three of the eight huts occupied by the company are quarantined on account of measles, and so nearly half the company is ruled out of the competition. I shall be sorry not to go with

the men I know, as I should be going if I had not received my commission (provided I were not in quarantine). Being an officer, I must await my turn to be sent over to France.

There are a number of cases of measles in the camp, and as soon as one hut is released from quarantine, one or two more have to be quarantined. None of the cases, so far as I know, are severe. We are afraid, however, that the whole camp will be quarantined. In that case, we might possibly not be allowed to write letters; so if communications should suddenly cease coming from me, you will know the reason. There have been no cases of measles in the Officers' Quarters, but we would be quarantined the same as the men.

Having finished my Bombing Course, I am one of the regular officers of the Battalion now, and appear on the parade ground daily, usually in command of a platoon. I am enjoying it very much. The first day on parade was rather trying. I felt as though the whole Battalion was staring at me. The Captain of the company was called away for half an hour, during which time I had to drill the platoon. By the time he got back I was feeling quite at home. I do not think any of the men guessed it was my first parade as an officer.

I enjoyed my trip to London. Last Tuesday, in the House of Commons, I heard part of the debate on the question of exemptions from service under the Compulsion Act. Sir John Simon, an eloquent speaker, quoted numerous instances of hardship caused by the refusal of tribunals to exempt certain men—the sole supports of widowed mothers, etc. I was rather impressed by his speech (of which I heard only a part), but the papers condemned him bitterly for thus attacking the government at such a time. The answer given by the Under Secretary for War was simply that (1) while the tribunals might make a few mistakes in deciding hundreds of appeals for exemption, they were doing all in their power to render fair decisions, and (2) that the Compulsion Act promised exemption only where “serious hardships” would otherwise result, a certain amount of inconvenience and suffering being absolutely unavoidable under the circumstances. After Simon’s speech, of which I heard the latter part, and the reply thereto, a third speaker began an address which seemed to have no end, and during its course I went out.

To-day is my first day as Orderly Officer. The duties of the Orderly Officer are to see

that all the routine orders for the day are carried out—that the men rise at Reveille, that they receive the proper quantity and quality of food, that all the huts are clean and in good order, that the stables are clean, that windows are blanketed during the evening, and that lights go out promptly at 9.45, etc., etc. First Post (9.00 P. M.) is just sounding. At Last Post (9.30) I have to inspect the Fire Picket and the Guards. Then my duties will be over, except that I have to make a round of the camp after midnight to see that everything is in order.

It is amusing to see what a fine time the men in quarantine are having. As soon as a man gets the measles, he is sent to a hospital and all the men in his hut are quarantined. They go for a march by themselves every day, but of course cannot come on parade with the rest. So a lot of time is spent in their hut playing games, singing, reading, or sleeping, just as they choose.

I must close now.

With greatest love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I have just received a lovely box of Scotch shortbread, cake, ginger bread, etc.,

with your card enclosed. Thank you very much, Molly. It is delicious.

*Shorncliffe, March 6, 1916.*

DEAR RAE,

I am afraid you will think I am a poor correspondent. I am really pretty busy, however, with not much time for letter writing, and besides, when I write to mother and father I intend the news for the whole family.

How are you getting on with your guessing contest? You must know the names of hundreds of books that many people in the contest have never heard of, and should have a good chance of winning one of the prizes. Do you remember the similar contest we engaged in when we lived in Lowell? I hope you will have better luck this time than we had then.

You would be interested to see the various occupations in which women are now engaged in England. We see post-women delivering the mail (each wears a flash-light on her bosom to illumine her way after dusk), women conductors on busses and street cars, women ticket collectors at the railway stations, women elevator boys, women barbers, etc., etc. They seem to do their jobs pretty well, too.

I have a very comfortable room now and a

servant, a convalescent wounded soldier, to wait on me, make my bed, look after the fire in my room, polish my boots and my belt, and so forth. I shall need to have a valet to look after me when I get home. How could I polish my own boots after having it done so well for me for so long? I am very particular about my belt and boots. Our daily routine starts with Physical Training from 8-8.30 A. M., then an hour's musketry practice, then half-an-hour of bayonet-fighting, then musketry again till 11.30. In the afternoon from 1 until 5.30 we are hard at work again, the schedule being similar to that for the morning. The evenings I spend reading or studying, or shopping in Folkestone (the stores are open until 8), or else at a concert at the camp Y. M. C. A., or in Folkestone. Time does not hang heavy on my hands. I can always find something to do.

I hope you are keeping well, and are taking lots of exercise. Write when you find time to.

Your affectionate brother,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

P. S. Will you please tell mother that a dozen photos of me will soon be on their way to her. I had four positions taken. I am sending 6 of the best, three of another, two of

another, and one of the poorest. She can order more of them if she wishes. I do not think any of them are very good. They all look too much like me.

*March 10, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I am on guard at the Folkestone Water Works once more. The guard has been increased so that it is now necessary to have an officer in charge. I am to be here for three days, during all of which time the guard, including myself, must wear clothing and equipment so as to be able to turn out at a moment's notice. I have to inspect the guard three times a day, and visit all the sentries twice by day, and twice by night. There is a wonderful echo here, and I enjoy listening to the sentries passing the call "All's Well" every half-hour by night. Two of them are so situated that their call cannot be heard at all from the guard-room, but the echo can be heard distinctly.

Last night as one of the reliefs was loading before going out, I had to caution the men to keep their rifles pointing in the air while loading them. I had scarcely finished speaking when bang! a bullet went sailing up into the

sky. Through carelessness a man had let a cartridge slip from the magazine into the breech, and had accidentally discharged it. This emphatic punctuation of my remarks should cause all who were present to listen with very respectful attention when I speak.

On Tuesday last Mr. Jones and Reggie, who is still on sick-leave, came out to the camp to see me. I had dinner in Folkestone with them that evening. It was very pleasant to meet some one from home.

I have been granted a certificate as Instructor in Grenade Work in consequence of passing the four-weeks' course. My inability to draw well prevented me from attaining very high marks, and in a way I am glad of this. It is, unfortunately, customary to keep in England as Instructors in various kinds of work, the officers and N. C. O.'s who make the best marks in the courses. This is unfortunate because it leads many to try to make only enough marks to pass for fear lest, if they did too well, they would be kept as Instructors and not sent to the front. I am glad that I did my best and that, through no fault of mine, I am unlikely to be kept in England as an Instructor.

It is time for me to go and see that the sen-



tries are "alert and acquainted with their orders," as the Guard Report says, and so I must close.

Your affectionate son,  
CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, March 13, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Thank you very much for the cablegram which reached me on my birthday. It was waiting for me upon my return from the Water Works about 10 o'clock Sunday morning.

It is two weeks to-day since any Canadian mail was delivered in the camp here. It is reported that a number of ships bringing troops and mails from Canada are quarantined at Plymouth on account of smallpox.

There is no use trying to conceal the sad truth from myself any longer, mother,—I am getting fat. I do not get enough exercise here. We have physical training twice a day, an hour of bayonet practice, and, of course, some marching, but still it is not enough to keep me from getting fatter and fatter every day until I am quite ashamed.

*March 15.* The draft of reinforcements from the 4th University Company, of which

I spoke in a former letter, did not leave until this morning. A draft of Black Devils (so named by the Indians in one of the rebellions in the Northwest) or 90th Winnipeg Rifles, left at the same time. They marched off very gaily with the band playing "Soldiers of the King," amid the cheers of those who were left behind. At the last moment before moving off some of the men were not allowed to go, as the draft was over strength. Those who were called out to stay behind were terribly disappointed. Some of them almost wept.

The measles seems to be on the decrease in camp, although several huts are still in quarantine. I understand that the Fifth University Company is quarantined on account of measles in Montreal.

No letters came from Canada to-day, but I received the *Standard* of February 12, which has some splendid pictures in it.

I have very little news this time. I am waiting eagerly for the letters and parcels which I know are on the way.

George sent me a pound recently for me to get something for myself. I have got a beautiful flashlight made to be worn on the belt. It can be used for signalling, for lighting the path before me, or for reading by if necessary.

Postmen (and postwomen) carry similar flashlights when they deliver letters after dusk.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. If my photographs should not arrive in good condition, please notify the photographer and me at once. The photographer guaranteed delivery in good condition.

*Shorncliffe, March 17, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

After an interim of more than two weeks Canadian mail is again reaching us. Yesterday I received your letter of March 2, and father's of February 29th. To-day yours of February 20th and February 28th, and father's of February 22nd and 24th arrived, also Croy's of February 24th. Except the cake which I acknowledged some time ago, no packages have reached me for some time. They will all turn up in time, no doubt. I have acknowledged all that have come.

You refer to a "letter of Cousin Augusta." Did you send such a letter? It has not reached me. Father was enquiring about the Officers with whom I am chiefly associated. Of the five who came overseas as officers of the Fourth University Company, one, C. C. Robinson,

was a student at Wycliffe College. His father is an Anglican missionary in Japan. He is one of my best friends. Two others were students at Victoria College (Heywood and Cheney are their names), and another, Mitchener, is from S. P. S. Higgins, who, by the way, is not with us any more, but has secured his transfer to the Artillery, you already know. Of the three of us who were promoted over here, one named Millett is from Acadia, and the other, Harvey, was a High School teacher in Ontario. All of the eight except me were qualified Lieutenants before they left Canada, and officers of the Canadian Militia.

Father also enquires as to what the 11th Reserve Battalion is. I should have explained this before. It is a battalion composed of six companies, namely, four "Training Companies," the Headquarters Company, and a Casualty Company. The Headquarters Company comprises the clerical staff, which is necessarily large for a Reserve Battalion, the band, and all others connected with the administration and care of the camp. The Casualty Company is composed of soldiers wounded or sick who have recovered sufficiently to leave hospital and to perform light duties while convalescing. From the Casualty Company they are

transferred to other companies as they become fit, or, if totally unfit, they are sent back to Canada. A number of the original Pats are in the Casualty Company. Of the Training Companies No. I is a draft of R. C. R.'s (Royal Canadian Regiment), No. II, P. P. C. L. I., No. III, Black Devils (90th Winnipeg Rifles), No. IV, the 44th Battalion of Winnipeg. Drafts of reinforcements from the 4 training companies are sent out from time to time according to the needs of the battalions which each several company is to reinforce. The officers of a reserve battalion do not necessarily remain with men of their own regiment while here. For example, I am at present attached to number 4 Company, although upon promotion I was posted to the Pats, to whom I expect to go when sent overseas. Some officers are posted merely to the 11th Reserve Battalion, and are liable to be sent to any of the units represented in this battalion. Thus, since only one company of this battalion is composed of reinforcements for the Pats, it is better to put 11th Reserve Battalion on my letters for fear they might be sent to the P. P. C. L. I. in France. I am an officer of the 11th Reserve Battalion who will some day be sent to the P. P. C. L. I. in France, or, to put it

in another way, I am an officer of the P. P. C. L. I. at present attached to the 11th Reserve Battalion of which one company is composed of reinforcements for the Pats. I trust this will clear up the difficulty.

I met Gordon Crossley in Folkestone the other day. He had come down to arrange for a transfer to the Field Artillery in barracks near here. He was looking well. I have not been to Dover, as it is necessary to secure a Pass before any one can enter the city. It would not be difficult for me to get a Pass, but I have not done so yet.

I am glad to have my diary back. I shall copy it into a diary which I have here. My diary is going to be very brief, all interesting facts being mentioned in my letters home.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I enclose a copy of the exam. I took at the Bombing School.

*March 24th, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Last Sunday I went for a walk with a couple of friends, one of them from another Battalion (12th), and had afternoon tea at the Metropole Hotel in Folkestone, as we do not get

much of a supper in camp on Sundays. The officer from the 12th casually directed my attention to a young Lieutenant of the Royal Naval Air Service, who was sitting near us, saying his name was Ince, and that he had recently won the D. S. O. It turned out to be Strachan Ince, who was with his brother Billy (Lieut. in the 35th Battalion encamped near St. Martin's Plain). Mr. and Mrs. Ince were with them. I had a pleasant chat with them. Mrs. Ince recognised me before I told her my name. Later in the evening I met Bert Moyle in a restaurant. He was wearing the uniform of a Captain in the Canadian Army Medical Corps. He is at Sandgate, which is between St. Martin's Plain and Folkestone. It is very pleasant to meet people whom I knew of old.

You will be pleased to know that the hair brushes, sweater, etc., have all reached me safely. Will you please thank the donor of the socks? They are very nice ones. I do not know who made them, whether they are the ones from the S. W. League, or from Mabel Moule. I also have received the letter from Mrs. Inskip. The commissions, which were to have been issued wholesale to members of the Fourth University Company, have never materialised. The only ones who have received

commissions from the company are the three Sergeants, and a few who had a strong pull in one quarter or another. I was wonderfully fortunate to be promoted.

Last Monday the 11th Reserve Battalion moved from St. Martin's Plain to West Sandling, a distance of about five miles. The composition of the battalion is unchanged. There are, as I explained in my last letter, six companies, No. I consisting of reinforcements for the Royal Canadian Regiment (of the Canadian Permanent Force), No. II, reinforcements for the Pats. This company consists of what was the 4th University Company, and dregs of the 3rd University Company (*i. e.*, those who are not yet qualified to go to the front) and those of previous University companies, and of the original Pats, who, having been wounded, have passed through hospital, and convalescent home, and, after serving some time at light duty in the Casualty Company, have again been declared fit for active service. The other companies are equally complex in their make-up, *i. e.*, in addition to those who are waiting to go to the front for the first time, there are those who have completed the cycle of the trenches, hospital, convalescent home, and Casualty Company. No. III Company is



composed of reinforcements for the Winnipeg Rifles, commonly known as Black Devils, and No. IV of reinforcements for a composite Winnipeg Battalion. Before getting my commission I was, of course, a Sergeant in No. II Company. Since returning from the Bombing School I have been attached to No. IV company, until this week, when I was transferred to No. III (Black Devils). This does not in any way alter the fact that my regiment is the P. P. C. L. I. It simply means that, in a composite reserve battalion like this, where the number of officers is constantly changing, the officers are treated as though they belonged to the battalion and not to any one company of the battalion. Besides the four training companies which I have enumerated, there is a Headquarters Company, composed of the administrative staff of the camp, and a Casualty Company, previously referred to, composed of casualties from the four regiments to be reinforced by the four training companies. From the Casualty Company, which performs various light duties, men are transferred to their proper training companies if they become fit, to the Headquarters Company if they are only fit for clerical work or some duty of that

sort, or are sent back to Canada if they are permanently disabled.

I have given this long explanation of the composition of the battalion, in addition to the explanation in my previous letter, in order to make the situation perfectly clear, so that you may understand how it is that I belong to the Pats, am stationed in the 11th Reserve Battalion, and am attached to a company of Black Devils.

I was very glad to get the tooth paste, eatables, etc., in the packages you sent. I also appreciate the cartoon about Mr. Jiggs, and the horse with the heaves, which father sent.

With greatest love,  
CLIFFCRD.

*March 24th, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

With the pound which you sent I have bought a flashlight of the kind which I described in a previous letter. It is a very useful thing, one that will last, and one that I should not have got but for your remittance.

I have not a great deal of time for reading, but this last week I have been devouring at odd moments "Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy" by Stephen Leacock of McGill.

Probably because it has been so long since I read anything of the sort, many of the stories struck me as being rather clever. Have you read any of his stories?

Write when you have time. Letters are always very welcome. By the way, I sent you a copy of "Fragments from France" (cartoons of trench life by Capt. Bairnsfather). In case it does not reach you, you will find the cartoons with a good write-up in the *Strand Magazine* (Eng. Ed.) for March. If they are not in the American *Strand* for March they may come out in the April number. They are extremely good, I think.

Love to Mildred and the children,

CLIFF.

*West Sandling, Kent, March 29, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have very little news to tell you this time, inasmuch as I am quarantined. One of the officers in this hut developed the measles last week. He was sent to the hospital, and his room-mate and batman were quarantined. On Sunday the batman managed to get drunk and visited the room where all the other batmen sleep. They, of course, in the pursuance of their duties entered the officers' rooms in the

hut. The Medical Officer, when the circumstance was reported to him, put the whole hut under quarantine. Only three officers were caught, however. The others happened to be out at the time, and are sleeping in other huts. But my room-mate and I, and one other officer, and the batmen, are shut up for sixteen days, with a sentry with fixed bayonet in front of the door. All our meals are brought in to us. I sometimes have breakfast in bed. Out on the parade ground the battalion is hard at work drilling in anticipation of being inspected by Sam Hughes. In the afternoon my room-mate and I are allowed to go out for a long walk in the country, but, of course, cannot go into any stores or buildings occupied by other people. We are having a delightful time.

In one of your letters you asked about Sunday in camp. There are three church-parades at 9.30. One for Church of England, one for Roman Catholics, one for "Presbyterians and other Protestants." If necessary, there would be a parade for Jews on Saturday, but there are very few Jews, if any, in camp. Every one must attend the parade of the church to which he belongs. On enlistment, every man must register his religion or denomination. The Presbyterians usually have their service in the

Y. M. C. A. hut. The chaplain preaches a very short sermon, the whole service lasting about three quarters of an hour. Occasionally we go to some church in the neighbourhood, but usually the chaplain preaches even there, and the minister of the church does not appear at all. We never attend a regular service of any church, as the number of troops is so great that there would not be room for the regular congregation. The C. of E. service is held in the hut of the Lord Roberts Club, a Church of England Club similar to the camp Y. M. C. A. The R. C.'s meet in a hut known as the Roman Catholic hut. There is usually a band for each parade, although we have only a few hundred yards to march. After church parade there are no further duties for the men, except those detailed for guards, pickets (police), etc., but they are not allowed to leave the camp until 2 P. M. In the afternoon nearly everybody goes for a walk, and many have supper in Folkestone or Shorncliffe, as supper in camp on Sundays is a very simple meal. There are services (voluntary) at the Y. M. C. A. and Lord Roberts Club in the evening. Many go to church in Folkestone in the evening. The men have to be back in camp at First Post (9 o'clock). There are also Sunday concerts

at the theatre in Folkestone. These usually attract a large number of officers and men.

Kent is called "The Garden of England," and it well deserves the name. The country about here is beautiful—low, rolling hills, and beautiful green valleys. Much land is given up to sheep grazing, and at this season the infant lambs are numbered by the thousand. Yesterday we came upon a little old church founded by Queen Ethelburga in the ninth century. The time which I can spend in walking about the country is well spent, and I am much pleased with my state of quarantine, as it enables me to see far more of the country than I could under ordinary circumstances when I am on parade until 5.30 daily including Saturdays.

Things are done in a more formal manner here than at St. Martin's Plain. The 11th Reserve Battalion is now part of the 12th Reserve Brigade. All four battalions of the brigade are quartered together in one big camp. A band plays at Reveille (5.30), at Retreat (6.30 P. M.), and for each Battalion parade.

Frequent drafts are being sent over to France, and I am hoping my turn will come before very long. There are a number of officers who will go before me, however, and it

is useless to speculate when my time will come.  
It depends on many different things.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

APRIL, 1916

A High Class Batman—A Window Cleaning Incident—  
A Joke at the Expense of "the Family"—When Sir  
Sam Said, "Where Are You From?"—When Napo-  
leon Was Menacing England—Farms Tilled by Old  
Men and Boys—The Marvel of Voluntary Enlist-  
ment in England—An Easter Service in a Meadow—  
"Well, We Have a Good Navy, Anyway"—The Bat-  
man's Remark.

*West Sandling, Kent,*  
*April 2, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Your parcel of socks, etc., reached me two days ago, and was very welcome. The thumb-tacks were among the most useful articles enclosed, and were the means whereby numerous pictures were affixed to the wall of my room. The tooth-paste, soap, and foot powder were also welcome. Will you please thank Mrs. Muir and Mabel (whose address I do not know) for the socks. They are very nice ones. I shall give to Morgan, "the tall man," the pair intended for him. John Ridd is not with me, as he had to go to the hospital for an operation. His successor, named Towse, is a much



better batman than Ridd ever was. He is an Englishman by birth, who, when war broke out, was a florist in Winnipeg. I believe he was doing very well, and had a large business. He enlisted and came overseas with the First Contingent. He was badly wounded at Festubert, and is still very lame. He would like to get his discharge now that he is not fit for active service any more, but does not seem likely to get it, as he is fit for light duties (such as officers' servant), and so can take the place which would otherwise be occupied by an able bodied man. He is really too intelligent a person to spend his time cleaning belts and shoes, etc., but does all his work perfectly. His predecessor felt rather superior to his occupation, and showed his feeling by doing things in a half-hearted way. I shall give Towse the socks intended for Ridd.

I am still in quarantine, but turn out on parade daily with the hundred or more men who are also quarantined. We go through the daily schedule apart from the rest of the battalion, although more or less contact is unavoidable. The form of measles prevalent is so light that quarantine is not very strictly observed. Johnson is one of the men quarantined. He is most indignant at having to

parade all day, and being made to stay in the hut under guard all the rest of the time. He says the authorities seem to think measles can be communicated only at night.

There was to have been a grand review of the troops of the Canadian Training Division at Shorncliffe to-morrow by the Honourable The Minister of Militia, Sir Sam Hughes. However, we understand that he has been recalled to Canada on pressing business. It is wonderful how quickly news spreads among the thousands of troops encamped around Shorncliffe.

I have no hope of getting to France for some time yet. The Pats have plenty of officers at present, and there are several in camp who are senior to me, and so will be sent over before me. This prolonged sojourn in a reserve battalion is the one thing about getting a commission which I do not like. I should have been in the trenches by now if I had not been promoted. The first draft from the Fourth University Company has already been in action. If there is a big drive soon, it will probably hasten my summons to the front. If not, I may be here doing little and learning little for months. The daily schedule is so little varied that I learn little that is new on

parade, except that I get more used to the feeling of being in command. I do some studying in the evenings. My work occupies most of my time, although it is not hard, and is largely in the nature of supervision of what others are doing.

Recently, when we were still at St. Martin's Plain, as Orderly Officer one day I went into the hut where I used to sleep. I complained that the windows were dirty. The man who was Hut Orderly (*i. e.*, who had to see that everything in the hut was clean and in order) that day was a young man of so serious a mien and manner that he reminds me of Harry Ballard. He immediately began a voluble explanation of why the windows were not clean. I was not satisfied with the explanation, and so ordered him to have them cleaned. It happened that he was the only Hut Orderly that day, although usually there are two. In any case, for an unusual piece of work like washing windows (which is seldom done), he could easily have got some friends to help him. But no! the poor conscientious fellow spent a considerable portion of the morning making the sixteen windows shine as they never shone before, in addition to doing the sweeping, scrubbing, etc., usually done by

two men. It had happened that when he tried to explain why the windows had been allowed to get so dirty, he had inadvertently called me "Sergeant." He had apologized most profusely for so doing, and, as it was evidently unintentional, I had thought nothing about it, although it had amused some of my former fellow-privates who heard it. But a distorted rumour spread through the company to the effect that I had made this poor fellow wash sixteen windows as a punishment for calling me "Sergeant." I have no fear of being called Sergeant again by any of my old comrades. The incident caused considerable amusement.

To-day has been a beautiful summer day. Being quarantined I could not go to church, but had a walk this afternoon. It is like June in Canada.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*West Sandling, Kent,*

*April 6, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I was hoping to come out of quarantine on Monday, but this morning my room-mate went to the hospital with measles, and so I am due for 16 days more. I am going to apply for

leave when I get out. Robinson, my roommate, was much pleased to be going to the hospital. He was not feeling very sick, but had a beautiful rash. When he comes out of the hospital, of course, he will be out of quarantine, while I may still be confined. I have not been loafing this last week. I have been going to the ranges at Hythe every day, leaving at 6 A. M. and getting back at 1 P. M. I go with quarantined men of course. In the afternoon I can go for a walk in the country, but have to eat in my own room, and cannot enter the Mess or any other unquarantined building. Most of the men come out of quarantine to-day, so I may have nothing to do hereafter, as I cannot associate with those who are not in quarantine.

The family is kind to promote me as it does. Some time ago Emma spoke of the responsibility of "looking after my company," implying that I am a Major or a Captain at the least. And in your letter of March 16th you refer to my being "on the Staff." Am I a Brigadier General or only a Colonel?

In his letter of March 16, father inquires about the expected raid on some of the camps by Germans in Canadian uniforms, and asks where the Germans were expected to come

from. The order to be on our guard came from Headquarters and I do not know much about it. A careful patrol of the coast by night was maintained at the time, and the general impression is that a landing party from a submarine was expected. A few desperate men disguised as Canadians and armed with bombs could do a lot of damage to a sleeping and unsuspecting camp, although none of them would be able to return to their ship. The moral effect of such an attack would be very great, especially in Germany, where, of course, it would be greatly magnified in the press. The attack did not materialise.

The grand review of the troops of the Canadian Training Division took place last Monday. Contrary to expectation, Sir Sam Hughes remained in England for the occasion. I do not know how many troops were reviewed, as I had no opportunity to make a careful estimate, but there must have been at least twelve thousand. Sir Sam shook hands with all the officers after the review. He even deigned to ask me where I was from. This is always a hard question for me to answer. I told him Montreal, which I call home, although I have lived there so little.

I wonder if you have a map of England

which shows all the little places in Kent which I mention in my letters. Along the coast two or three miles apart are Folkestone, Sandgate, and Hythe. Shorncliffe is a mile or so inland from Sandgate, and Sandling a couple of miles inland from Hythe. Bert Moyle is at Sandgate. The whole countryside around is sprinkled with camps of Canadian soldiers, usually two or more battalions together. Here at West Sandling there are 4 battalions forming the 12th Reserve Brigade. At Shorncliffe there is a permanent barracks of the British Army, and has been for a long time. Sir John Moore was at one time commander of the troops there. From Folkestone to Sandling the chalk cliffs rise close to the water's edge. From Sandling on, however, they recede from the coast and there is a broad level stretch of country. When Napoleon was expected to invade England 100 years ago, a canal was dug for defensive purposes, beginning where the cliffs recede from the shore and running along parallel to the coast for many miles. The coast was also lined with round gun towers called Martello Towers. These still stand about a quarter of a mile apart for miles along the coast. The plain between the cliffs and the water's edge would have

made an admirable landing place for Napoleon. It is here that the Hythe Ranges and Musketry School are situated.

It is getting late, and as I have to get up at five o'clock (no excuses for lateness are accepted) to go to the ranges with the quarantined men, I had better retire.

Good-night, mother dear,

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*West Sandling,*

*April 15, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have run out of note paper and, as I am still in quarantine, I have difficulty in obtaining any except this which is provided at the Mess. I shall write on one side only, so perhaps this will do for the portfolio. I have very little news to tell this time. I have been going to the Hythe Ranges all week, leaving about 6. A. M. and getting back about 1 P. M. The rest of the day I spend reading, or else go for a walk. To-morrow (Sunday) as I am not eligible for church parade, I expect to walk to Canterbury and back. Canterbury is about 13 miles from here.

The Fifth University Company, together



with a draft for the R. C. R.'s, arrived here the first part of the week. The Fifth University Company makes a fine appearance on the parade ground. I have not met any of the officers or men yet. The Strathcona Horse, who were sent to France as Infantry, now have their horses again. For the first time a regiment of Canadian cavalry (horses and all) was sent to France recently. As, of course, cavalry is of no use in trench warfare, it would seem that some open fighting is expected sooner or later. Drafts are going to the front from this brigade almost daily. Men returning from the trenches report that two brigades are now allowed for each section of trench that was formerly allotted to one brigade. This means, of course, a tremendous reserve of men. Mountains of ammunition are reported to be accumulating. All this is regarded as evidence that some big move is being prepared for.

It is quite pathetic to walk through the country and see the farms being tilled by old men and boys. It is a rare thing to meet a young man of military age who is not in khaki, *i. e.*, in the country. In London, they are not so rare. In spite of the indignation against young men who have taken refuge in munition factories, I am convinced that there is no country in the

world where so large a proportion of the population would voluntarily enlist as did so in Great Britain. The relatively small numbers that have been obtained under the Compulsion Act, together with the large number of exemptions granted by the tribunals, show that the great majority of those who should be in the army enlisted voluntarily under the Derby scheme, or before it came into operation.

I received, and enjoyed, a box of cake from Glasgow last week, and this week have received two *Montreal Standards*, and a *Literary Digest*, all of which I enjoyed very much.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

*West Sandling, Kent,*

*April 19, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER:

There has been no Canadian mail for some days, so I am expecting to receive two or three letters from you when it does come. I am still in quarantine and so have little to write about.

I am enclosing three post cards which may be interesting. I have marked Cæsar's Camp on the map as it is rumoured that the battalion is going to be moved thither.

One day last week, when I was at the

Ranges, heavy firing at sea was audible for some time. It was suggested that the firing might be directed at floating mines, but the sound was such as to make me believe that heavier guns were being used than would be necessary to explode mines. There was one tremendous explosion, whereupon a column of smoke or steam became visible on the horizon. Not infrequently do we hear firing which we cannot account for, and see things we should like to have explained. One day I was watching a destroyer proceeding leisurely down the Channel. Suddenly it swung around and started off at full speed in the opposite direction. I could not tell whether she had received a summons by wireless, or whether the commander had decided to take afternoon tea in Dover.

Quarantine is not unpleasant this week, as I have not had to go on parade at all. Reading, walking and sleeping take up all my time (when I am not eating).

Take good care of yourself, mother. I want to find you strong and well and rested when I come home.

Your loving son,  
CLIFFORD.

*West Sandling, Kent,*  
*April 23, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

My quarantine, which lasted nearly four weeks, is at last at an end, and I am no longer treated as a leper, but can mingle with my fellow men.

This has been a most beautiful Easter Sunday. You will be interested in the Easter service which was held this morning in a meadow near by. It was attended by all the Protestants in the Brigade. The troops formed three sides of a hollow square, or rather parallelogram, the officers in front of their battalions. The staff officers stood in the centre of the rectangle. The pulpit, consisting of six drums piled, and covered with the Union Jack, stood at the open end of the formation. Behind the chaplain were the massed bands of the brigades. The form of service used was that intended for open air service in the Regular Army, and was apparently an abbreviated form of the regular Episcopal service. It was followed by a short Easter sermon, the whole service lasting about three-quarters of an hour. From the rising ground on which we were standing we could see for miles over the coun-

try, which is wonderfully beautiful. The hillsides, well watered by nature, and closely cropped by thousands of sheep, appeared as green and smooth as well kept lawns. The partly ruined castle of Saltwood (where the murderers of Thomas-à-Becket slept the night before they killed him at Canterbury) was visible in the distance, surrounded by tall trees which may have been standing when Cæsar landed a few miles away. A bluff beside us was scarred owing to having been used as a machine gun target. During the service an aeroplane flew over our heads. These signs of warfare, however, seemed much less close to us and much less real than the quietness and peace of the service and of our natural surroundings.

Mother's letter of April 2 reached me today, also a box of cake and shortbread. Both were very welcome. We have a saying in the army which indicates well the optimistic spirit which prevails, showing as it does that we always look on the bright side of things. Whenever anything goes wrong, or an unexpected (or in one's own private opinion an unnecessary) disagreeable task is thrust on one, the customary remark, uttered in a tone of patient resignation and determination not to be dis-

couraged, is "Well, we have a good navy, anyway," or "Thank goodness, we have a navy." The other day it was storming so hard that we knew it would be impossible to carry out the "battle practice" at the ranges according to schedule, but as Divisional Orders said we were to go to the Ranges, we went. On arriving at the ranges, we were officially informed that the weather conditions were unfavourable, and so we marched back again—eight miles altogether in a driving, pouring rain. When I reached my room wet to the skin, my batman's greeting was "Good gracious, Mr. Wells, ain't it a good thing we have a navy?"

I enclose a snapshot taken at St. Martin's Plain. I do not remember whether I sent a copy of it before. The church in the background (St. Martin's) is one of the oldest in England. As you can tell from my expression, the sun was shining in my eyes.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

MAY, 1916

An Officer of the Black Devils—The Splendid Work of the Y. M. C. A.—Sleeping in a Bag on the Floor—A Russian Platoon from Western Canada—The Russian Soldier's Love of Gambling—"Whoa!"—Visiting Oxford—A "Cook's Tour" of the Trenches—Canadian "Landsturm"—At the Hythe Ranges.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, May 1, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

You will be surprised at the above address, and will perhaps be disappointed when you learn the reason for it. A general rearrangement of the Canadian Training Division has taken place, the idea being to group the various battalions according to the district in Canada in which they were raised; all the troops from any given district being brigaded together. The P. P. C. L. I. and R. C. R. (Royal Canadian Regiment, the permanent infantry force of Canada) are forming a special depot by themselves. In the general shuffle, several junior officers of the P. P. C. L. I.,

including myself, were transferred to the 11th Reserve Battalion to which we were formerly attached. The officers who came over in charge of the various P. P. C. L. I. reinforcements, and those who have seen service at the front with that unit, were retained with the Pats, the others being transferred. The 11th Reserve Battalion, to which I now belong, my connection with the Pats being severed, is henceforth to be composed wholly of troops from the Winnipeg district, and is to reinforce two battalions at the front, the 8th (90th Winnipeg Rifles), known as the Black Devils (a name given them by the Indians in the Northwest Rebellion), and the 10th, also of Winnipeg and the West. To one of these two battalions, therefore, I shall go when my turn comes to be "warned for the front." One advantage in the transfer is that I am quite well up in the seniority list of the subalterns of the 11th, while in the Pats I was junior to every other officer except those of the Fifth University Company.

In your letter of the 12th, which reached me to-day, you speak of an enclosure given you by a train hand in Missouri. This was not in the envelope. The papers which you send reach me at odd intervals, the postal service being



somewhat deranged with reference to parcels and papers.

I could have some of the cards of which you sent a sample placed in the camp Y. M. C. A. along with the other cards and tracts which are always on the tables there. The Y. M. C. A. is doing a splendid work over here, holding services on Sunday evening, concerts during the week, providing stationery free of charge, and in general providing a place of amusement where the men can go in the evening and during off-hours. Officers are not allowed in the Y. M. C. A., except the Honorary Captain in charge. The Lord Roberts Club (a Church of England Club similar to the Y. M. C. A.) and the Salvation Army also have a hut each in the camp conducted for the same purpose, and on the same lines, as the Y. M. C. A.

The reconstructed 11th Reserve Battalion marched back to St. Martin's Plain on Saturday, and found we were thrust in on top of two other battalions, which are to move out tomorrow. In the meantime we are very much crowded. I have been sleeping on the floor in my sleeping bag. I find I sleep just as well as in a bed.

Your affectionate son,  
CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*London, W. C., May 7, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Here I am in London again, this time on duty, not on leave. Since Thursday I have been doing some special work for the battalion at the Canadian Record Office in London. I finished it last night, and leave for Shorncliffe to-night. It has been a very pleasant change. Apart from this little trip nothing worth mentioning has happened since I last wrote.

At West Sandling one of the companies of the battalion to which I belonged when I was there had in it a platoon composed wholly of Russians from Western Canada. Many of them could speak no English. Their N. C. O.'s acted as interpreters. They all understood how to act in response to the usual commands given in drill, but anything out of the ordinary had to be explained through the interpreters, or by illustration. They do their work with a seriousness and enthusiasm that some of our other soldiers would do well to emulate. Their besetting sin is gambling. They would sit up all night gambling if they were not closely watched. One day when we were having a general cleaning up of the lines,

I was looking after the row of huts where the Russians were quartered. When everything was ready, the Colonel came to inspect them. I had made sure that the Russians had their hut spotless and that the men were standing by their bunks. When the O. C. reached the next hut to theirs, it occurred to me to make sure that everything was O. K. in the Russian hut. When I looked in, I found no one in his place, every one smoking, and about a dozen different card games in progress. It was by a tremendous effort on my part, seconded by the English speaking N. C. O.'s, that we got all the cards out of sight, and every one shoved into his place just in time for the Colonel's inspection. By the time the Colonel reached the next hut, probably they were all gambling again. On the parade ground the Russians behave splendidly, but off parade they are difficult to manage.

An officer returning to camp late one night was halted by a Russian sentry with the command "Whoa!" instead of "Halt!"

There are many interesting things I should like to write about, but discussion of military matters is strictly forbidden, so I have to confine my letters to personal affairs, and matters of general knowledge.

On Good Friday I went to Canterbury, and attended a service at the Cathedral.

Please take good care of yourself, mother, and lie down for a while every day.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, May 8, 1916.*

MY DEAR FRANK,

Your letter of April 16th received a couple of days ago. I was in London on duty part of last week, and while there called on Mrs. Wigfield. She spoke of receiving a letter from Florence which spoke enthusiastically of your new home. Mrs. Wigfield has kindly consented to look after my trunk containing surplus baggage when I go overseas, and to send me from time to time things which I may require from it. I find it much pleasanter to be an officer than to be a non-commissioned officer or private. I had more fun as a private than as an N. C. O., but I should not now have my commission had I not passed through the various non-commissioned ranks. As a private one is free from responsibility, and, when possessed of a strong constitution and good health,

does not find the work too exhausting. I did not find the position of an N. C. O., who must be an example of mechanical perfection in the duties of a private, so congenial as I find that of an officer whose duties are more theoretical.

I am still engaged in the routine of life in a reserve battalion. Drafts come from Canada, are trained in musketry and bayonet-fighting and other necessary accomplishments, and are drafted over to France as they are needed by their respective units. The officers of the reserve battalion are in charge of training these men, and are themselves called upon from time to time to take the place of those officers of their respective battalions who become casualties. What is keeping me here so long is the number of slightly wounded officers who come to the reserve battalion from hospital and who are always sent back to France in preference to those who have never been in the trenches.

I have been transferred from the P. P. C. L. I. to the 11th Reserve Battalion, which is reinforcing the 8th and the 10th Battalions (both of Winnipeg) at the front. Thus I shall go either to the 8th or the 10th when my turn to go overseas finally comes. After six months in a Reserve Dépôt, one is quite will-

ing to go to France. The men always march off very happily, singing and cheering, with the band playing.

I see by my watch that it is three minutes to eleven. At eleven the electric lights are shut off in the camp, so I must close in haste.

Your affectionate brother,  
CLIFFORD.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
Shorncliffe, May 16, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Last Friday evening I got away from camp with three days' leave beginning officially at Reveille Saturday. Friday night I spent in London, and Saturday morning I proceeded to Oxford, where I stayed until Monday at Queen's College with Carl Weber, a classmate of mine at Hopkins. I enjoyed my visit very much. I dined with him in the old (16th century) dining hall, and slept in one of the vacant rooms in the college. There are less than 500 students at Oxford now. Before the war there were over 3,000. Most of those who are there are foreigners or physically unfit. Although life at the University is far different from what it is in peace times, I was able to imagine what it would be like under normal conditions.

The thing that surprised me most was the strict discipline to which the students are subjected. They have to pay a fine if they return to college after 9 in the evening, and are liable to suspension if they are out after 11. They have to answer to their names every morning. In many ways life at Oxford resembles life in camp. On the other hand, the students are not compelled to attend any lectures which do not interest or concern them. In this and other respects it is very unlike an American University. One pleasing feature is that everybody there takes some outdoor exercise of one sort or another every day. In American colleges a small proportion devote a large amount of time to athletics, and the majority take no part in them. Hopkins seems very remote now, and the things that interested me there, very trivial. I remember that Prof. Gildersleeve, the famous Greek scholar at Hopkins, once remarked that when he returned from taking part in the American Civil War, an Academic life at first seemed very unattractive, and the life of a cowboy in the West attracted him far more. I am beginning to feel the same way. I feel that I should like to go on a Polar Expedition when I get through with my trip to Berlin.

I sometimes feel quite discouraged over my prospects for getting to the front. No officers have been asked for, for the 8th or 10th Battalions, for a long while, and there is no telling when I shall be called on. It is, of course, a necessary and important work that I am engaged in—assisting in the training of troops for the front. But when one has supervised the training of scores of troops and seen them march off gaily with the bands playing, and everybody cheering them on their way to the boat at Folkestone, it is irksome to be kept waiting indefinitely oneself. However, there is nothing to do but to wait. My chance is bound to come sooner or later, especially if the long-postponed "big drive" (which is at present expected [unofficially] in September) ever does come off. I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that I am not remaining here of my own free will. If I had known that my commission would mean this indefinite sojourn here, I should not have been so anxious for it. If the war ends without my getting to France (which is too horrible to think of) I shall be extremely sorry that I ever accepted a commission. My room-mate (a snapshot of whom is enclosed) is in the same situation as



I. The other Sergeant of the 4th University Company who was promoted with us, was sent to the Canadian Military School for a three months' course. He is at present in France on a "Cook's Tour" of the trenches. Officers taking the general three months' course are sent to France for about three weeks, during which time they are attached to a battalion at the front, and learn at first hand what is required of an officer in the trenches. This constitutes what is known as a "Cook's Tour." Even that is better than nothing. By the way, the only commissions given to members of the 4th University Company, except to a few who were acquainted with Sam Hughes, or some other general, were the three referred to above. The wholesale promotions which were promised in Montreal never materialised.

I have been quite busy of late. Capt. McLeod of the 8th Battalion (to which I hope to go some day), who won the Military Cross for holding a section of trench with a few men when the Germans had broken through on each side, is my company commander. He has been acting as Quarter-master for the last few weeks, and as I am the Senior Subaltern of the company, a good deal of the routine

work of the company commander falls on me. This is a splendid experience. The company is very weak numerically at present, as numerous drafts of men (but alas! no officers) have been sent to France recently, and no reinforcements from Canada have come lately. Thus the Company Commander's work is not so great as usual.

"Lights Out" has just sounded, and, although officers do not have to retire yet, I seldom sit up late. I am in splendid health. Reveille sounds at 5.30. From 6 to 6.45 the officers take P. T. (Physical Training). During the morning we have another hour of P. T. and during the afternoon an hour of bayonet fighting (very strenuous—I enjoy it), all this in addition to the exercise which is incidental to the regular day's work. I am outdoors nearly all the time.

Good night, mother dear.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. Lt. Higgins, whom you know, transferred to the artillery some months ago. I met him recently. He had just returned from a "Cook's Tour," which he enjoyed, and which I think did him a lot of good.

*11th Reserve Battalion,*

*May 25, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have all my overseas equipment now, except field glasses, which are very expensive, and not absolutely necessary in the trenches. The American-made glasses which are carried by many Canadians are not of very high quality (like American ammunition). Perhaps it would be fairer to say that they are not of uniform quality. Some are good, others very poor. It is possible to order these American glasses through our Q. M. Stores, but if I decide to get a pair, I shall get an English pair through the Army and Navy Stores.

I believe I told you that Jack Grant went overseas with the first draft of the Fourth University Company. Harry Nesbit went later. Johnson is being trained as a signaller and has not yet gone. I have not yet seen D. McTavish, nor have I seen Gordon Crossley or Reginald Jones for some time.

This week I am taking a party to the Ranges at Hythe daily. I forward under separate cover a copy of daily orders which may prove interesting, and which will be a souvenir of this part of my military career.

We have in camp a number of officers of the first contingent, and also part of the 61st Battalion, which arrived from Canada comparatively recently. The first contingent officers refer to the 61st officers as the "Landsturm." This enrages the latter. I occupy a middle position. Compared with the first contingent officers, I am a novice, but compared to those who have just arrived from Canada, I am an old soldier.

It is now nine o'clock, but I am writing without artificial light (on account of the Day Light Saving Bill), and should be able to do so for nearly an hour more. Considering the time at which I must rise (2.30 as I have to see that my range party get their breakfast) I had better turn in.

Hoping things are going well at home and in the church,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*Shorncliffe, May 29, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have plenty of time to write letters this week, as I am Orderly Officer for the week, but unfortunately there is little to write about.

The usual routine of duties occurs daily, never anything exciting or very interesting. A Zepelin did drop bombs near enough to be heard here about ten days ago, and of course the lights in the camp were promptly extinguished when news of her approach was telephoned to us. But even a mildly-interesting event like that is an oasis in the arid desert of life in a reserve battalion.

All last week I went to the Hythe Ranges daily with a party of about 60 men who were shooting their musketry course. I fired the whole course myself and qualified as a First Class shot, but not as a Marksman. Men are classified as Marksmen, First, Second, and Third Class shots, according to the total number of points they make in the various practices (deliberate fire, rapid fire, snap shooting, *i. e.*, shooting at a target which is visible for only four seconds, etc., at different distances) which constitute the course. I did not shoot so well as when I fired part of the course (I did not complete it) just before receiving my commission last January.

I hope everything is going well at home. Take good care of yourself, mother dear. I am greatly disappointed at being kept here so long, but at least you do not need to worry

about me, as I am perfectly safe here, in comfortable quarters, and am liable to be here for some time yet. Unless there is an invasion of England, an eventuality which is well guarded against, I am unlikely to do any fighting for months yet.

With much love,

Your son,

CLIFFORD.

JUNE, 1916

The Transfer from the Princess Pats—Luck from a Wounded Foot—The Australians' Answer to the Jocular Germans—A Commissioned Simpleton—Studying the Lewis Gun—Impatient to Go to the Front—At the C. M. S.—“Who Is the Idiot?”

*11 Reserve Battalion,  
Shorncliffe, June 3, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

You ask whether I was pleased or otherwise at leaving the P. P. C. L. I. I was sorry to leave a regiment which has become so famous, and I was also sorry to leave my various acquaintances and friends in that unit. But other considerations more than counterbalance these unpleasant features of the transfer, and on the whole I am pleased with the change. These other considerations are (1) a vast improvement in my relative seniority. The 61st Battalion which left Canada in March is “attached for training” to the 11th. I am, of course, senior to all the subalterns of the 61st, and stand well up in the list of the 11th. (2) Most of the P. P. C. L. I. officers with whom I was associated, had been in the trenches. A certain gulf inevitably exists in a reserve bat-

talion between those who have "done their bit" at the front, and those who are only hoping to do so some day. (3) Chances for being sent to the front are improved, inasmuch as the 11th is reinforcing three battalions at the front, none of which has so large a reserve of officers as the Pats. (4) St. Martin's Plain is far superior to any other camp in the neighbourhood, with respect to location, quarters, etc. If I am to wait very long in England, I prefer to wait amid pleasant surroundings.

Although my opportunities of being sent to France soon are improved with the change, they are still so slim that I have applied to the C. O. to be sent to the Canadian Military School on the next three months' course. This course, which qualifies one to be a Field Officer (although of course it does not mean promotion to that rank in the near future, but simply means that if I should remain in the army for years until I was promoted to Field Rank, I should not need to qualify for it again) is considered an excellent course in every respect. It includes all branches of infantry training with special reference, of course, to conditions at the front at the present time. It also includes a "Cook's Tour" of the trenches in France. One of the three Sergeants of the



4th University Company who were promoted in January was (accidentally) sent to take the three months' course when the other two were sent on the Bombing Course. He was attached to the 8th Battalion (Black Devils) during his "Cook's Tour," was wounded in the foot by a stray bullet while leaving the trenches one night, and is now in a London hospital, having the time of his life. The King and Queen visited the hospital recently, the former stopping to chat with him. Lords and Ladies drive him around in motor cars. This individual's name is Millet.<sup>1</sup> He hails from Nova Scotia, and was formerly a student at Acadia. He will be "some" hero when he parades the streets of Wolfville once more. Some people have all the luck.

I should have applied to be sent on the three months' course long ago, but that I was hoping to be sent to France without it. Owing to the large number of promotions from the ranks which take place in France, this hope is getting more and more unlikely of fulfillment, and so I shall consider myself extremely lucky if I

<sup>1</sup> J. Stanley Millet, a graduate of Acadia, was reported killed in action a few weeks after the death of Lieut. Wells. Doubtless this is the Lieut. Millet referred to here. NOTE.--Lieut. Millet was wounded, not killed, at this time.

secure the next appointment on the three months' course.

The chief topic of conversation to-day is, of course, the great naval battle in the North Sea. I prefer to reserve comment on it until further particulars are published.

The following incident, and many others like it, show how wonderfully well informed the Germans are with regard to happenings behind the British line. A Major just back from France vouches for the truth of it. When a battalion of Australians took over a section of trench for the first time, they were at once greeted by a sign raised from the German trench, reading "Welcome, Australians! Come across without your arms and we will give you a splendid welcome," or words to that effect. The Anzacs replied by a sign as follows: "Come across here with your arms, and we will give you a splendid welcome."

Your affectionate son,  
CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
Shorncliffe, June 7, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

A lovely box came from you to-day. I like everything in it, especially the socks (which

are light and suitable for summer), and the maple sugar, which is delicious.

I am still living here at St. Martin's, but am attending a course on the Lewis Machine Gun at the C. M. S. This course lasts only two weeks. The Lewis Gun is hardly a machine gun in the ordinary sense of the word; it is really only an automatic rifle. Knowledge of this gun should form part of the training of every infantry officer, as it is coming into use more and more, and is employed mainly in conjunction with ordinary rifle fire. For this reason I am glad to have this course, but I am not sufficiently gifted as a machinist to wish to be a machine gun officer.

Canadian casualties last week are estimated at from 7,000 to 10,000. We received orders on Sunday that every available man in camp should be ready to proceed to France on Tuesday. A company from another battalion was also given us to equip. This meant a tremendous amount of work. Most of the officers worked all Monday night getting the draft ready. The new men had to be examined by the Medical Officer, issued with Webb Equipment, shown how to put it together, and how to pack in it the numerous articles they are required to take with them (it is quite an art

to pack everything required), identity discs had to be stamped with the name, number, battalion and religion of each man, etc. By four o'clock in the morning they were ready, and I marched the 300 of them to Shorncliffe Station, where the train was waiting to take them to Southampton. Our own men were practically ready when the call came, but the company given us to equip were not ready at all, having only recently come from Canada, hence the great amount of work. The 11th is practically depleted of men available for draft now, only those regimentally employed (mostly casualties) being left.

A good many things do not seem quite fair in regard to the issue of commissions. For example, there are in the trenches many Lieutenants who came overseas as Lieutenants with the First Contingent. In the "Land-sturm" battalion which are just now arriving from Canada, many Captains and Majors were junior to these First Contingent Lieutenants when the latter left Canada. For this reason battalions at the front very seldom ask for officers to be sent to them who are above the rank of Lieutenant. It would not be right to put a Captain who obtained his captaincy by waiting in Canada over a Lieutenant who

is only a Lieutenant because he has been at the front from the first and has had no chance of promotion. The result is an over supply of Captains in England. Many of them voluntarily revert to the rank of Lieutenant and go out as juniors to the Lieutenant who preceded them.

There is with the 11th at present a Lieutenant who came to England as a civilian and through friendship with General — secured a commission, and was attached to the 11th Battalion about two weeks ago. He knows absolutely nothing about soldiering. Most of the officers will scarcely speak to him. The unfairness of it is this, that as he is absolutely useless until he receives some training, he has to be given the preference when it comes to detailing officers for various courses. I know enough of the duties of an officer to "carry on" in a reserve battalion. He does not. Hence, he may be sent to the C. M. S. for the three months' course in preference to me. If this happens, I shall feel more like committing assault and battery on a British subject than I have felt for some time. The poor simpleton apparently does not realise that there is anything unusual about his position in the battalion.

I am still using my little loose-leaf pocket book for notes, but at present have a good supply of paper on hand for it. Please continue to send me paper for it from time to time.

The various articles which you send me in my box are very useful. The rubber bands, thumb tacks, paper clips, etc., all come in very handy. I don't see how you manage to think of so many useful little things.

It is eleven o'clock. The electric lights have just been switched off, and I am finishing this note by the light of a candle.

Good night, Molly dear. Take good care of yourself, so that when I come home I shall find you well and strong.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

*Shorncliffe, June 12, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I wired you to-day: "Please cable ten pounds. Am well." Last month my three days' duty in London (the Government allowance by no means covered expenses) and my three days' leave (I have to travel first class) together with the cost of a revolver, holster and pouch, compass, and other articles of equipment, have left me rather close hauled

financially, and as I like to have a reserve on hand over here as well as in Canada, I decided to cable for the above-mentioned portion of my assigned pay accumulation. My pay is deposited monthly in the Bank of Montreal, 9 Waterloo Place, London, S. W. Perhaps I should have mentioned this fact in my cable, so that the money might be sent direct to that bank, but any other means of transmission will be satisfactory. All expenses incidental to sending the money will of course come out of the assigned pay. I hope this will not be much trouble.

The Canadian casualties have been extremely heavy this last week. Four P. P. C. L. I. officers whom I knew were killed and others wounded. Of the five Sergeants of the old Fourth University Company, one has been killed, two wounded, and the other two are sitting in this room writing letters, and wondering when we shall have a chance to do our bit at the front. If I had been at the front and had come back, I should be more contented here, but of course, no one can be satisfied with England until he has been in Flanders.

Nine months ago I should have considered it a great hardship to have to spend two weeks

learning the, to me, uninteresting details of the workings of a complicated piece of machinery like a machine gun. But I am almost enjoying my investigations of the internal mechanism of the Lewis Gun, a course on which, as I told mother in my last letter, is at present occupying my time. Not that I am a mechanical genius, or that I shall ever voluntarily devote any great portion of my time to tinkering with wheels, springs, bolts, screws, or any sort of machinery, but that my nine months of dealing with strictly practical operations has caused even a complicated machine to appear to me less mysterious and less uninviting. In plain English, I am getting on quite well with my machine gun course.

I suppose you wonder why I am not sent to the front. I have discussed this point in previous letters, but as it is seldom out of my mind, I shall mention it again. There are three reasons, as it appears to me to-night, one positive, and two negative. The one positive reason, I suppose, is that there is work to be done here in preparing drafts for the front which I am capable of doing, and have performed satisfactorily in the past. The chief argument against sending me is that I have never been at the front, and officers of one sort



or another (either those who have recovered from wounds, or men who have been sent back from France to take commissions), to whom this argument does not apply, are usually available when this battalion is called upon for officers for the front. Another argument which might be alleged against me is, that I have no certificate from an Officers' Training Corps. It is to remove the possibility of this argument being used, as well as to obtain the excellent training afforded, that I have applied to be sent to the school for the next three months' course, which starts in about a month. Probably, also, the battalion staff finds it more convenient to keep a few officers who are accustomed to the routine of the Reserve Battalion than to have all the officers changing all the time. If I go to the school, I shall (1) receive a first class training, (2) probably be sent on a "Cook's Tour," (3) possibly be sent direct to be permanently attached to a unit at the front, (4) remove the possibility of lack of training being used as an argument for keeping me here. This was hinted as a reason by the O. C. the last time I applied to be sent to France, although I am not sure that the inconvenience referred to above is not the real reason for keeping a few officers here for so long. One

Captain has been here since the autumn of 1914. If I should have the good luck to be warned for the front, I shall let you know.

Your affectionate son,  
CLIFFORD.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
Shorncliffe, June 17, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have not much to write about this time. I am still with the 11th Reserve, and have no immediate prospect of getting away.

You ask if I have socks enough. I am well supplied at present. If you send any more in the near future, I should like them lighter than the heaviest of those I have received. The heavy ones are just the thing for winter, but are a little too warm for summer wear.

I saw the name of Lieut. Ince (Billy I suppose) in the casualty list under the head of "Missing" the other day. There have been a great many names I know in the lists recently.

I am pleased to have spent a winter and spring in England. The former was unpleasant (like a Baltimore winter, only more so), but the latter has been beautiful. I have never seen fields so smooth and green, or such beautiful hedges. On a green hillside near here

some trenches have been dug. The hill forms part of the chalk cliffs, and the earth that has been dug out of the trenches contains a great deal of chalk. From a distance, the excavated chalky soil appears almost pure white beside the green grass, giving a very beautiful effect.

I am enclosing a Musketry Score Book in which are entered my scores in the Classification Practices which I fired last month. My total is not very good. Conditions were not at all favourable for me, as I had nearly 100 men to look after, and could only fire hurriedly between times.

I have an idea that I may be sent to the famous Musketry School at Hythe for a course in musketry. On my return I should be made Assistant Musketry Officer of the Battalion, and later on Musketry Officer. The Hythe School has been established for a great many years, and is the best musketry school in the Empire, if not in the world. It is, of course, a permanent institution of the Regular Army, and not a temporary school like the Canadian Military School at Shorncliffe. I should be delighted at the chance of taking the course, but for the fact that it would still further delay my getting to France. I do not know whether I shall be sent or not, but have learned

that the present Musketry Officer has applied for me to be sent there to qualify as his assistant. With my Grenade Course, Lewis Gun Course, and this Musketry Course, I shall have all the special courses I want. All I shall want then will be a general officers' training course and practical experience at the front. The Musketry Course is, however, only a possibility, not a certainty. You may be sure I shall not stay in a Reserve Battalion any longer than I have to.

Will you please send me a Ross Rifle Manual, a little hand-book describing the mechanism of the Ross Rifle? I believe there are several such publications. Any one will do. I have not seen any of them over here. Will you also ask father to give Ned the money for the belt which he is sending me. After this my assigned pay will not be disturbed by me, but the equipment which I had to get together with my other expenses, reduced my bank account to a rather small figure, and so I wired for ten pounds to replenish it. Things are terribly expensive over here, very different from three years ago.

Good night, mother dear.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
June 25, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

To-day I received two letters from you, one dated June 6th, the other June 9th. I was very glad to get them, as I have received no others for over a week.

In my last letter I spoke of the possibility of being sent to the Hythe Musketry School. That is not coming to pass, as I am attending the three months' course at the C. M. S. (Canadian Military School). This gives a splendid up-to-date general training for an Infantry Officer. It includes everything an officer should know,—engineering, organisation and administration, military law, topography, tactics (my favourite subjects), riding, entrenching, drill, etc., etc. It is really a Sandhurst Course compressed into three months' space. As a consequence we are kept tremendously busy. We begin with an hour's squad drill before breakfast, an hour's riding after breakfast, then lectures for the rest of the morning. In the afternoon, more lectures, or some outdoor exercises, like entrenching. There are two Lieut.-Colonels, and a dozen Majors in the class, besides Captains and

Lieutenants. I wish I had had the training months ago. I am still quartered with the 11th, but have to be at the school by 7 A. M. The day's work at the school finishes with an hour's squad drill from 5 to 6 P. M. One has to do a lot of studying in the evening to keep up.

Thanks for the handkerchief enclosed in one of your letters to-day. Handkerchiefs are always welcome.

After the full reports of the naval battle were published, it became evident that it was a victory for our fleet, first in that they frustrated the German objective, whatever it may have been, and second, that they inflicted heavier losses than they themselves suffered. If only the battleship fleet could have cut off the Germans, it would have been an overwhelming victory. Great indignation was expressed by the English press at the misleading tone of the first reports of the battle, which gave our losses and left the impression that the Germans had suffered comparatively little.

One of the leading papers published a very strong article demanding to know who was responsible for the misleading report. The article was headed, "Who is the Idiot?"

I am sorry you have not been up to the

mark. Please try to have a good rest when you go to visit Mrs. Elliot. I am very comfortable here, and find many things which are enjoyable, and many which are amusing. Take good care of yourself, mother dear.

CLIFFORD.

P. S. If you should ever have occasion to cable to me, the only address necessary is, 11th, Canadians, England. After I go to France the following would be sufficient: — Battalion, Caladians, B. E. F.

Thank you for the map of Kent, which I received in good condition and which is hanging on the wall beside me.

JULY, 1916

Training in Horseback Riding—Cavalry Training for "Shock Action"—Two Days in London Before Crossing to France—Popularity of Colonel Lipsett—The Badge of the Winnipeg Rifles—Nothing Matters but Duty—Exasperating Delay—Definition of Terms—Hearing Guns 75 Miles Away—The Disadvantage of Having a Name Beginning with W.—Canadian Canoes at Hythe—Can Canada Maintain Four Divisions in the Field?—Why Folkestone Escaped German Raids.

*Shorncliffe, July 2nd, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Nothing much to write about this week. I am hard at work at the C. M. S. The course is splendid, up to date in every particular. There is nothing to compare with it in Canada. I am at the school from 7 A. M. to 6 P. M. every day except Saturday and Sunday. Saturday morning is given up to examinations each week.

The course in riding under a regular cavalry instructor is quite an education in itself. We were told the first day, and it is repeated whenever necessary, that it is far better to fall



off and break your neck than to hold on to the arch of the saddle. No necks have been broken yet, but there are cases of falling off nearly every day. I have managed to stick on under all circumstances hitherto. Before we get through, we shall be riding cross-country, jumping fences, etc. One has to be able to ride at a full gallop using neither reins nor stirrups, and keeping the arms folded. I find the ride every morning the pleasantest part of the day.

The "big drive" has apparently commenced at last. We are anxiously awaiting further reports as to its progress. It will not be over in a week, but it really does look as if the beginning of a series of advances had arrived. Canadian cavalry in France and England is training hard for "shock action," *i. e.*, with swords and lances, as though open fighting is expected some time. Canadian and Indian cavalry are reported to be training in the neighbourhood of Verdun.

I am sorry you could not visit George on his birthday. It would have been pleasant for him, and the rest would do you good.

Take all the rest you can, mother.

With love,

CLIFFORD.

*London, W. C., July 5, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I received your letter of June 19, yesterday. The picture of you standing beside the snow bank is lovely. I am delighted with it, and think it is one of the best photos you ever had taken.

Yesterday I was warned to be ready on Friday to proceed overseas to the 8th Battalion. This is the battalion of which I have already written to you—recruited by the 90th Winnipeg Rifles, and is called the Black Devils or Little Black Devils, or more often simply the L. B. D.'s. This is what the regiment was called by the Indians in the Northwest Rebellion. At least one of the Indians who fought against the regiment in the rebellion is now serving in its ranks. I know many of the officers of this battalion. Two of them have been my company commanders at different times since I got my commission. At the second battle of Ypres the 8th was one of the battalions at the extreme left of the Canadian line, and made a wonderful stand with the Germans all around them. You may not have heard so much of the L. B. D.'s as of the Pats, but I am just as well pleased to be going to the

former as I would be to go to the latter. I know many of the officers of both battalions, but think that, on the whole, I shall be better satisfied to be with the 8th than with the P. P. C. L. I. I shall be going out with three other officers from the 11th, and shall be going to a battalion where I know many of the officers, N. C. O.'s and men, and so am really very fortunate. You have, I think, a University Company cap badge. I shall send you a P. P. C. L. I. badge, an 11th Reserve Battalion Badge, and a L. B. D. badge, so that you will have a complete record of the various units to which I have been attached. Collar badges, if you have any, are not worth keeping. The 8th battalion badge consists of a little Black Devil, with the words "Hosti Acie Nominati," *i. e.*, "Named by the enemy in battle." This is, of course, the badge of the Winnipeg Rifles.

I have two days' leave, and have come to London for a rest, and to get a few odd articles that I still need. My course at the C. M. S. has been rudely interrupted, after little more than two weeks. But even in two weeks one can learn a good deal, and I feel better qualified than if I had not gone to the school at all.

I shall write again before I leave, and, if I

find it practicable, shall send a cable the day I leave. Don't worry about me, mother dear. I shall be doing my duty, and nothing else matters. I feel sure I shall be coming home some day, perhaps before many months pass, and shall want to find you well and strong, and happy.

With greatest love,  
CLIFFORD.

*London, W. C., July 5, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have two days' leave preparatory to proceeding overseas. I am going to the 8th Battalion, particulars about which I have given in the letter which I sent mother this morning. There are just a few things I have to get before I leave. Getting them, and enjoying a little rest and recreation, will occupy my two days in London, and then I shall return to my battalion ready to leave at a moment's notice. I am in excellent health (weight 165) and eager to get away after my months of waiting. I am lucky to be going with three officers whom I know, to a battalion where I am already known to many of the officers and men. The officers of the 8th are an unusually kind and cordial set. Those who came over with the

First Contingent (I have been associated with many such since I got my commission) are as considerate of late arrivals, even those who came over months after I did, as of those who belonged to the original 8th. In the Pats I found some of the few surviving officers of the "original" a little inclined to be snobbish in their attitude towards those who came overseas later. This is one reason why I am glad to be going to the 8th.

The C. O. of the original 8th was an officer of the British Regular Army, who, I understand, happened to be in Canada when war broke out, and was put in command of the 8th Battalion. His name is Colonel Lipsett. He is now a Brigadier General in command of the Third (Canadian) Division. He is, I think, the best known, best liked, and one of the most efficient officers of the C. E. F. The officers and men of the 8th believe he is in a class by himself. He was a very strict disciplinarian, which is by no means incompatible with popularity. He mingled with the men on all possible occasions. My batman never tires of telling me how the Colonel helped him to fill sandbags on one occasion. He was, in short, a typical British officer of the finest type. Although he is no longer with the 8th

his influence is still felt in the battalion, and his name is becoming a tradition of all that a C. O. ought to be. Things are done so far as possible according to the most approved standard of the Regular Army.

I receive the Montreal and other papers, which you send, at rather uncertain intervals. I am always glad to get them. Letters come more regularly. I shall be even more glad to hear from you after going overseas than hitherto.

I met a McMaster man named Craig recently. He said he was a class-mate of Ned's. He is a Lieutenant in the 63rd. I should like to be going to Knowlton with you this summer. Perhaps I shall be able to do so next summer. I hope things are going well at the church. Have you any hopes of moving to the new site in the near future?

Hoping you are well, and will have a pleasant summer, I remain,

Your affectionate and grateful son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*Shorncliffe, July 17, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

When I was in London the week before last, I wrote to you telling you I expected to leave

for France that week-end with three other officers from the 11th. Numerous officers from other reserve battalions had been warned at the same time, but for some reason at which we can only guess our departure has been delayed, and we are still here. Last week I received another notification to hold myself in readiness, but nothing has come of it yet. Perhaps this is due to the fact that most of the Canadian Forces in France are in reserve undergoing reorganisation at present, or perhaps because the transports are being used for other purposes. Various rumours are afloat regarding the cause of the delay. The only clear fact is that we are still here, nominally still confined to barracks awaiting instructions to proceed at any moment. Today, supposing my letter from London is about due in Westmount, I cabled to you "Still in England." When I do leave, I shall cable to you giving my address in France. Needless to say, the present situation is rather exasperating, to put it mildly.

Father enquired the meaning of the term "Field Officer." A field officer means a Major or a Lieutenant-Colonel. I do not know the origin of the term. A Platoon Commander is normally a Subaltern (a Second Lieutenant or a Lieutenant), a Company Com-

mander is usually a Captain, and a Battalion Commander usually is a Field Officer. Perhaps that accounts for the grouping of the five lowest commissioned ranks into the three groups Subalterns, Captains, and Field Officers.

The big push is really on at last. Every night when I have gone to bed, and the camp is quiet, I can hear the guns at the front 75 miles or more away. I suppose it is only the big guns that are audible, but they pound away steadily. I can hear 80 or 100 shots a minute. This will give you some idea of the expenditure of ammunition. I said that I "hear" them, but I sometimes doubt whether the perception is through the ears at all. It seems as though one feels a pulsation in the atmosphere rather than hears a sound.

I must close now; good night, mother dear,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. My cable announcing my departure for France will give simply my new address. The censors are strict in regard to publishing news of movements of troops.



*11th Reserve Battalion,  
St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, Kent,  
July 23, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Your letters of July 1st and 9th reached me yesterday, also father's of July 4th. I am glad you had a good rest at Cacouna and hope you will enjoy Knowlton equally well.

I and the others who were warned with me are still here. Rumour says we are going on Wednesday, other rumours say next Sunday. We have been warned, and are going some time—that is the only sure thing. I should have gone two weeks ago if my name began with A instead of W. When it was found that only half the officers warned were wanted immediately, the first half of the list (which was in alphabetical order) were taken. I belong to the second half, of course. Some day I shall write an essay showing the influence on a man's life of the initial letter of his name. I have lost weeks of my life waiting for various things which were attended to in alphabetical order. Yesterday afternoon I went for a long ride on horseback in the country. I had a splendid little horse that needed no encourage-

ment to gallop whenever we came to a suitable stretch of road. Kent is called the Garden of England, and well deserves the name. The views from and of the chalk cliffs are beautiful. If I ever am a millionaire, I am going to have a good saddle horse. One thing I have gained from my military career that will always be a pleasure is ability to ride.

You asked me about some way of reducing weight. I am looking for the same thing. The last time I was weighed, the scale recorded 168 pounds. I am going to ride as much as possible to try to shake off some of the fat. My additional weight is not all fat, but some of it is. I find that when one is riding a lively horse, the horse does not do all the work, but that the rider too gets a good deal of exercise.

I occasionally go to the Baptist Church in Folkestone. It is a very attractive church. Last Sunday evening there was a congregation of about 700, including 100 or more soldiers. Every seat was occupied. Yesterday morning there were about 400. I enclose a leaflet used at the service yesterday.

Since I have been "warned" I have not been attending the school, but have been employed on various odd jobs about the battalion, such as taking out parties for bombing practice. I

enjoy this, as I can throw bombs farther and more accurately than any of the men.

Occasionally in the evening I go out to Hythe for a paddle on the canal. They have real Canadian canoes there, and the canal, built for defensive purposes when an invasion by Napoleon was expected a century ago, is a delightful course to paddle up. It stretches for many miles parallel to the coast.

There are very few Canadian casualties these days, as the Canadians are in reserve since their heavy losses during the last German onslaught on the Ypres salient. This may be the reason that all the officers warned two weeks ago were not wanted at once.

Canada has three Divisions at the front, making one Army Corps. Besides this, there is the Canadian Training Division around Shorncliffe, consisting of reserve battalions, and training depôts for Cavalry, Engineers, A. S. C., A. M. C., etc. There is also the Fourth Division at Bramshott. It is rumoured that this Fourth Division is to go to France, and that Canada is to maintain 4 Divisions out there. All the officers I know believe Canada will have great difficulty in maintaining Four Divisions in the field. Three Divisions seem to be about all we can manage.

I hope you are keeping well, and are having a delightful time at Knowlton.

With greatest love,  
CLIFFORD.

*11th Reserve Battalion,  
St. Martin's Plain,  
Shorncliffe, Kent,  
July 30, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Here I am still, with neither any intimation as to when I shall be going to France, nor notification that the warning to "hold myself in readiness to proceed overseas at any moment" has been cancelled.

It has been rather an uninteresting week, with the exception of Thursday. Wednesday's orders detailed me as one of the officers to take part in manœuvres lasting for 24 hours from 8 o'clock Thursday morning. I had charge of a platoon which represented a company in the scheme of operations. The whole force engaged on each side represented a Division, and included Signallers, Engineers, Machine Gun Company, etc. We had to march between twenty and twenty-five miles, spent the night in an open field in a heavy fog,

and the battalion of which my company formed part never even saw the enemy. Altogether it was very much like active service. The next morning we marched seven miles before breakfast. It was an interesting break in the week's work.

Yesterday morning some of the officers in camp saw a German sea-plane, which had been making a little raid, pursued by three British planes. The raider was brought down near Dover. Unfortunately I did not see the chase. Last night I was wakened by the sound of bombs exploding and anti-aircraft guns being fired some miles away, possibly at Dover. It is said that the Germans do not attack Folkestone and its immediate neighbours along the coast in gratitude for the rescue of the crew of a large German ship which was wrecked here at the beginning of the war. The story does not sound probable, but for some reason Folkestone has been overlooked by German aircraft while Dover only a short distance away has been repeatedly visited by them.

The short Canadian casualty lists show that the Canadians are still in reserve. When they return to the front line probably the officers who have been warned will be sent for. It is

likely we shall spend some time at the base in  
Havre before going into the firing line.

With much love,

Your son,

CLIFFORD.

AUGUST, 1916

"Somewhere in France"—Pleased to Be "On the Way"  
—Swimming at Havre—No Kinship to "Henry"—  
Sunday Band Concert—German Prisoners—A Story  
of a German Major—The Humours of Censoring  
Letters—Wearing a Gas Helmet.

*Somewhere in France, Aug. 4, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am at a Rest Camp far away from the firing line, and cannot tell when I shall be leaving here. I did not cable to you when I left England, because I was so busy at the last that I really could not find time to go to a telegraph office, and also because a cable would have given the impression that I was going straight to the trenches, whereas I knew I should be detained here for some time.

I left Shorncliffe Wednesday morning, August 2nd, with other officers, and reached here Thursday morning after a pleasant trip. It may be that I am unduly cautious in suppressing the name of my present location, but, as I am not yet thoroughly conversant with the peculiarities of the censorship, I have decided

to be on the safe side. You had better address my letters in future to the

8th Battalion,

1st Canadian Division,

B. E. F.

I am having plenty of practice in speaking French, and find it much easier to understand the people here than the Canadian French in Montreal.

Beyond the fact that I have left England, there is very little that I can report. I am pleased to be "on my way" at last.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*Canadian Base,*

*Le Havre, France,*

*Aug. 8th, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am at present at the above address, which I understand it is permissible to mention in letters. I have moved here since I last wrote. Here the finishing touches will be given to my training before I proceed "up the line."

It has been, and is, extremely warm and dusty, and the swim in the sea, which I manage to get in nearly every day, is very refreshing. I can really float in the salt water, so you no



longer have the family monopoly of that accomplishment. I am beginning to like salt water for swimming, although I always used to prefer the fresh. What kind of a time did you have in Knowlton this year? I was glad to receive the picture post card of the place. It seems more than a year since I was there.

I am enjoying life here. I have many nice friends among the officers, and am continually running across men whom I have met in one capacity or another since I enlisted. When I first joined up, I knew scarcely any one in the whole Expeditionary Force. Now I have many acquaintances and friends from all parts of Canada. One of my best friends is a boy named Ford, a Sergeant in the First University Company, who recently received his commission in the P. P. C. L. I. He was at McGill when war broke out, and is an exceptionally attractive chap. He is commonly called "Henry" after his famous peace-making namesake, who, as he is very careful to state on every possible occasion, is no relative of his.

There are a great many things I should like to write about—things that I know would be of great interest to you, but I have to confine my letters to personal matters. I shall try to

write frequently so as to keep in touch with you. I was never in better health.

Hoping things are going well at home, and with love to "everybody" (as Miss Murphy would say) I am,

Your loving son,  
CLIFFORD.

*Le Havre, Aug. 15, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

As you see, I am not yet with my battalion, but am enjoying life in this most interesting and historic region. It is really a great piece of good fortune and a great privilege to have been of an age and in a position to come overseas to take part in this war. I only wish I could write in detail of all the interesting things I see day by day.

I have not received any mail since leaving England. Mail arriving at Shorncliffe for me is being sent on to the 8th, and has not yet been re-forwarded here, although I am expecting some any day. It is nearly two weeks since I left England.

On Sunday a grand band concert was given at the camp here, and the country people for miles around came in to hear the music. They seemed especially interested in the pipers. It

was very interesting to see the country folk in their best Sunday clothes, mingled with hundreds of Canadian, and a few French, soldiers.

I have seen lots of German prisoners. They are well treated and always appear to be on good terms with their guards. I heard of a German Major who, when told he was to be sent to England with other prisoners, laughed and said he knew that was impossible, as England was completely blockaded by the German fleet (presumably he meant the German submarine fleet). This is a true story.

It seems a long while since I heard from you, but I am expecting to receive mail very soon.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*8th Battalion, Canadians,  
B. E. F., France,  
August 21, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

The first letter I have received since leaving England arrived yesterday—yours of July 16th. It had gone to Shorncliffe, then “up the line” to the 8th, and then back to the base where I still am.

In addition to the excellent practical training which I am getting here, one of the official

duties is censoring letters. This takes an hour or more each day. Some of the men's letters are very amusing, their comments on the war, their food, the French people, etc. Yesterday a chap asserted positively that the war would be over by November. In a letter this morning another man said he was counting on being home for Christmas, 1925. One very funny letter was written by a man who was most indignant at having been transferred to a kilted battalion. He did not object to kilts *per se*, but he objected strenuously to "scrubbing his knees every day." Not one letter that I have read has been anything but confident as to the outcome of the war, and all are cheerful. The men have a sense of humour which goes far toward lightening their burdens.

I had the experience of wearing a gas helmet the other day and walking through gas ten times as powerful as one is likely to meet in the trenches. I could breathe without difficulty, but found the helmet hot and uncomfortable, which, of course, is unavoidable.

We are having lovely weather, at present, and I am enjoying life here. Being in the fresh air day and night (in a tent) I cannot help being well. I am hoping to get some more letters soon, but mails are more uncer-

tain here than in England. There are many interesting things which I cannot write about.

Take care of yourself, mother dear. With love to father and the others at home, I remain,

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

SEPTEMBER, 1916

With an Entrenching Battalion—A Gas Attack—Germans Outclassed—Seven Miles Through Mud, Real Mud—"Strafing"—The Rattling of the "Typewriters"—The Greater Daring of British Airmen—"Russian Scotchmen"—The Stolid Peasants of Flanders—Aeroplanes Hiding in the Clouds—Gas Attacks—Keen Enjoyment of the Picturesque Side of Modern Warfare—Too Much Noise for Sleep—Glorious Air Fights—Back in France—A Hog Interfering with Discipline and Rations—"Part of the Way on an Aeroplane"—Camping in an Ideal Spot—"Hot, Dusty and Triumphant"—Bombardment Seen at Night from the Crest of a Hill.

*First Canadian Entrenching Bn.,  
B. E. F., September 2, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

As you see by the heading, my address has changed again. I was warned to join the above named unit a few minutes after I mailed my letter to father last Sunday. With a few other officers I left the base Monday evening. Then followed a railway journey lasting two days and two nights. Troop trains in general move slowly, and this one in particular seemed slower than the average. There were numerous stops

at places which I would like to mention, but cannot. Finally on Wednesday evening we reached a little town where we "disembarked" from the train. We had supper in a little inn, the walls of which, and even the ceiling of the room in which we ate, were scarred with shrapnel. The town is still full of civilian inhabitants, who have to take to their cellars when Fritz chooses to send a few shells their way. After supper we had a walk of seven miles through mud—real mud—to a camp where the Battalion is located at present. We are several miles behind the front line, far enough to be out of danger, but near enough to see a good deal of what is going on. Heavy batteries are near us and when they give Fritz his daily strafing they make our little huts tremble. Occasionally Fritz makes a feeble response and we can see his shells bursting as he tries to locate the cleverly concealed guns. Then British and Belgian batteries all around come to life, and make things interesting until the Huns give up the argument, and comparative silence reigns again.

Apart from the "strafing"—as artillery fire is called—one of the most interesting features to be observed from here is the flares at night. For miles along the front line we can see the

flares shooting up into the air, lighting the country in a wonderful manner. Most of these flares are German, showing that Fritz is more nervous than Tommy.

At night one can hear the machine guns ("typewriters" we call them) rattling away, can see the flash of the British guns, hear the sound of their shells rushing along like an express train travelling through the sky at incredible speed, and a dull boom as they burst in the distance. And yet we are as safe here as we were in England. In the day time we see observation balloons and aeroplanes galore. The British planes are far more daring than the German, and it is fascinating to watch them fly over the German lines followed by little puffs of soft fleecy white or black smoke as the shrapnel shells burst around them. Only once since I arrived here has a German plane ventured this way, and our anti-aircraft guns soon drove it off.

You may wonder what an entrenching battalion is. Its purpose is to supply reinforcements as they are needed by units in the firing line, and to provide working parties to work on second line defences by night. I was out last night with a party. We left at dusk and returned at 2 A. M. We were working some



distance behind the line and Fritz never knew we were there.

I am perfectly happy here. My only fear is that you may worry about me. Please don't do this. I shall be here for some time, and am not in any danger. You had better address your next letter to this battalion. My next move will be to join my unit, but that will not be for some time.

The most disagreeable things here are the rats, which are innumerable, and the flies which are a thousand times more numerous than the rats.

My platoon is composed of kilties. Some of them are Russians. They will persist in coming on parade without their khaki aprons, so that I have to call the Russian Sergeant, and administer a scolding with him as interpreter. What peculiar workings of military officialdom caused these Russians from Western Canada to be put into a Highland battalion, it is hard to say. They are known as the "Russian Scotchmen." They are hard workers, and splendid soldiers.

We are "somewhere in Flanders." The stolid peasants till their fields right up to the line, and pay no attention to shells screeching overhead, or aeroplanes circling among the

clouds. It is interesting to see the planes hiding among the clouds when the shells follow them too closely.

Occasionally Fritz makes a gas attack. Then gas alarms (empty shells suspended in the air and pounded with a stick) are sounded all around us, and every one gets his helmet ready. We have to carry gas helmets all the time here, even when we go to dinner. So far there have been no casualties, as the helmets afford perfect protection, and the gas is diluted when it reaches us.

Thus you see that the picturesque and delightful side of modern warfare is much in evidence here. I am enjoying it immensely. Even the discomforts are a pleasure, as they remind me that I have escaped from the Reserve Battalion where I was buried for so long a time.

By the time this letter reaches you I shall have been in the army for over a year. My one regret is that I did not enlist sooner.

Goodnight, Molly dear. Please take care of yourself and of father, so you can meet me when I come home, looking well and strong. Now that Roumania has joined us, it may not be so very long before I get home again.

With much love,      CLIFFORD.

P. S. I have received only one letter from you since I left England. Some day soon I shall get a big bunch of mail.

*8th Battalion Canadians,  
B. E. F., Sept. 2, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I had occasion to think gratefully of you last night—hence this letter, as I thought you might be interested in the occurrence. I was sleeping peacefully in my little bunk in a hut a couple of miles behind the line about midnight last night, when I was wakened by a tremendous noise, banging on empty shells and blowing of horns, etc. For a few seconds I was too sleepy to realise what was happening and then some one hollered “gas attack!” Five seconds later I was dressing at lightning speed. Then I pulled on my gas helmet and started out to make sure that my platoon was all ready. It was pitch dark, and the ground is full of shell holes, ditches, disused trenches. Through the goggles of my helmet it was hard to pick out the ground before me. Suddenly I remembered the flashlight which I bought with the pound you sent me. I had had little occasion to use it before then, but I was tremendously thankful to remember it then. I hastily

turned back, fastened it on my belt, and was able to get around to all my men in quick time. As soon as the gas alarms sounded, our artillery opened fire, and such a noise ensued as I never heard before. Crash! Crash! Crash! on all sides of me; gun flashes lighting up the sky all around, shells screeching overhead, and all the while the horns and shells giving the alarm. After an hour we were able to turn in again, only to be awakened at 2.30 to go through the same performance again. Thanks to the timely warning and efficient helmets we had no casualties either time. Thank goodness, the wind is blowing toward the German lines to-night so we can count on a whole night's sleep.

I am at present with an entrenching battalion, constructing second line trenches. I take a working party out every other night. By going cautiously and avoiding using lights of any kind, we can escape observation by Fritz, although his shells do come pretty close sometimes.

Our artillery outclasses the German, as our airmen outclass Fritz's airmen. Very rarely does a German plane come this way, while ours are over the German lines every day. An

especially daring German plane flew overhead the other day and dropped a bomb about fifty yards from me. It failed to explode, and our guns drove the plane off in quick time.

Being Orderly Officer of the day, I did not have to go out with the working party to-night. It is a horrible night, rain, mud, pitch dark, except for flares and gun flashes. I am glad to be able to stay in.

The country here is so wet as to be soggy, but the water is not fit to drink, scarcely fit to wash in. The washing water is diluted mud from a shell hole near by, while drinking water is brought in carts from miles away.

In spite of these discomforts, I am enjoying myself immensely. I was never happier in my life. Very soon I shall be with my battalion in the front line trenches.

Some of the unpleasant and dangerous things I do not mention in my letters home; so do not call mother's attention to them. I thought you would be interested, however.

Letters are a godsend here; so write soon.

With love to Mildred and Barbara, and the baby,

Your brother,  
CLIFFORD.

*Somewhere in Flanders,*

*Sept. 4, 1916.*

MY DEAR NED,

It is about 11 P. M. and I have been trying to sleep, but it is no use. A battery of 9.2 howitzers about half a mile away have started an argument with Fritz, and innumerable other guns are chiming in, and between their remarks and Fritz's rather feeble reply, there is such a racket going on that sleep is impossible. So I have lighted a candle and will write a letter to you until things quiet down or until I am sleepy enough not to mind the racket. I have just taken a look out of the door of the hut. Flares are shooting up along the line, field guns pounding away on all sides, machine guns rattling, and shells roaring through the air. Fritz must have been misbehaving in some way to deserve such a strafing.

I am with an entrenching battalion a couple of miles behind the line. I have to take out a working party about every other night. Today has been so stormy (torrents of rain) that to-night's party was cancelled. The men have been singing away in their huts this evening, in spite of being wet, cold, and annoyed by

rats, as though they had not a worry in the world.

Speaking of rats reminds me that a couple of days ago some men lifted up one of their little huts, filled up all the rat holes underneath it except two, and poured water down one of the two. As the rats streamed out of the other hole, a little rat dog attended to them, killing 43 in a few minutes—43 for one hut is the camp record, and I feel quite proud of it, as it was my platoon that established it. I am afraid it will be broken soon, however.

I expect soon to join my battalion in the front line. Here we are close enough to see what is going on, but in no danger. Gas attacks (we had two Sunday night) annoy us, but we always have timely warning and our helmets give perfect protection. I never enjoyed life before so much as I am enjoying it here. There is so much to see and hear. I am a long way from the "fed-up" stage. I really enjoy army life, and in some ways shall be sorry to leave it when the war is over.

The others in the hut are giving up the attempt to sleep and are complaining of the inconsiderateness of the artillery in disturbing us.

We see some glorious air fights here. The

other day there were 15 planes in the air at once, sailing about in the midst of a cloud of shrapnel bursts. Yesterday one of our planes destroyed a German observation balloon a few miles from here. I wish I could describe the pandemonium that is going on around me as I write, but one has to hear it to know what it is like. When one of the nearby big guns goes off, there is a flash that lights up the hut, a tremendous crash that makes the ground tremble, then a roar like an elevated train soaring up into the sky; then it grows fainter until it ends in a dull thud in the distance.

Well I must try again to get to sleep. I suppose I shall soon get used to the noise.

With love to Marjorie and yourself, and hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,

As ever, CLIFF.

*Somewhere in France,*  
*Sept. 11, 1916.*

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I have had a long journey since I wrote you last from Flanders. First the battalion marched five or six miles; then we were met by a long line of motor busses which took us 15 miles to a certain place where we spent two days. I was billeted with my platoon in



a farm house. I had a quaint little room in the house which was reached by a sort of gangway (half way between a ladder and a stairway) which led us out of the little kitchen. My men were quartered equally cleanly and comfortably in the barn. The farmer and his family were not pleased to see us at first, but soon became more friendly and would heat large caldrons of water so that the men could make tea without building fires near his precious barn. They would also sit up hours after their usual bed time talking to the men, especially the French Canadians. The farmer spoke both French and Flemish. I was inspecting the platoon one morning when there arose quite a hubbub at the other end of the line. I was rather surprised at this breach of discipline, but when I learned the cause I was quite willing to excuse it. About 50 yards away the day's rations were spread out on the ground, and a large hog was helping himself to them. I put a guard over the rations, and there was no further excitement. The next day we left at midnight and marched until 6 in the morning. About daybreak another battalion which was being transported in busses overtook us as we were resting by the roadside. The busses stopped for some reason right be-

side us, and there was a general exchange of remarks between the men on the busses and the men on the ground. "Have you chaps marched all the way from . . . . .?" inquired a young fellow on the top of an ex-London bus. "Naw," answered one of the men who had reached the "fed-up" stage, "we got a ride part of the way on an aeroplane." It would have been a good incident for Bairnsfather to depict in one of his cartoons. I suppose you know Bairnsfather's cartoons? They are wonderfully true to life, and very popular out here.

At 6 o'clock we were picked up by busses, and at 9 o'clock we entrained. We were on the train until 8 P. M., and then marched again until 12, when we bivouacked in a field, where we are still stopping, two days later. We have received brand new tents, and altogether have an ideal camping ground. It is a field with a gentle slope covered with green grass, and surrounded by orchards. The men are getting exceptionally well fed, and are having a good rest after the long journey; so they are quite happy. We are a little farther from the line than in our last location, but are near enough to see the flares at night, and the balloons and aeroplanes by day. The roar of the guns never ceases.

I have been pretty busy since I got here, putting up tents, etc., etc. I have just finished censoring a lot of mail, and have snatched time to write to you.

You had better send my letters to the First Canadian Entrenching Battalion until further notice. I do not know how long I shall be with them.

I am sleeping in a tent with two other officers who are going to the 8th. We are very comfortable here. I have a Woolsey sleeping bag, in which I sleep very comfortably, and in which I pack my kit when we move. The weather is delightful, and the country much more attractive in every way than Flanders. We have plenty of good drinking water, which means a great deal.

I hope every one at home is as well and happy as I am. I always think of home a great deal on Sundays. Yesterday while we were busy putting up tents, I was wondering what you were all doing at home.

Your letter of Aug. 12 arrived on Saturday. This is the second I have received since I came to France. The others will arrive some day.

I must close now.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. A certain Canadian Brigade has just marched by the camp on their way back to billets after being in the front line. They were hot, dusty, and triumphant. One of the battalions made a splendid charge, capturing a German trench in fine style. They received a wire of congratulation from Sir Douglas Haig. Fritz will soon begin to go to pieces. We see lots of German prisoners here.

*September 13, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

This little brooch has the same design as the 8th Battalion cap badge. I thought you might be glad to have it. The little devil is black instead of gold on the cap badge.

Everything is going well. I am still with the Entrenching Battalion.

With love and in haste (to catch the post) I  
am

Your son,

CLIFFORD.

*First Canadian Entrenching Bn.,*

*B. E. F., France,*

*September 22, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

As you see, my address has not changed since I last wrote. I have, however, been

away from the Battalion for a week, in company with other officers on duty that took us as far back as the Canadian Base Depôt. Now I am back again and having a delightful time. The Entrenching Battalions are reckoned as being "in the line" but in reality this particular Battalion is many miles from it. We are too far back to go out on working parties at night as we did in Belgium. Besides, we have very few men here at present, so we (the officers) are having a delightful time. The men are enjoying themselves too. We are encamped in a very pretty spot surrounded by orchards. We have brand new tents that had never been used until they were issued to us. At first they were white, but, of course, we have had them covered with daubs of green and brown paint to escape observation from hostile aircraft. In the morning we parade from 9.30 to 12, P. T. (physical training), bayonet fighting and squad drill being the chief items. In the afternoon we go for a short route-march, getting back about 4 o'clock. After that we play football, quoits, baseball, etc., until it is dark. Yesterday the officers had a baseball game, the married men against the single ones. The Colonel pitched for the former; for the latter I made a 2 base hit in

one inning, but the C. O. put me out at first base twice. I put him out at second base once, but the umpire decided otherwise. The nearer a battalion is to the front line, the more cordial is the spirit between all ranks. Every one tries to make things as pleasant as possible for every one else.

Although we are doing no fighting ourselves, there are many indications that there is a war on. The guns are never silent, except for a short time every morning, when both sides seem to take a rest. Observation balloons are always in sight, also aeroplanes. Twenty-two balloons, mostly British, were in sight at one time the other day. Every day I see British aeroplanes sailing over the German lines, with little puffs of smoke following them around, making them keep up high but seldom hitting them.

Yesterday afternoon we went for a short march. We had scarcely started when we saw a man coming down from an observation balloon by means of a parachute. He landed quite safely. It was the first parachute descent I ever saw. I do not know why he came down that way. The next interesting thing we saw was a "motor dovecote," *i. e.*, a large cage filled with carrier-pigeons mounted on a motor lorry.

A little later we had a good view of a German plane being driven off by our anti-aircraft guns.

I wish you would send me some more large safety pins,—the largest size. They are splendid things to pin blankets together with. Also chocolate, cake, toothpaste, toothbrush, and other things of that sort, would be welcome. Send them to the 1st Canadian Entrenching Battalion.

I received father's letter of August 14th two days ago. Mail is very irregular. By the way, when you write to me after I join the 8th Bn., do not mention the Brigade or Division. The address will be simply 8th Battalion, Canadians, B. E. F., France. We are not allowed to mention Brigades or Divisions.

There was a discussion among the officers the other day about the number of Canadians who are found to be unfit for active service after they have reached England. A considerable proportion have to be sent back to Canada, or be kept in England on permanent duty there. It is a great mistake for any one to enlist if his health is not sufficiently good for him to endure the hardships of active service. It is a waste of his own time and of the Government's money. The proportion of Cana-

dians who are marked unfit for active service is disgracefully large. So if C—— does not feel that he is strong enough to go through all the hardships of a campaign he is acting in a more patriotic way in remaining in Canada than he would be in coming over to England.

I must close now. After three days' rain, the sun is shining again. Our battalion has a football game scheduled for this afternoon.

With greatest love,

Your son,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I enclose some cards of places I have seen since coming to France.

*1st Can. Entrenching Battalion,  
France, Sept. 28, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

We are taught in the army the importance of making reports to Headquarters at regular intervals. Even when there is nothing to report, the message "situation unchanged" should be sent in, this report being as important as any other. This letter is simply to report to you that the situation is unchanged, so far as I am concerned. I am still with the Entrench-



ing Battalion, waiting for the summons to join the 8th.

The news from the front continues to be good. Every day bunches of German prisoners march back, looking glad to be out of it all. Our aeroplanes ascend in swarms every morning and make for the German lines. The big guns are never silent.

A couple of nights ago I was bringing a party of men back to camp. We had to march over the crest of a hill, a few miles from the front line. There was a heavy bombardment on at the time, and the sight was so wonderful that I halted my party for a quarter of an hour to watch the show. All around us gun flashes were lighting up the sky, the sound of the guns merging into one uninterrupted roar. Overhead a couple of searchlights were searching the clouds for hostile aircraft. In the distance, we could see the shells bursting over the trenches, the shrapnel shells bursting in the air with a red flash, the high explosives bursting on the ground with a whiter light. Flares by the score were being shot into the air all along the line, some of them white, some red, some green. It was a sight which no words can adequately describe.

Life here is far more interesting and en-

joyable than it was in England. In fact, I am finding it the pleasantest part of my military career.

I have just received word from the Adjutant that I am to proceed to a point 12 miles away, starting to-morrow morning at 6.30, to bring back a draft of reinforcements for this battalion. I shall have a horse to ride there and back, and am looking forward to a pleasant ride.

I must close now. There is really no news I can give. I am quite well, and enjoying myself. By the way, you will have read, of course, of the "tanks" or armoured automobiles which are being used in the offensive. They are wonderful things; can cross an 8 ft. wide trench, knock down trees, climb out of shell holes, etc. They could pass right through a house if necessary. Bullets and bombs glance harmlessly off their armoured sides. They carry 6 or 8 machine guns, and a couple of heavier guns. This is one respect in which we have got ahead of them.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

OCTOBER, 1916

Contents of Kit Bag—Wonderful Progress of British—  
In Action—Further Training—Narrow Escapes in  
Battle—Watching an Air Raid from the Top of a Box  
Car—Churning for the Farmer's Daughters—A Call  
for Novels—In the Battle of the Somme—Elaborate  
German Dugouts—An Invisible Village—Efficiency  
of Canadian Artillery—A Remarkable Experience.

*1st Canadian Entrenching Bn.,  
B. E. F., October 6, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am still with the Entrenching Battalion, and have nothing special to report. Things are going on just as usual. Unfortunately the weather has been very wet, and there is mud everywhere—not so bad as in Belgium, but still real mud. I have an excellent pair of high boots, and so am not troubled by mere mud. The worst thing about the mud is that it hinders the offensive.

I am pleased with my equipment. It is complete in every respect, and I am often called on to lend various things to other people. Still,

my kit seems to bulk less large than the average when it is packed up. I think father would approve of the way I pack my kit. You may be interested in what it consists of. In the first place, I have a Woolsey valise, or sleeping bag. This is a large hold-all which is carried on a transport wagon when we move, and which contains all my belongings, except what I carry on my person. It holds, (1) two blankets and a rubber sheet such as is issued to the men, (2) a pack containing clean clothes and housewife, (3) extra boots, (4) the blue bag you made, holding handkerchiefs, collars, scarfs, etc., (5) a small issue-haversack with my ink-bottle, pencils, a few necessary books, etc. These things go in a pocket at one end of the sleeping bag, and form a pillow when the bag is unrolled.

On the march I wear my high boots, and (1) the Webb Belt Ned sent me, with my revolver and cartridge pouch, (2) a large haversack holding medical supplies, bandages, etc., holdall with towel, soap, etc., a compass, a Field Service Pocket Book, (3) water bottle, (4) gas helmet, (5) shrapnel helmet (unused as yet), (6) raincoat en banderole. The housewife which you made is an excellent one, and

is in great demand. The next time you send me a box, please put some studs and a couple of khaki neckties in it.

Even from where we are at present, we are conscious of the advance that our troops are making. Batteries which used to keep us awake at night are now miles away from us. Ammunition stores, etc., are being moved farther up the line all the time. Roads which could not be used by day on account of danger of shelling are now perfectly safe. Observation balloons have advanced. Wonderful progress is being made, but, of course, our casualties are heavy, although lighter than those of the Germans. A C. O. who was in camp recently said that in the last advance his battalion took more prisoners than the total of his casualties, and that the German casualties in addition to prisoners were twice as great as his.

Some time ago I asked that, in future, letters be sent to the First Entrenching Battalion. These have not begun to reach me yet. By the time I get an answer to this letter I may be with the 8th, and so in future you had better send your letters to the 8th Battalion, Canadians, B. E. F., France. By that time

the Canadians will probably be in some other and quieter part of the line.

With love to all, I am,

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. No letters received since I last wrote—mail very irregular.

*8th Battalion, Canadians,*

*B. E. F., France,*

*October 15, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I have been in action with my battalion already, and was fortunate enough to come through without a scratch. Of course I had narrow escapes. I took off my coat and went down the trench one time, and came back to find my coat riddled with shrapnel. Shells burst all around me, throwing showers of dirt over me, while rifle and machine gun bullets whistled just overhead continually. In three days I became hardened to sights which were indescribably horrible—and to horrible sounds and smells as well. An aeroplane battle took place in full view—seven planes participating. One was brought down in flames, two others were compelled to descend. The Germans sent

over tear shells which make one's eyes sore and upset one's "tummy" as well.

Before you receive this letter I shall have been through a much sterner action than the last, and it is by no means improbable that I shall have "gone west," as it is called in the army. I am accordingly enclosing a letter which I want you to send to mother only if I am killed. I want her to be sure to get it after my death, not otherwise, and the best way I can think of to ensure this is to send it to you. I have a feeling that if I survive this next scrap I shall come through the whole war all right; but casualties are sure to be heavy this time.

I must close now, George. Please write when you find time. I am always delighted to get a letter from you. Tell me about your work, which is always interesting to me. Give my love and best wishes to Mildred and Barbara and the baby.

Your affectionate brother,

CLIFFORD.

*8th Battalion, Canadians,*

*B. E. F., October 18, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

The day after I last wrote to you, namely, Saturday, Oct. 7, I joined the 8th Battalion.

We were in action three days last week, and in support or reserve trenches the rest of the week; so I had no opportunity to write letters. You will be surprised to learn that at the present moment I am somewhere in France, many miles from the firing line. I was detailed last Saturday to attend a short machine gun course at a camp far away from the front line. The idea seems to be that all infantry officers should know something about machine guns. There are several hundred officers here, most of them English, a few Australian and Canadian. Among the latter is a friend of mine, Lt. Ford of the P. P. C. L. I. I was much pleased to find him here. We shall be here about a week before rejoining our battalions. The course deals mainly with the Lewis Gun, with which I have a slight acquaintance already. Every evening we go to the town nearby where we have the most delicious and best appreciated meals that ever were eaten. It seems strange to be in a town where none of the buildings have been destroyed by shell fire. Last week I was in a village which, so far as I could see, did not have a single stick or pile of bricks eight feet high. Everything, literally everything, had been levelled to the ground by our



artillery fire before it was captured from the enemy.

Last week I received a lovely box from you. It was the best I have received yet. Thank you for it very much. The cake and candy were most delicious. The foot powder also was welcome. I did not have my boots off for six days last week, but did not have a single blister on my feet. I take good care of them, and find the powder useful.

My Company Commander in the 8th is Capt. Boswell of Winnipeg, whom I knew in England. I get on with him very well indeed. One gets to know the officers and men of a company much better over here than in England.

In coming back for this course, I had to travel in a box car. The journey took two days altogether, the train being simply an empty supply train returning from railhead. I had a splendid view of an air raid on a French town, by two Taube planes, one night on the way. The train stopped while the planes were around and I climbed on top of the car to see the raiders, who dropped a couple of bombs on the town, but were driven off by gun fire.

Mrs. Wigfield, Frank's sister-in-law, is look-

ing after my trunk for me, and sends things out to me as I need them. It is very good of her to do so, and I should like you to write and thank her for it.

I am very glad to be with my battalion at last. It has taken me a long while to get here, but that has not been my fault. The battalion has been in a very busy part of the line for some time, and I imagine we shall be going out of the line for a rest before long, and then into a more peaceful part of the line.

With much love to all at home,

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

*8th Battalion Canadians,  
B. E. F., France,  
Oct. 25th, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

About ten days ago I wrote you enclosing a letter to be given to mother in case I was pegged out in the attack which we were then anticipating. Will you please destroy the letter to mother, which was written for that one special occasion, and keep the one which I am sending herewith to give to her if, at any time during the war, I should "go west."

When I wrote last, I am afraid I was in a

rather pessimistic humour. This does not often occur. When I wrote I had passed through my baptism of fire. I was complimented by my company commander on my coolness during the bombardment, but when we had come out into reserve for a day or two in anticipation of going in again, the narrowness of my escapes impressed me and was responsible for the rather despondent tone of my letter.

Perhaps the best way to break into the game is to go through a "show" (as a battle is called) the first thing and learn the worst there is to experience. Anyway, that is what happened to me, and I am none the worse for it, and can look forward to ordinary peaceful trench warfare with perfect equanimity.

When actually in the line (the fighting was fairly open) the first time, everything seemed unreal. I could not make myself feel that the shells bursting around us were really intended to harm us, and it was a shock to see a shell which burst in the German lines hurl two bodies 75 feet or more into the air.

One night I was sent out on a patrol into No Man's Land to see if our bombardment had cut the German wire. We came to a short section of trench midway between the lines which the Germans had evacuated. We crept up to

it on hands and knees, and cautiously looked in. There, by the moonlight, we saw three dead lying on the ground, and one, evidently a sentry, standing up holding his rifle with fixed bayonet in one hand. He was leaning against the parapet with his head resting on his arm, as though he had fallen asleep at his post—as he had, with a bullet through his head. Then we—two men and myself—crept on, finding dead everywhere, for the field had been the scene of a terrific fight. Close to our own parapet we found a dead Canadian. We brought in his identity disc, papers, etc., from his pockets. Among the papers was a short poem beginning:

“Sing me to sleep where the bullets fall,  
Let me forget the war and all.”

Our artillery must send over two shells to Fritz's one, and ours are the heavier as a rule. Our 9.2's do terrific execution. Fritz cannot see where his shells are bursting, as his planes are kept off so well by our airmen. His fire, moreover, would dwindle away to nothing almost, when our planes went over his lines, as he is so afraid of revealing his gun positions to our heavy artillery.

Altogether, now that I have taken the plunge, I am not having too bad a time. I feel that I have been through the worst there is to go through, and the even tenor of trench warfare has lost its terrors.

Well, I must close now. Write soon to

Your brother

CLIFFORD.

*8th Bn, Canadians, B. E. F.,*

*October 25, 1916.*

MY DARLING MOTHER,

I rejoined the Battalion yesterday after my course. We are in very comfortable billets in a pretty little village quite a way back from the line, and are enjoying a good rest. The four officers of D Company to which I belong have a room in a farm house on the outskirts of the village. The men sleep on the hay in the barn. They enjoy themselves greatly, assisting the farmer, and doing the churning for the farmer's daughters. The farmer is excused military service owing to having seven children. He is a prosperous farmer, and his family is one of the happiest I have ever seen. Every evening they all gather in the kitchen, and laugh and chatter away like a lot of children.

I am sending you a few cards from places

which I have seen (whenever you get a post card you will know that I have been at the place pictured), also some photos which I had taken while I was away for the course. In the group the one standing is my friend Ford of the P. P. C. L. I., and the other two are English and Scotch, one-star wonders, *i. e.*, 2nd Lieutenants, who were in our class. I had a very pleasant time while I was away. Now that I have returned full of knowledge, I have been put in charge of the Lewis Gun Detachment of the Company, in addition to commanding a platoon. I am glad of this as it keeps me busy, and so makes the time pass more quickly and pleasantly. I am also sending you a little souvenir made of German rifle cartridges picked up after the Battle of the Marne. I do not buy souvenirs as a rule, preferring to find my own, but this was so beautifully made, and should prove useful, that I got it for you. I bought it in a little store near here where it was made. It is a stand to hold a watch. The German bullet is a little smaller than ours, and makes a very neat, clean wound, as a rule.

I should be glad if you would send me a Balaclava Helmet—one not too warm. I have had my hair clipped off close all over my head,

and would be glad of a light Balaclava to wear at night. I would also be glad of another pad like this one.

Unfortunately there is another Lt. Wells (an Englishman) in the Battalion. His initials are C. H., so it is necessary to mark letters and parcels for me very distinctly.

I must close now. With great love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. In your next box, will you please slip in something to read. Some cheap copy of a good novel, or some other book—not too deep, but yet of a good length. Some good old English novel preferably. One of Jane Austen or Thackeray, or some good modern novel or essay—anything with lots of reading matter in it. I am asking Emma to do the same. All reading matter is carefully preserved and passed around.

*8th Battalion, Canadians, B. E. F.*

*France, October 30, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I received to-day your interesting letter of September 29. I enjoyed your description of Valcartier. You must have learned a great deal more of camp life, and moral conditions in the army, than would have been possible in

any other way. I was much interested in your summary of the situation in the church. I trust that the fourth year of your pastorate will prove to be the best so far, and that the new building will be in existence sooner than now seems possible. I like to keep in touch with things at home, and to feel that I have some interest in the world apart from the war.

You probably know in what part of the line the Canadians have been until recently. We have been on the march for some days, and before long will be going into the line again—this time at a very quiet part. After the fierce fighting of the region we have left ordinary trench warfare will seem calm and peaceful.

As I look back on my military experiences hitherto, I feel that I have been wonderfully and providentially guided, and protected. My promotion has been rapid and not obtained through "pull." My training in the 4th University Company was an excellent basis for the further training which I received as a Sergeant in England. If I had not served in the ranks, I should not have felt competent to hold a commission. Then the courses which I took in England—Bombing and Lewis Gun—were the two most practical and useful courses I could have had. Then after I came to France



I was with the Entrenching Battalion during most of the heavy fighting in which the Canadians were engaged. I joined the 8th in time to take part in the last "show" (a battle is called a "show" over here) before we moved away from the Somme. One such show is equal to about three months of ordinary warfare, so I feel like a veteran already.

Everything is done by companies over here. When we go into the line each company takes over a section of the trench from a company of the battalion we are relieving. When we are out, each company is billeted separately. The company officers eat and sleep together. There should be six officers for each company, but there are seldom that many.

Some of the German dugouts which I have seen are remarkably elaborate. Most of them have floors, walls, and ceiling lined with boards about two inches thick. They are dry and comfortable. Many have stairs leading down into them, being thirty or forty feet underground, with various rooms and passages. One in which I slept was merely a tunnel running straight into the side of a hill. It was about thirty feet long, four feet wide and three feet high, and was lined with 2-inch lumber. The amount of wood which the Germans use is

enormous. Our men are lazy in comparison with the Germans. They prefer to scoop out a little hole under the parapet rather than to dig a really bomb-proof dugout for themselves. Where the push is taking place the trenches are very simple and shallow, being hastily dug and not intended for permanent occupation.

We are slowly winning back the country from the Germans, but when a bit of territory is won back it is in a terrible condition. The fields are ploughed up by shells, trenches and barbed wire everywhere. The villages are in ruins. At dusk one evening, knowing I was in the neighbourhood of a certain village, I enquired where it was. I found that I was in the midst of it. I had supposed I was in the open country, for as I looked about no buildings were visible. Every building in the village was flat upon the ground, smashed into little bits. Strange to say, a number of trees were still standing. In the dark I had supposed the trees stood in open fields, but instead they stood in a wilderness of shattered bricks and boards, which are still occasionally churned up by the German artillery fire.

Our artillery does terrific execution. Our planes sail over the German lines continually, and are able to signal directions to the gunners.

Their presence has another good effect. The German artillery fire diminishes as soon as our planes go over, so fearful are they of revealing their gun positions.

During my first trip in the line, I had a most remarkable experience, such as has occurred to no other officer of my acquaintance. I do not think it wise to write about it at present, but some day I shall let you know all about it.

Two letters from mother and one from Rae have just reached me. I shall answer them before we leave our present billets.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

NOVEMBER, 1916

Socks for Soldiers—Writing in a Front Line Dugout—  
30 Yards from the Enemy Safer than 200—Changed  
by War—The Day's Work at the Front—A Shrieking  
Frenchwoman—Souvenirs—The Usefulness of the  
Chaplain—Wild Geese.

*Somewhere in France,*  
*November 1, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have to-night to answer five letters of yours—two came yesterday and three less than an hour ago, Sept. 23, Sept. 27, Sept. 30, Oct. 6 and Oct. 10, are their dates. It is delightful to hear from home.

You ask about my diary. I will send it home at the end of the year, if you will send me one for 1917. My diary is just a brief record of where I am, and what I am doing. My letters are the fullest record of my experiences. Many things I cannot write about, but will describe when I get home.

I am well supplied with socks, and have a good supply of paper for my notebook, so you need not send any more of these at present. I

like long socks. Of course I can always find men to give socks to, but those that are issued are really quite good enough for the hard usage they get out here; so do not work too hard at knitting socks for any one but me. A large proportion of the men get packages from England or Canada, and they share them with each other.

I am glad you like the Little Black Devil brooch. It is really a distinctive badge, and historical, too, for a Canadian Regiment. I like your parcels very much indeed. The things you send are just right. When I think of anything else, I will let you know. By the way, a tin of cocoa would be welcome, and I would like some real home-made fudge. I am very fond of chocolate in any form. The packing of your parcels is excellent, and they arrive in good condition in spite of hard usage en route.

Do you like the photos I sent recently? I wish I could have one taken in full marching order—with revolver, gas helmet, steel helmet, water-bottle, haversack, pack, etc.

I wish I could tell you just where I am, and where I have been. When we go into the line again, it will be in a very quiet part of the line, where both sides are content to hold their posi-

tions for the present without trying to advance.

My address will not change again in the near future, so I will give it in full now, and will not repeat it in every letter, as I can write more fully sometimes if I do not mention the battalion I belong to:

Lieut. C. A. Wells,  
8th Battalion, Canadians,  
D Company, B. E. F.,  
France.

This will always find me.

I will close now, as I have to get up early in the morning. At present I am second in command of the company, a Platoon Commander, Company Mess Secretary, and Company Lewis Gun Officer. All this keeps me busy, and makes the time pass quickly.

Good night, Molly darling,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. Please excuse this paper, the only kind available at the moment. A writing pad is a good thing to put in a box. I cannot carry much paper around with me, and have to use whatever is at hand. Also, something to read. I am at present reading "The Fortunes of Nigel," by Scott, and have also "A Kentucky Cardinal" on hand. Anything to read is welcome.

*Somewhere in France,*  
*Nov. 3, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am writing this letter about 8 P. M. in a dugout in the front line. The dugout is not actually in the fire trench, but in the close support trench a few yards behind the fire trench. The dugout serves as our Company Headquarters, and it is here that I sleep. This is a very quiet part of the line. Occasionally I hear a gun fired and a shell whistles overhead. An occasional rifle shot or machine gun rattle is heard (probably fired at some point where there might be a German, not at any visible target). Trench mortars are the most active weapon. We send over about five bombs in answer to one of Fritz's. But altogether things are so quiet here that one would scarcely believe there is a war on. About an hour ago we could actually hear a band playing in the distance, some miles behind the line. And yet we are within three hundred yards of the Germans. Probably the German officers opposite us have most luxurious dugouts, with board floors, walls, and roofs. Ours have no flooring. The walls are covered with fine-meshed wire netting, the roof is of corrugated iron

covered with sandbags, and supported by rough timbers.

The ration party, which goes back each evening to bring up the rations for the following day, has just returned. They brought me a parcel from you containing socks, toothpaste, candy, shaving soap, shaving paper, foot powder, and other things. Thank you very much, mother dear. I am well supplied with socks at present. The shaving paper (a little pad, you remember) I shall keep for a writing pad, as it is a convenient size to carry with me. The toothpaste and tooth brush are both very welcome, and also the wash cloth. In civilian life I seldom used a wash cloth, but in the trenches, where water is so scarce and so precious, I find a wash cloth is a good thing, as it enables one to wash his face (and neck) with a minimum waste of water.

I believe that for some months you can count on me being in this safe and quiet part of the line. If it were not for the mud and the rats and mice, we should be very comfortable indeed. As it is we are having a good rest here. There is a town near by just behind the German lines which has not been shelled at all. We can see houses, factories, churches, all intact, but no smoke from the chimneys or any



other sign of life, as it is entirely deserted.

In coming up to our present position we marched along a road through villages destroyed by shell fire a year or more ago, the only occupants being artillery men who live in cellars and dugouts under the ruins. We caught glimpses of the muzzles of huge guns peeping out from amid ruined houses. Then we entered a long communication trench which finally emerged in a little valley. On the far side of this little valley or ravine dugouts were cut into the slopes, along the top of which runs our front line. Fritz's line is a little lower than ours on the far side of the slope. In some places the lines are only 30 yards apart, in other places 500 yards apart. When the lines are very close together, both sides keep only a few men in the front line, where the trenches are very deep, and very little activity is shown by either side; so that one is really safer when only thirty yards from Fritz than when 200 yards away.

I must close now and go to visit the sentries. Things are much quieter here than in the metropolis of Canada, so I shall be able to get a good night's sleep until "Stand to" an hour before dawn.

With great love,

CLIFFORD.

*Somewhere in France,*

*November 3, 1916.*

DEAR RAE,

I received your letter of September 24 a few days ago. I am sorry you never received any acknowledgment of the handkerchief you sent me on my birthday. I feel sure I sent one. In any case, I was glad to hear from you and to receive the handkerchief, which is always a welcome gift.

I am writing this letter in a dugout within three hundred yards of the Germans. It is a very quiet part of the line. The Germans do not bother us much, and we do bother them very much. If they throw a trench-mortar bomb at us, we throw back five at them; so it does not pay Fritz to "start anything." The worst things to contend with are rats, mice, and mud. The dugout in which I am writing is inhabited by no rats, four officers, and forty-six mice. The mud outside surpasses anything you can imagine. We are plastered with mud day and night. I had a bath two days ago, and will have another in about two weeks if all goes well. I enjoy baths.

You ask what my weight is—I have not been weighed for some time, but I imagine I

weigh about 156. I am a good deal heavier than when I left home.

The rations for tomorrow have just been brought up, and the Q. M. S. (Ned will tell you what the initials stand for) tells me there are two parcels for me; so I am anxiously waiting for them to be delivered to me. All the trenches have names, like streets, with signboards at the intersections. Otherwise one would lose his way, as there are trenches, communication-trenches, and saps running in all directions.

I must close now. There is really not much I can say in a letter from here. Write soon, as I am always glad to hear from you.

Affectionately,

CLIFFORD.

*France, November 4, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

In my letter two days ago I did not mention two or three of the most welcome things in your box. One is the book "Servitude et Grandeur Militaires," which I shall read with great interest when we return to billets. Another is the ink tablets which will be very useful. The fish paste I shall keep as an emergency ration to eke out the diet of "bully-beef" (*i. e.*, canned

corn beef) and hard tack to which we are sometimes reduced.

Last night I received a nice long letter from George. He hopes you will be able to visit him when you go to Hamilton. I hope so too, as I know you have been working hard and need a rest. Sometimes I feel that a peaceful academic life is very desirable, and at other times I wonder if I will ever be able to settle down to such an existence after moving about so much this last year and having so many strange and exciting experiences.

Everything has been going well since last I wrote. I have good nerves, good health, and a good Platoon Sergeant; so am just as well off out here as any one could be. I feel sorry for some who suffer from poor health, but when one is blest with a sound constitution—and a sense of humour—he can get on very well indeed.

To-day is a beautiful autumn day, with a high wind blowing the clouds across the sky, and doing its best to dry up the mud. We have had a great deal of rain lately. The soil here is clay in some spots and chalk in others. The clay is stickier, but the chalk marks one's clothes more; so there is little to choose be-

tween them. I seem to have a great attraction for both.

With love,  
CLIFFORD.

*November 5th, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I received yesterday your letter of October 15th. In it you spoke of a letter previously written and addressed to me which had been lost. This turned up to-day. It is dated September 29th, but the postmark on it was Cleveland, Oct. 18th. Some one must have carried it around with him for over two weeks.

It must have been quite a shock to you when your street-car killed the auto driver. It would have been to me a year ago, but now bloody death is a familiar sight. I am a different man to the one who enlisted in Montreal fourteen months ago. No one can go through the day's work out here and remain unchanged.

You say that probably several million men feel as I do—that it would be hard to return to humdrum civilian life. I think the majority of those who have been in the front line, especially in a busy sector, will be only too glad to return to civilian life. I may feel that way myself. It is not because the horrors of war

attract me that I feel I should like to remain in the army, but that military life is the only really practical line of activity of which I know anything or in which I have ever "made good." Of business I know nothing. Neither science nor medicine attracts me. It will be rather late to go into law. So the only alternatives are the army, and the academic life for which I was preparing. I feel that I have made good in the former, and could rise considerably higher by hard work. Quite likely, however, I shall return to my old ideas of a comfortable and interesting existence as a Professor and Archæologist.

Already, I have a fund of experiences to relate when I get back. I have seen severe open fighting, and am now enjoying peaceful trench warfare. There is a fairly regular exchange of a certain number of missiles of various sorts daily. We "stand to" for an hour at daybreak and again at dusk—the usual times for an attack. After "stand down" in the morning the men clean their rifles. After breakfast the morning "strafe" begins. Rifle grenades and trench mortars are fired by both sides, while there is more or less artillery fire, and ranging fire by machine guns—also a little sniping. About noon both sides seem to knock

off for lunch until it is time for the afternoon strafe. All night there is intermittent machine gun and rifle fire. Both sides have working parties at various places, behind the front line, and patrols and wiring parties out in front. Such is the day's routine. There is, of course, always the possibility of one side springing a mine or making a raid, and incessant watch must be kept to guard against these possibilities. The mental strain is sufficient to make every one glad when the relieving battalion appears, and we can go back for a rest and a bath.

I write very frankly in my letters to you, stating just how I feel at the moment. This is a sort of safety valve. I have to be very guarded in my letters to mother so as not to mention anything which is liable to cause unnecessary worry; so if you do not mind being used as an escape-valve for my feelings, I shall continue to write freely to you.

Remember me to Dr. Dunlop when you write to him. One thing he told me in his undergrad-class I have found very true—viz.: that by practice one can develop his power of seeing things clearly out of the corner of his eye.

I am writing this by candle light in a dug-

out in the support trench. It is about 10 P. M. Fritz is throwing "minnies" (minenwerfer bombs ) over our way, which is contrary to all precedent, and will provoke retaliation from our trench mortars. The opposing trench lines hereabout vary in their distance from each other from 30 to 500 yards.

Give my love to Mildred and the children, and tell them I shall pay them a visit some day next year.

Your brother

CLIFFORD.

*November 16, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have on hand your letter of October 19th, written in Hamilton, and your letter of the 21st, begun in Hamilton and finished in Westmount. We are back in comfortable billets again for a few days, and are enjoying a rest. The chief annoyance is a large battery in our back yard, so to speak, which fires frequently, and shakes the remains of the ruined house in which the company officers are billeted. Very few houses are left standing here.

I am glad you enjoyed your trip to Ontario, and met so many old friends. I always acknowledge letters and packages. You ask about some little military books sent some time



ago. I received them, and thank you for them —also for the set of dominoes in a letter a short time ago. There is a great deal of talking going on in this room, and the guns just outside are making a terrific row; so I cannot write very coherently.

The part of the line where we are now is very quiet by comparison with other parts. The lines are close together. One night I could hear a German coughing. He seemed to have a very bad cold, poor chap. The mud in the trenches is very deep. One part of the trench had water 18 inches deep in it, but no one had to stand there. We all have been issued with rubber boots which come away above the knees and keep one's feet dry, so the mud does not trouble us much.

I think I had better close now, and write again before long. There is such a confusion going on that I cannot write properly. This is just a note to let you know I am in good health and thinking of you.

Will write again soon.

With love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. Please keep enclosed notes from notebook, which was getting too bulky. Have plenty of paper for it at present.

*8th Battalion, Canadians,  
B. E. F., France,  
November 19, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Your letter of November 1st reached me last night. It contained a little pad, which I was glad to get. You ask again about my boxes. I always acknowledge them when I receive them. Often perhaps the box is delayed in reaching me, and my acknowledgment in reaching you. If you will put the date on the tag on each box I will send a "whizz-bang" (Field Post Card) acknowledging it at once. It is not always possible to send a letter immediately.

Yesterday we moved to a different village. We found the company officers' quarters would be very crowded, so I went out to look for other accommodation. We found one house where there was a large room occupied by only two officers. There was plenty of room for four, but the Frenchwoman, whose house it was, insisted that there were billets for only two there. Another officer and I went into the room to see for ourselves how much room there was. The woman followed us, screaming at us in a ferocious manner. My friend put his

coat on a table in the room. She threw it on the floor. I attempted to cross the room; she seized me by the arm and dragged me back very roughly. She was shrieking at us all the while. Finally, she routed us both, and we had to retreat leaving her in possession of the house. I do not know how many officers are supposed to be billeted in the room, nor do I care. Nothing would induce any of us to venture near that house again. One of the batmen had to go there on an errand. The woman picked up a pail of water to throw at him, but he retreated soon enough to avoid getting wet.

Experiences like this are very unusual (I am glad to say). Usually the people with whom we are billeted make us as comfortable as possible, and do not seem to mind the trouble. Of course, they have no say in the matter. A certain number of officers or men is quartered upon them, and they are paid accordingly, of course. Very frequently, in fact usually, the places where we are billeted are deserted, so far as civilian inhabitants go. Often they are in ruins, and we have to make ourselves comfortable in cellars or dugouts. It is very pleasant to get back to a place where there are civilians, and shops, even if it is only

a tumble down village like this one. We are less than five miles from the German lines—within easy artillery range if Fritz had shells to waste—and yet life goes on here much as usual. The village school across the street is apparently well attended.

I should like very much to receive a nice large rich fruit cake in one of your boxes—also a box of grapenuts.

Good-bye for the present, Molly dear.

With lots of love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. As my address will not be changing in the near future, I may not always repeat it in my letters.

Please give my love to Laura Amelia when you write to her. I am glad to hear that she is getting on well.

I am sending home my little stud case, as it is getting battered. In it are a few little souvenirs—an 11th Bn cap badge, and an 8th Bn ditto, a piece of the ruined cathedral at Ypres, a cartridge for firing a rifle grenade, and three bullets—the largest French, the smallest German, the other English. I think you have a 4th University Coy cap badge.

*8th Battalion, Canadians,  
B. E. F., France, November 19, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

This note is to wish you a very happy birthday, and many happy returns of it. I am afraid you will not get this until early in December, but I shall think of you when November 28th comes around, and shall hope to be home for your next birthday.

Today is Sunday, and as we are back in reserve at present, we had a church parade this morning. We had no music, having no battalion band, but apart from that the service was very good. We have a good padre—Capt. Harrison of B. C.—whose sermons, when we have a service, are very helpful. It usually happens that we are in the front line or in support on Sunday. The Chaplain has a good many opportunities to be useful—not only in holding services—formal parades and others—but also in looking up information about men who are reported “Missing,” etc. He conducts burial services, visits the sick, and looks after the men’s welfare in every way possible.

An interesting thing occurred last week when we were in the front line—a great flock

of wild geese flew over the lines from the German side to ours. I suppose they were on their way south for the winter. There must have been two or three hundred of them. As they crossed Fritz's line, there was no shooting, but as they reached our lines a fusillade began—men firing their rifles at the birds all down the line—without hitting any of them. The Germans became alarmed, thinking we were about to start something. They immediately opened fire with rifles and trench mortars, but soon quieted down again when they realised we were not going to attack. The geese were flying in a V-shaped formation, but when the shooting began the large flock broke up into about a dozen small flocks, each in a V shape, and all wheeled to the left and made off as regularly as a body of troops which had unexpectedly come under fire.

Please give my love to grandmother when next you write to her.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

P. S. There is very little news I can put in letters, but I shall have a great deal to tell you when I get home.

*November 25, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I received this evening your letter of November 8, containing the little safety pin for my collar. It is a beauty, and I am much pleased with it. You must think of me a great deal, mother, to send me so many nice presents. You will be pleased to know that I received two boxes in one day this week—one from you direct containing a lovely fruit cake. All the officers of the company enjoyed it very much. There were also some socks and other comforts, all of which were very acceptable. The same evening a box of delicious shortbread came from Glasgow. I like shortbread or shortcake (which is it?) very much indeed. If you will date your parcels, I can tell which ones you refer to in your letters. I do not know whether the socks which came with the fruit cake were those knitted by Mrs. Muir or not. If they were, please thank her very kindly for them.

Here is a little bit of good news for you, mother. I have reason to believe that, by the time you receive this letter, I shall have been in the trenches for the last time till after New Year's Day. So at Christmas time, you may

think of me as being safe and comfortable. I cannot explain more fully how and why I shall be out for so long, but I am confident it will be as I have said.

You ask whether I want scarfs or socks for the men. Socks I can always use, but scarfs are not so much in demand. Balaclava caps are more useful. I want one of them myself to sleep in (*i. e.*, to wear when I sleep). I have a very good batman now—a young English boy—who joined the battalion about the time I did. His people in England keep him pretty well supplied with comforts.

I must close now, Molly.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.



DECEMBER, 1916

Description of a Dugout—Poultry Running Wild—  
When He Blushed—Request for Maple Sugar—Happier at the Front than at Home as a Slacker—A Theatrical Company—"I Have a Motto"—Front Line Opinions of U. S. A.—A Cooking Experiment—A Christmas Love-Message—Military Decorations—The Farmer's Ruined Tree.

*December 1, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

A letter from you written September 1st has just arrived. Three months en route. It went to the 8th Battalion, then back to the base, then to the Entrenching Battalion, and finally here. My address is permanent at last, and so my mail will no longer be subject to such delays.

I wish you could see my present surroundings. I am in our Company Headquarters in the line—a dugout thirty feet underground with board floor, walls and roof. It was built by the French who originally held this part of the line. The room is about 8 feet wide, 15 feet long, and 6 feet high. The signallers oc-

cupy one corner of it with their telegraph and telephone instruments. A good deal of space is taken up with the timber props for the roof which makes the room seem smaller than it is. There are three entrances. One is continually banging one's head in coming in and out of these dugouts, so I always wear my steel helmet or "tin hat," which is really a splendid protection for the head against knocks of all sorts.

This part of the line is quiet enough for the sergeants and officers to be able to take turns on "trench duty"—that is in patrolling the front line to see that sentries, bombing posts, listening posts, machine gun crews, etc., are all attending to their business, and that everything is O. K. This is my night off, and so at 9.30 P. M. I am back in Company Headquarters writing this letter, and do not go on duty again until "Standto" in the morning.

Down underground here the air is rather heavy, while outdoors it is a clear frosty night. After being outdoors all day one sleeps very soundly in a warm dugout (this one *is* warm), so I feel that I had better turn in and sleep while I can.

Good night, mother dear. With love to all,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I may be going on leave before many

weeks pass. Imagine seven whole days in England!

*December 7, 1916.*

DEAR RAE,

This is in answer to your letter of November 12, received a few days ago, and also to thank you for the two lovely handkerchiefs which I received last night. The latter will be very useful as I always need handkerchiefs.

We have been very fortunate as a battalion recently with regard to the weather. It always rains when we are back in billets, and stays fine when we are in the trenches. If it must rain, this is how we would have the rain schedule arranged. The battalion that relieves us periodically probably does not like it so well.

I shall have hundreds of interesting things to tell you when I get home, but for most of them you will have to wait until then, as we are not allowed to describe many things in our letters.

We are at present a few miles back of the line living in caves and dugouts in a wood. There are no civilians about here, and the poultry from deserted farms is running wild in the woods. The officers' cook yesterday

shot four wild hens with his rifle and, gave us an elegant supper.

I am lying in a little bunk in a dugout ten or twelve feet underground and writing by candlelight, so if the writing is not good you will have to excuse it.

I have to get up early to-morrow, so had better close now.

Affectionately,  
CLIFFORD.

*December 8, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have sent you a package of Christmas cards addressed to various people. Will you please see that they are all forwarded? I am not sending any Christmas presents this year. One has not much opportunity to buy things which it would be worth while to send. If I go to England on leave I shall take a few souvenirs with me, but shall have to leave them there in my trunk, as I cannot send them home by mail.

Your box of November 6th reached me safely a few days ago. The socks, chocolate, carboic salve, etc., were all acceptable, and, I blush as I write the words, the insect powder has already proved its usefulness.

I will tell you two luxuries which I should be glad to receive some day—a box of grape-nuts, and a small can or bottle of maple sugar. If you send the latter (or a tin of maple-ene, a mixture from which maple syrup can be made—I think I have spelled the name correctly) I shall get our cook to make some pancakes, and we shall have a real home-like dish.

Molly dear, I hope you will have a very happy Christmas. Of course, I should love to be at home, but yet I am happier here than I would be if I had remained at home. Next year I hope to be home. One never knows what will happen. I have been wonderfully fortunate hitherto. Next year, who can tell what kind of a job I shall have or where I shall be?

Take care of yourself, and take a nap every afternoon so that you will be well and strong when I come home again.

With oceans of love,

CLIFFORD.

*December 8, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

Just a note to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May 1917 be the happiest and most encouraging year of your

pastorate in Westmount. On Christmas Day, wherever I may be, I shall be home in spirit, and shall pray that Christmas 1917 may find me at home in body too.

I am sending to each member of the family one of the Christmas cards which the 8th officers have had printed. I am sending one to grandmother too. I hope she will receive it safely.

I am in splendid health and am having many interesting experiences, which it will be a great pleasure to relate when I get home. Perhaps when I go to England on leave I may write more fully about some of my experiences than I can out here.

Hoping you are in the best of health, and that everything is going well at home and in the church,

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD A. WELLS.

*December 18, 1916.*

MY DARLING MOTHER,

The parcel containing the two polo-caps and "John Inglesant" arrived yesterday. The former is just the thing to wear when asleep when it is cold, and will also be a good thing,

I believe, to wear under my steel helmet. The book is just the kind I want, a long, interesting novel. It is one of the great novels in the English language although it is not very well known. I am looking forward to reading it with eagerness.

Your letter of November 21 is at hand. I am glad you like the watch holder and the photos. In the photographs I have not my Black Devil collar badges. Some day I shall have another taken just to show my badges, which I have received from England since I had the photos taken.

I have been having a very Christmas-y time this last week. I received a lovely large box from Emma, a cake from Mr. and Mrs. McTavish, a box from Miss Sims, my old teacher at Rosedale school. She must have received my address from another boy from Rosedale whom I met at Shorncliffe, and again out here not long ago.

I also received a letter from Mary, saying she had sent me a parcel, and one from Katherine signed "Kicking Katherine the Kolicky Kid." She tells me that copies of some of my letters are read to the Current Events class at her school. What an awful responsibility I am incurring in writing letters! Please be

very careful in the selections of which you make copies for circulation.

I see by referring to your letter that the polo-caps are from Mrs. Scott. Thank her very kindly for them. The tube of vaseline of which you spoke did not come with them. I should like some stuff for my hair. I told you I had it cut off short. Since then it has grown out long again, but without the slight inclination to part which it used to have.

I paid a visit to the P. P. C. L. I. not long ago, and had supper with my friend Ford. I met several of the 4th University Company, including Harry Nesbit, who wished to be remembered to you and father. I forgot that Reggie Jones is back with the battalion, and so failed to ask for him. The P. P. C. L. I. have a theatrical party, about 8 men, who do nothing else but give entertainments to the battalion when out of the line, and to other battalions when the Pats are in the line. I went to the entertainment the night I was with the battalion. It was really splendid. It runs two nights whenever the battalion comes out of the line. Half the battalion parades each night for the entertainment, otherwise every one would try to go both nights. The men enjoy it immensely. The singing and acting



were really excellent. One song in particular you would have enjoyed. It was sung by a man wearing his full equipment—rifle, bayonet, entrenching tool, haversack, pack, water-bottle, rubber boots slung over his shoulder, gas helmet, steel helmet, etc. He came on the stage looking as tired, bored, unhappy, and disgusted as any one could, and sang a song the burden of which was,

“I have a motto—  
Always merry and bright.”

The dismal expression of countenance and voice with which he sang made it extremely funny, and he was encored again and again.

I must close now, Molly dear.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*December 22, 1916.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I am sitting in a room in a farm house on the outskirts of a little village with a long winter evening before me, part of which I shall devote to answering your letter of Nov. 26th, which reached me to-day. I am in charge of the only troops billeted in this particular village, and

so am in a position of solitary grandeur and unwonted independence. This, of course, is in the course of a short respite from the trenches.

The chocolates made by Miss Esther Ward have not reached me as yet. I shall acknowledge them gladly when they come.

You ask my opinion as to the "feeling among intelligent (sic!) officers as to the attitude of the U. S. A." I must preface my answer with the remark that when one is at the front he has little time or inclination for study or discussion of the world situation in general, and indeed is liable to know less of, and feel less concern in, the general situation than one who is not engaged in the war so actively. Consequently, I do not believe there is any very strong feeling one way or the other about the attitude of the States, especially as it (or they, whichever is correct) appears rather negligible as a military potentiality in Europe in any case.

Moreover I must admit that my own feeling is most probably an important factor in forming an opinion as to what the general feeling is. With this preface I shall try to answer your question.

To understand the feeling toward the U. S. A. you must remember our profound convic-

tion that the cause of the Allies is the cause of civilisation, and that ultimate defeat for the Allies would sooner or later prove disastrous to the U. S. A. This we think should be evident to every intelligent American. Consequently there cannot but be a slight feeling of resentment that the States should apparently regard this as a private European war, that she should apparently regard English regulations which may slightly inconvenience American commerce in the same light as Germany's flagrant offenses against international law, that she should be content as a nation to rake in untold wealth while the Allies expend not only riches but their best blood in defense of principles the vindication of which should concern the U. S. as much as them. True, the U. S. has sent us lots of munitions, but of notoriously bad quality and at exorbitant prices. The poor quality I know from my own observation of more than one kind of munition. For any assistance which American supplies have given us, we thank the navy which enabled them to be brought to us, and not any kind feeling on the part of the U. S. A.

To this feeling of resentment there is added a slight feeling of contempt, due to the President's evident preference for "verba non acta,"

to the tame manner in which the country has submitted to the murder of her citizens on the high seas, and to her failure to protest against many of Germany's outrages. The fact that a country is "too proud to fight," with all that ever-memorable expression connotes from our point of view, cannot be readily forgotten by those who are doing the fighting for her as well as for themselves.

The foregoing is the best answer I can give to your query. What I have written is largely my own opinion. As I said before, the general aspects of the war are very little discussed in the trenches, and one seldom has an opportunity to associate with officers other than those of his own unit.

There is, of course, a sprinkling of Americans in the Canadian Army. In most cases they are the sons of British parents, or Britishers who happened to be resident in the States. What bona fide Americans there are, are in general either adventurers or U. S. citizens honestly dissatisfied with the neutrality of their country. The total number of Americans in the Canadian Army is, I have read in a New York paper, much less than the number of Canadians who fought for the North in the American Civil War.

To change the subject—you speak of a meeting of the A. A. A. S. I wonder what these initials stand for. The only thing they suggest to me is "American Anti-Aircraft Society," which can scarcely be correct.

You ask for a souvenir of the battlefield. Certain articles only can be taken as souvenirs. German rifles and revolvers are taboo, although they are sometimes smuggled across to Blighty. I carried a little German novel that I picked up in a captured trench for some time, but finally threw it away. That is the fate of most souvenirs. However, I am saving a few little things which may be of interest in the future, and shall have something for you.

I was reported wounded some time ago. In the course of a certain "liveliness" in No Man's Land one night, I was hit on the leg just below the knee by a piece of a German hand grenade. The piece that hit me must have struck on a flat side, and moreover the force of the blow was broken by the buckles of my high boots, and so only a bruise resulted. It made me limp a good deal, however, and I had quite a time getting back to our trench.

I have had more exciting and interesting experiences than I could describe in a hundred letters. There are many things that are not

unpleasant after one gets used to them, and many that are unspeakably monotonous under any circumstances. However, it's all in the game, and the game is bound to end some day.

The evening is passing quickly and I must soon turn in.

With love to Mildred and the children,  
As ever,

CLIFF.

*France, December 22, 1916.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Nearly Christmas time again. I hope everything will be pleasant and everybody happy at home on Christmas Day. Out here we have made elaborate preparations for a fine Christmas Dinner for the men on December 25, and for the officers three days later. You may be sure it will be a memorable day for most of them. For some it is the second Christmas in France, the third away from home.

At present I am not with the Battalion, but am in charge of a party doing some work quite a distance from the Battalion. We are billeted in a very squalid little village in a very pretty little valley. The men of my party are the only troops in the village. I have a large room in a farm house with a bed—the first real bed I

have slept in since I came to France. During the few days of my sojourn here I am as independent as a Colonel in command of a battalion, and am enjoying being the boss for a change. I am hoping to have motor lorries to take us back to the Battalion for Christmas Day.

I took a great responsibility upon myself to-night. The cooks of my party are rather inexperienced. They have on hand to-night some fresh vegetables, some tins of baked beans, and some tins of Macconachie (tinned Irish stew). The two latter require to be heated only before being eaten, while the vegetables (turnips and cabbage) of course require a thorough cooking. We have no facilities for cooking the three things separately, so I have told the cooks to cook the vegetables, and then add both the beans and the Macconachie. They are very unwilling to mix the three ingredients in this manner, but I cannot see why the result should not be very good indeed. As I do not want to have a sick party on my hands, I am waiting anxiously for the result of the experiment.

Please, mother, be very careful in the selections you make from my letters to send around to the different members of the family. Lots

of things that I write, for one reason or another, I would rather not have sent around. I leave it all to "your superior judgment"—to use one of your own expressions.

With much love, mother darling,

CLIFFORD.

MOLLY DARLING,

Just a short note for yourself. Don't be worrying about me, and getting tired. I like to think that you are happy and that things are going well at home. I am perfectly well, and would be perfectly happy, except for being a little homesick sometimes, if I thought you were all well and happy at home.

I have not been in action lately, and may not be for some time. So cheer up. The favourite song with the men at present is: "Pack all your troubles in your old kit bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile." That's what we try to do, and I hope you do too. I will be home again before very long, and will want a hot bath as soon as I get there.

Good-bye, mother dearest.

With lots of love,

Your son,

CLIFFORD.



*Christmas Day, 1916, France.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

My first and I trust my last Christmas in France! May the war be over next year, and the whole family together once more when Christmas 1917 shall arrive.

I am home in spirit to-day and can picture the various happenings. I hope you are having a goose for dinner, and bread sauce, and plum pudding, and that your famous red cherries are in evidence (the ones you won't let us eat). It is Rae's turn to distribute the presents. Next year I shall take that duty upon myself.

I am in safe and comfortable surroundings to-day, as I told you in a letter some time ago, I expected to be. I am sorry to have to be away from home on Christmas Day, but glad that I was able to come over here.

With oceans of love, Molly dear,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. Your letter of December 1, and father's card, reached me last night—Christmas Eve.

I do not think I can get any more of the photos I had taken when on the machine-gun course, but I shall be going on leave soon and shall have some more nice cheap ones taken.

CLIFF.

*Dec. 25, 1916.*

MY DEAR RAE,

Just a note to thank you for the two *Munsey Magazines* which you sent and for two or three other books which arrived in the same mail. I refer to "Daniel Deronda," "Baron Münchausen," and "Woodstock." I believe you sent them all. Thanks very much. I have read one of the books already, and shall pass it on to a friend. The same with the others when I finish them.

I hope you are still fond of your work at the library, and that you are enjoying the best of health.

As ever,

CLIFFORD.

A Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year.

Write whenever you can.

*December 27, 1916.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I received your most interesting letter of Dec. 5th this morning, and was pleased to get the news of the church and of yourself.

Long ago, in a letter, I asked you to make a contribution to general church expenses out

of my assigned pay. Did you receive this letter? I like to feel that I am doing my bit at home as well as out here.

I wish I were home to enjoy Mr. Reddish's oysters. For Mr. Edmonds to send apples to Canada is rather like sending coals to Newcastle. By the way, I sent a Christmas card to each of the above. Mr. Edmonds has sent me several letters, and Mr. Reddish has always been a friend of mine.

Along with your letter this morning came one from mother written at Knowlton, July 23, and one from Ned dated Dec. 6th. You enquire about the various decorations. The Victoria Cross is of course the highest honour, and is awarded without reference to rank for conspicuous bravery under fire. The D. S. O. is awarded to officers only, and is, as the name implies, a recognition of distinguished or efficient service, not necessarily under fire or even in the field. The D. C. M. is a corresponding decoration awarded to N. C. O.'s or men. The Military Cross is a decoration given to officers for good work on the field of battle, and the M. M. (for N. C. O. and men) is supposed to correspond to it. Personally, I should consider the D. S. O. and D. C. M. higher honours than the M. C. and M. M., but many do not

think so, as there have been cases where the former decorations have been given for work performed far out of range of the enemy's guns, and apparently of no very great merit. The latter implies the recipient's presence on the field of battle. To illustrate the difference between the two—a Colonel might receive the D. S. O. for handling his battalion in an exceptionally efficient manner during a battle while he himself was in a place of comparative safety. A subaltern of my acquaintance received the M. C. for wiping out a German machine gun crew single handed. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same distinction would apply to D. C. M. and M. M. A D. S. O. is higher than a D. C. M. and a M. C. than a M. M. only insofar as the work of an officer is of a more difficult and responsible nature than that of a Pte.

I am enjoying a good deal of responsibility at present. In the course of a short respite from the trenches, I am in charge of a party doing some work quite a distance from the battalion. We are billeted in a little village. We are the only troops here. I issue orders every night as though I were commanding a battalion. I have another officer as 2nd in command.

This morning a farmer came to my head-

quarters and stated that some of the men were engaged in chopping up one of his trees for firewood. The tree had been cut down to be sawn into planks. I found his story was correct, and had to pay for the tree (only 10 francs) out of my own pocket. I am getting even with the men this afternoon. I told them that, as they had ruined the tree and made me pay for it, they would have to bring it down to the billet and cut it all up for firewood for the cooks. A dozen men have been working for an hour and a half already, and have advanced about 100 of the 300 yards they have to go. By the time they have finished their job they will have learned that they should use a good deal of discretion in "rustling" firewood.

I expect to go on leave shortly after I return to the Battalion. When I return to France, I shall know exactly what to bring and what not to bring. I shall leave a few souvenirs in my trunk in England. The fewer things one has to carry the better.

Wishing you a very happy New Year, I remain,

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

JANUARY, 1917

Starting for 10 Days' Leave in England—An Interesting Naval Surgeon—Visiting in London—A Remarkable Experience in No Man's Land—Germans Risking Their Lives to Care for Canadian Wounded—"Safe Back in the Trenches"—Ferry Service in a Flooded Town.

*Jan. 3, 1917.*

DEAREST MOLLY,

Just a note to tell you I am going on 10 days' leave to England to-morrow. Mere words fail to express all that this means after five months in France.

I received two parcels to-night, one containing a Balaclava Helmet—just what I needed—cake, nail brush, etc., from you, and one from Glasgow from the church. Thank you very much for yours, Molly. You always send the things I want. I was much pleased with the little circular in the parcel from the church. It is very instructive, and the little photos make it attractive.

Goodnight, Molly dear. I shall write a nice long letter from England.

With love,  
CLIFFORD.

*January 6, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

I am in Blighty on leave, and am enjoying myself greatly, although I find it just a little bit lonely, as I know so few people in England. I am thinking of spending a few days of my leave in Devon, Cornwall, and that part of the country—a region I have long wanted to visit.

I had a most interesting journey from the Battalion to London. I started one evening with a small party of men going on leave from different battalions. Usually on night marches the rear of a party is in danger of getting out of touch with the front, but on this occasion there was no trouble of that sort. At the entraining point I met Higgins, whose Platoon Sergeant I used to be. He is now with the C. F. A. and was also going on leave. In our compartment on the train there were two infantry officers, one artillery officer, and one Royal Flying Corps officer. We had a most interesting time discussing our various jobs. We entrained at 1 A. M. and reached the port of embarkation about 5 o'clock A. M. The leave boat sailed about three hours later, and made fast time across the Channel. I stayed in Folkestone the rest of the day, and visited

friends in the 11th Reserve Battalion. Last night I came on to London. Most of the way the only other occupant of the compartment was a Naval Officer (surgeon). He was one of the most interesting men I have ever met, a graduate of Edinburgh University, and well acquainted, both personally and professionally, with various men of Johns Hopkins and other American and Canadian Medical Schools. He had been entertained by President Wilson at Princeton, and had travelled widely in America. In the Navy, he had been all over the world. His experiences in the navy were intensely interesting. His ship goes to sea for sixty days at a time, and is not allowed to return to port under any circumstances during that period. This is contrary to the practice of the other European navies, which allow their ships to return to port to escape the worst of the winter gales, and which do not send them out when the weather is too bad. He explained various points about naval gunnery which had puzzled me, and many other things which I had never thought of. On my side, I was able to tell him about life in the trenches. Time passed quickly, and we were soon at Charing Cross. Last night I had a Turkish bath, and



so I feel quite clean for the first time in months.

To-day I spent in making various purchases for myself, and in executing a few commissions for some of those whom I left behind in France.

I wrote to you on Dec. 30, but I have just found the letter which I had forgotten to post. In it I acknowledged receipt of an exceptionally nice box from Glasgow from you. Just before I left France, a similar box from the church arrived. I also spoke of having received a letter from "Gretchen Somerville Jones," apparently a second cousin. It was written July 16. She spoke of her mother having just returned from visiting you. I sent a note in reply.

My letters are written on all sorts and shapes of paper. If they do not fit in the portfolio in which you keep them, I shall try to secure greater uniformity. Usually it is difficult to get good note paper, and I have to use whatever is available.

Good night, mother dear. I hope everything is going well with you.

CLIFFORD.

January 6, 1917.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I received your letter of Dec. 11 just before leaving France, and thank you for forwarding the wedding invitation.

I have been receiving with more or less regularity the *Montreal Standard* and the *N. Y. Times* which you send me. I am glad to have them. More than once I have recognised places pictured in the pictorial section of the *Standard*. I enjoy many of the *Times'* articles, too. The papers are passed on when I have read them.

I have also received some *Literary Digests* from you, for which I thank you. Since receiving the last one from you, Emma has written me that she is giving me a subscription to the *Literary Digest* for the New Year. If you will continue to send me the *N. Y. Times*, and the *Standard*, I shall be able to keep well in touch with trans-Atlantic events.

I was much pleased to hear of the success of the every member canvass of which you spoke in your letter. It is a splendid response for war-time. I hope with you that there will soon be evidence of a general eagerness to undertake the building of a new church.

This reminds me of the naval surgeon of whom I speak in my letter to mother. He was apparently one of the most eminent surgeons in the Naval Medical Service, and a man of great experience and intelligence. Speaking of the capture of Roger Casement led to a discussion of the state of Ireland. He told me some things about the state of the peasants there which were almost incredible. When I asked him the reason, he put a great part of the blame on the priests and their meddling in politics, or rather their control of politics. He was of the opinion that the interference of the church with affairs of state was a great mistake. Imagine my surprise at learning a little later that he was a Roman Catholic. I remarked that the separation of church and state was an unusual doctrine for a Catholic to hold to. He admitted this, but said that his opinion was based on his own observations in different countries, and that he was in favour of absolute separation of church and state in England and everywhere else. Sound Baptist doctrine from a Scotch Roman Catholic!

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

*January 14, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

Early to-morrow morning I leave for France again. My ten days have passed very quickly and happily, although it is not like a visit home. When I am "safe back in the trenches" again, I will write and tell you about my leave.

In one of my letters a long time ago, I spoke of a remarkable experience which I had. Briefly, it was this. I met a German in No Man's Land one morning. He was a stretcher bearer and carried a Red Cross Flag. He was out on the same errand as I—looking for wounded. He offered to guide me to a number of "verwundete Engländer," lying in various shell holes. He did so, and I got a stretcher party (six men) and brought them all in—nearly twenty in all,—with the assistance of five other German stretcher bearers. The Germans brought the wounded to a point about midway between the lines, and my men carried them the rest of the way. Sometimes I had a German and a Canadian carrying a stretcher between them. When all the wounded in sight had been brought in, the Germans returned to their trench and we to ours. All

the while the German Artillery and ours were pounding away, and we were really safer between the lines than in either. The Germans lent me one of their stretchers, on which we brought in a wounded man, and then returned it to them. The German in charge told me he was an Alsatian, which spoke volumes. He belonged to the Medical Corps, and hence was a non-combatant, I presume. When no other Germans were around, he would speak to me in *French*. He did not speak English at all. The skill of the Germans in binding up the wounded, their strength and endurance in the exhausting work of carrying stretchers over ground which was one mass of shell-holes, and their quiet disregard of stray shells and the possibility of being sniped from our lines, commanded my highest admiration. I asked them how long the war would last. One said two years, one nine months, the rest about a year. They seemed to think they would not be defeated. They said their dressing-stations would be unable to cope with the number of wounded and besides that our artillery fire was so terrific they could not take out the wounded. They treated me with great respect, calling me "Herr Leutnant." We saluted before parting. Various other details of the incident I

shall give you when I return home. One of my men was slightly wounded by a piece of shrapnel, otherwise we had no casualties. The wounded men whom we brought in had all been lying out there for three days.

For various reasons, I do not want you to say much about this incident,—at least outside of the immediate family. It all happened months ago. The courage and humanity of the Germans under the circumstances was very remarkable. They risked their lives to rescue our wounded, when they could not even make prisoners of them, and at a time when our bombardment of their positions passed description. I have very special reasons for not wanting you to say much about the occurrence, but thought that, as I had alluded to it in a letter at the time, you would be interested to learn what happened.

I must close now, Molly.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*Jan. 16, 1917.*

MY DEAR RAE,

I have received your letter of December 27, your Christmas card, and your tin of candy. Thank you very much for remembering me so well. The candy is delicious. I enjoyed the book by Marchant which you sent some time ago.

I hope you had a pleasant trip to the capital of Canada. I have just returned from a most enjoyable visit to the capital of the Empire. And now both of us have to settle down to hard work again.

The mail closes this evening and so I must close too.

Wishing you a very happy New Year, I remain,

Your affectionate brother,  
CLIFFORD.

*January 17, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

An old lady said to her son as he was returning from leave, "Write and let me know when you are safe back in the trenches." I am safe back—not in the trenches, but in billets with the Battalion. The interesting thing is that I am not going to stay here long, but am to be sent on a month's course very soon. This will supply some deficiencies in my training, and besides is quite an honour. Just before I went away, the subalterns were given a long list of questions on tactics, etc., to answer. It was on the basis of my answers that I was selected for the course—not as needing it most, but as being qualified for an advanced course of general training. If the time ever comes for me to be promoted, I shall be better qualified as the result of this course.

When I left this town to go on leave, part of the town had been under water for some days, owing to the overflowing of the river. A company of Engineers got out their pontoons and ran a ferry service down one of the main streets where the water was from four to ten feet deep. Many of the civilians were confined to the second story of their houses, and some



of the troops had to move out of their billets into others farther up the hill. When I got back from leave the water had subsided, and had left a thick deposit of mud everywhere.

In England I had a delightful rest. I visited Mrs. Wigfield a couple of times. She always makes me feel at home. London had changed very little since I was last there. The only evidences of food shortage were a slight stinginess in the allowance of sugar at restaurants and a restriction in the number of courses which officers are allowed to order for a meal in a restaurant or hotel.

You had better address letters which you post before Feb. 10 to Lieut. C. A. Wells (8th Can. Inf. Bat.), Care of First Army School of Instruction, A. P. O. 3, France.

This will cause them to reach me more promptly.

Things are going well. There is nothing much of interest to tell you.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

This peculiar notepaper is the only kind I could buy here. I have received the *Standard* of Dec. 16 and Dec. 9, also the *N. Y. Times* of Dec. 10, for which please thank father.

*January 24, 1917.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I am at the school of which I spoke in my last letter. I left the Battalion one night at 7.30, and had a ride of about an hour. It was pitch dark and the horse kept slipping on the patches of ice in the road, and people on foot kept popping out of the darkness right under the horse's nose all the time, so that I was quite relieved when that part of the journey was over. Then a ride of an hour and a half in a bus brought me to the railway station. The train was ten hours late, and then took 12 hours for a five hour journey. Finally another bus ride brought me to the school, where I was speedily assigned to a comfortable billet, and had a good sleep. I am enjoying the work. I am outdoors all day. The preliminary work is of an elementary nature, but later on we shall have manœuvres and other exercises on a large scale. The weather at present is like Canadian winter weather,—cold and clear.

My instructor is a Captain of the Irish Rifles. His nationality is proclaimed by the shamrock on his collar, the harp on his cap, and the brogue on his tongue. I like him very

much, which is fortunate, as I shall be under his instruction for a month or more.

I hope you are well, mother dear, and that everything is "jake" at home. "Jake" is the ordinary expression in the Canadian Army for "all right" or "correct." It comes from the far west, but I do not know its origin.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

FEBRUARY, 1917

The American Declaration of War—The First B. E. F.  
—Memories of London—A Narrow Gauge Car Line  
at Boulogne—Description of a Visit to the Front Line  
—A Peaceful and Luxurious Kind of Warfare—  
Silent German Guns.

*February 4, 1917.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have two of your letters to answer—dated Jan. 4 and Jan. 9. The *Standard* and *N. Y. Times* are reaching me fairly regularly, and are always appreciated when they come.

We are not often near the 60th Battalion, which is in a different division, and so I have never met Major Ralston. If ever I have a chance I shall look him up.

I am still at the school of which I spoke in a previous letter, so have little news to give. They keep us pretty busy here, but the work is varied, and the instructors are considerate; so it is really a pleasant change from "up the line." The officers in charge are old Regular officers, and things are run like clockwork, not a moment of the day wasted. You will find me

a very business-like person when the war is over.

Rumours have reached us that the U. S. A. has declared war on Germany. It is hard to believe, following so close upon President Wilson's "Peace without victory" speech, although Germany's latest must be enough to rouse even the average American. Personally, I sincerely hope the States will take no active part in the war. As they have kept out of it so long, let them know that we can finish our undertaking without their help. On the other hand, I should like to see them disgorge some of the wealth they have acquired since the beginning of the war. Possibly Germany will lie down after gaining the hostility of the whole world. She must realise that she is in for a terrible thrashing this summer. The preparations for this year's campaign are stupendous. The stores of ammunition are colossal, and the reserves of men very great. There will be such fighting as the world never saw before.

I am very glad,—more so than I can tell,—that I enlisted when I did. It seemed at the time as though the war had been going on for a long while. I have a high respect for the men who came out before me, and went

through the second battle of Ypres, and Givenchy, and other "shows" in which the Canadians took part. The first B. E. F. is a tradition out here. No finer body of men, no better trained or better disciplined troops, ever fought anywhere. Still, the majority of the officers of my Battalion at the present time came to France after I did, and most of them left Canada months after me, so that I am quite an old timer in comparison with most of them. I have moreover had some exceptionally interesting experiences since I have been out. One of them I described in a recent letter. How many things I shall have to tell you when I get home!

Early rising is compulsory here, and I find early going to bed advisable. So as it is nearly ten o'clock, I had better close.

Your affectionate son,

CLIFFORD.

I was very sorry to hear of the death of Elliot Scott at Courcellette. I was in the place shortly after its capture. My friend Harvey was also killed near there.

(Note by O. C. S. W. Harvey, Millet and Wells were the three sergeants of the 4th University Company who were promoted to Lieutenancies the last of January, 1916.)

*Feb. 6, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

I have received your letter of January 3, and also two boxes. One of the latter contained some delicious shortcake, which I enjoyed very much. The other held a fruit cake, scarf, chocolate, and other nice things. There was in it a card with the name Mrs. Grafftey. This has puzzled me. I do not know how much or what part of the contents is from her, and so I cannot very well write and thank her. I might thank her for the wrong things. The box was evidently from you, and I thank you very much for it. I love to get things from you. If you will tell me what Mrs. Grafftey contributed, I shall write to her. The card was dislocated from its place as I opened the box, and so I cannot tell what it went with. By the way, who is Mrs. Grafftey? The nearest I can come to it is Virginia Graef.

My mail is somewhat delayed owing to my being away from the Battalion. The only letter from you which has reached me here as yet is that of Jan. 3. I am hoping for some more this evening.

Wednesday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday are holidays here at the school.

This afternoon (Wednesday) I have been sitting by the stove in the mess, reading, studying, and dozing. We have just had afternoon tea. I made some toast at the fire, and enjoyed it. I make very good toast.

You ask about London. The streets are very dark at night. Few street lights are in use, and those that are, are very dim. I did not see any luminous hats, but some men and women wear luminous buttons on their lapels, and so avoid colliding with other pedestrians. In the daytime things look much as they used to. Museums and picture galleries are mostly closed, but restaurants and places of amusement are open. Taxicabs and busses are less numerous than they used to be, restaurants are stingy with their sugar, officers can order only 2-course breakfasts and luncheons, and 3-course dinners. Many hotels have been taken over by the government for various purposes. The most striking difference from pre-war conditions is of course the darkness of the streets at night. Automobiles, busses, etc., carry very dim lights. So traffic is really dangerous at night.

Last Saturday afternoon I went into Boulogne, about 10 miles away. There is a funny little narrow gauge electric car line running



in. As the car was going up a long hill, we came to a place where, for some reason which Ned could explain, it was necessary to pull the trolley off the wire and coast past a certain contrivance on the wire. The conductorette pulled the trolley down too soon, and the car, which was crowded, stopped before crossing the dead spot in the wire, and immediately started backwards down the hill. The trolley swung out to one side, and the woman was too excited to pull it in, so it came in contact with a telegraph post and doubled up into a bow. Finally some of the officers on the trailer manned the brakes and succeeded in stopping the car. The motor man and the conductor-woman argued for 10 minutes as to who was to blame, and then proceeded to take the trolley pole off. About a dozen of us managed to straighten it out in about half an hour, and then we proceeded again. The car was so heavily loaded that the brakes controlled by the motorman were not sufficient to check its speed going down hill, and we had a most exciting trip. A couple of officers manned the brakes on the trailer, but even so we went down-hill at a tremendous speed, and barely crawled up hill. In town I had a nice hot bath, hair cut,

etc., and we came back to the school without adventure.

The cake of carbolic soap arrived O. K., and may be useful in the future. I have no immediate need for it, I am glad to say.

There is no real news in this letter. It is just a little chat with you, Molly dear. Lots of love,  
CLIFFORD.

*February 18, 1917.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have four of your letters to answer. One is that of Aug. 9,—the one that was returned from the Dead Letter Office. The others are dated December 29, January 18, and January 25. In one of them you ask about the result of mixing the various rations together in one grand stew. I had forgotten the incident, but remember now that it was a great success. Every one enjoyed the conglomeration, and no one was sick.

The work at the school is very interesting. It is just the kind of course I needed. Most of my military training, except for special Bombing and Machine-gun courses, has consisted of practical experience. Experience is a good teacher, but I am always interested in the theory of things, and can do the practical

things better when I understand their theoretical side. (This is not a good sentence.)

I received a long letter from Emma a few days ago. She always writes interesting letters.

After some weeks of cold weather a thaw has come, and the snow is fast disappearing. This is a very pretty part of the country. There are pine forests all around us. The school is located on what was a famous golf links before the war. There is an interesting old chateau—once a strong fortress—the ruins of which I pass every day.

I hope you are well, and taking good care of yourself. Don't work too hard.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

*February 27, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

Here I am safe back with the Battalion again. I found it in a new part of the line, where I have never been before. I am staying out of the trenches this trip, but paid a visit to the front line to-day, where I was conducted around by one of my brother officers. In general, I feel it to be so hopeless to try to describe what "the front" is like, that I sel-

dom attempt it. It occurs to me that to relate just what I saw and heard to-day would be interesting to you. As we do not expect to go into this immediate frontage next time, I was able to look at things to-day from a more detached, non-professional point of view than I usually can,—more as a war correspondent might,—to disregard essential details such as the exact number of sentries, dugouts, bombing posts, saps, etc., and to look at the war generally as a spectator and not as a participant.

About 9 o'clock I left the village where I am billeted with a few other officers who are having their turn "out of the trenches," and proceeded toward the front line three miles away. With regard to the village, in spite of its closeness to the line, and in spite of the fact that it bristles with artillery which fires every night, it is remarkable that it is full of civilian inhabitants. Fritz used to shell it, but does so very seldom now. He has no direct observation on it, and apparently does not wish to waste shells when he cannot observe their exact effect.

As I left the village, I found it protected by barbed wire and trenches. As I proceeded down the road, occasional shells whistled overhead toward Fritz. I walked down the road,

as I saw others doing so ahead of me, although a winding communication trench led from the outskirts of the village to the front line. After about half an hour's walk, as I neared the crest of a slight ridge, I entered the trench, as I saw the others doing. Soon I was in the dugout where my Company had its Headquarters. The Company was "in support," in the support trench a quarter of a mile behind the front line. I stayed there till about one o'clock, learning what had happened during my absence and talking about my course. Then, after lunch, I went up to the front line with one of the officers.

The most interesting feature about the battalion frontage is that it runs through what was once a village. There are ruined houses behind our trenches, in No Man's Land, and behind the German lines. Every building which might have given good observation has been levelled by artillery fire, but some houses of no tactical importance are intact, on both sides of the line. The men had brought stoves, etc., from these houses and had made their dugouts quite comfortable.

Behind the German lines a few miles away, there is a city, apparently inhabited and doing business. With the aid of glasses, I was able

to make out the time,—ten minutes to two,—on a clock on the tower in the centre of the city. Our artillery had been firing intermittently all morning, with no response from the Germans. During the afternoon the liveliness increased, and large shells threw showers of dirt and bricks into the air behind the German line. Also our trench mortars started to cut the German wire. I spent a quarter of an hour watching a trench mortar battery at work. Two men worked the gun, while a third observed the burst of the shells and gave instructions as to range and direction. Still Fritz showed practically no signs of life. Only by a very occasional trench mortar bomb did he show that his trenches were not deserted. Every now and then a sniper's bullet would whiz one way or the other, or a machine gun from some well concealed position would fire a few rounds at some point behind the line where there might be a target.

Half a dozen aeroplanes were in sight,—all British and all flying over the German lines as though they had nothing to fear. When one would get too far back or too low, the German Anti-Aircraft guns would open up, and the sky would be dotted with puffs of black smoke. Then often the plane would take refuge in a

cloud, and emerge flying in a different direction, and the German gunners would have to correct their range and elevation again. Not a single German aeroplane appeared all afternoon.

About five o'clock, I came back to my billet, where now, after supper, I am sitting by a grate fire writing by gas light. And within three or four miles of the Germans! This is the most peaceful and luxurious kind of warfare! The people of the village work in nearby coal mines. Every morning they go to work regularly, as though there were no war on.

I have your letter of Jan. 22, and father's of Jan. 18. I did not receive any mail addressed by you to the school. When I said to address letters written before Feb. 10 to the school, I thought I was going to be there a week longer than I was.

Our artillery is making night hideous as usual, and Fritz is not replying. I should not like to be a German these days. It is most demoralising to be shelled without hearing one's own guns replying.

I met Higgins to-day. His battery is nearby.

I hope this letter will prove a little more interesting than usual. There is so much to de-

scribe, and it is so hard to describe anything without violating the censorship regulations, that often I can say very little except that I am well and "carrying on."

I think a visit with Emma would do you good. Take care of yourself, mother, for my sake. We could not get on without you.

With much love,

CLIFFORD.

P. S. I should be glad to receive a couple of pairs of socks and some handkerchiefs.

P. P. S. I have just learned that one of the officers here used to be in the Navy. I have asked him about the life of a seaman. He is most enthusiastic, thinks it the most healthful and beneficial life imaginable. But my own nautical experience, what I have seen of ordinary seamen, and what I know of C——'s tastes and abilities, lead me to believe that he would not enjoy it at all, at all. Why does he not try the A. S. C.? He might get into the mechanical transport section, and drive a lorrie, or an ambulance, or a general's car. Or, if not in the M. T. Section, there must be many branches of the A. S. C. where his knowledge of office work would be useful. If he were in the M. T. Section, he might find it a stepping stone into the R. F. C.



MARCH, 1917

Pancakes and Maple Syrup in the Front Line Trenches  
—The Padre's Voice Drowned by the Noise of Guns  
—Second Birthday in the Army—Nervous Germans—  
The Cheese-cloth Shirt—The Beauty of Air Fights—  
“It Takes a Plane to Bring Down a Plane”—No Food  
Shortage at the Front.

*March 12, 1917.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

I have your letter of Jan. 7, and two lovely parcels, to acknowledge. The maple syrup was a great success. We had pancakes and maple syrup in the front line trenches. I should be very pleased to have that order repeated. In the other parcel dated Feb. 1st, there was a delicious cake. All the small articles were appreciated. I know you want me to tell you which things I really want you to send me, and so I will say that I have lost my taste for chocolate, which can be obtained over here, and that shaving soap lasts a long time, and I have quite a supply on hand at present. Hand soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste, I am always glad to get. By the way, the parcel with the grape nuts has not yet arrived.

You ask what to send to my platoon. There is nothing I can think of just now. If anything occurs to me, I shall be glad to let you know.

One Saturday night recently we came out of the front line trenches. We reached our billets at 2.15 A. M. Sunday. Hot tea was ready for all the men, and for the officers. We were wet, muddy, and tired, and soon were enjoying a sound peaceful sleep. At 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon, we had a church parade. We have a new padre, and he gave us a splendid sermon. This was the first church service I had attended with the battalion for months, and I enjoyed it very much. Usually we seem to be in the line on Sundays, when, of course, a church service is impracticable. On this occasion, there were times when the sound of the nearby guns drowned the padre's voice.

I am glad you like your gloves. I meant them all for you, and got two or three sizes so as to have one pair fit you. I hope they are not all too large.

I am writing this letter in bed by candlelight. By the way I am always glad to find candles in my parcels. We are in billets at present.

It did not occur to me until this evening that

to-day is my birthday—my second birthday in the army. My next birthday will find me at home, I trust. Our summer offensive, I am sure, will place the result of the war beyond the shadow of a doubt. The preparations are on a scale inconceivably great.

Well, good night, mother dear, with lots of love,

CLIFFORD.

I am enclosing a clipping from a recent *Literary Digest*. The Clark referred to is one of the famous characters of the original 8th.

March 13. I have opened the letter to say that your parcel of Feb. 9 has arrived—the cake is delicious—much enjoyed by all.

*March 13, 1917.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Your letter of Feb. 11th has arrived. I wrote to Mildred acknowledging receipt of the parcel referred to in your letter, and explaining my previous mistaken acknowledgment thereof. Miss Ward's chocolates, I am sorry to say, have never arrived. Please tell her that I appreciate her kindness in sending them, and am sorry they did not turn up.

Congratulations on my little niece! I hope to see her and the other children some day. I

envy you your peaceful congenial employment. I am beginning to get tired of patrols, and raids, sniping and bombardments, trench-mortars, H. E. and shrapnel. I shall be glad when the time comes to return to regular hours and peaceful occupations.

There are numerous signs that the Germans are very nervous. A few rifle shots and a couple of bombs thrown by a patrol in No Man's Land on a recent night caused Fritz to send up dozens of S. O. S. rockets. His artillery opened up in a very ragged fashion at first, and ours retaliated. An intense bombardment raged for an hour, in which hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of ammunition must have been expended—all due to the fact that Fritz is so easily scared into the belief that he is being attacked. I am convinced that this summer will see the beginning of the end.

I have to get up early to-morrow and so will close now. Give my love to Mildred. I hope you are both well.

As ever,

CLIFFORD.

*March 14th, 1917.*

MY DEAR GEORGE,

Just a note to tell you that a box of most delicious chocolates has arrived this afternoon.

Presumably they are Miss Ward's, which I told you in my letter of yesterday had not arrived. The Oberlin postmark is Feb. 19th, so they really did not take long in coming. Was there a previous parcel to this? Every one has voted the chocolates most delicious and they are disappearing like wildfire. Please thank Miss Ward very kindly on behalf of two Majors and half a dozen Subalterns of the C. E. F., including myself. I would write to her, but find I have mislaid the address.

Things are going on as usual, and I am quite well.

Love to Mildred and the children. Write soon,

CLIFFORD.

*March 26, 1917.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

Your letters of February 14 and 21, and father's of February 22 and 24, have arrived, also six *Standards* and *N. Y. Times*. The mails have been irregular of late, and for about two weeks I received no mail at all.

The watch protector to which you refer has not arrived. It should prove useful as I am continually banging my watch. In fact, it is in England undergoing repairs at the present

moment. I have the cheese cloth shirt, and will wear it the next time I go in the line. I have only been "lousy" (I do not know any other way to express it) once—some months ago, but one has to be careful all the time in dugouts in the trenches. Please tell Ned I have received, and thank him for, the book by H. G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind." I have sent him a Field Post Card in acknowledgment of it. I am well supplied with reading matter for my leisure hours now. I am still reading "Charles O'Malley," and enjoying it very much. All my books are read by two or three others besides myself. Your socks are just the right length. In the trenches I wear leather boots which reach to the knee, and I like to wear long socks with them.

We have been having a mixture of spring and winter weather lately,—first two or three days of bright spring weather, and then a day or two of frost, sleet or rain. To-day it is raining hard, but a couple of sunny days will make a great difference in the state of the country.

I have seen dozens of fights in the air in the last three weeks. It is a beautiful sight to see the planes manœuvring in the air like two hawks, and to hear the puff, puff, puff of their

machine guns, the sound of which is softened by distance. Each plane tries to get above the other, so as to swoop down upon it. It is almost impossible for one plane to see another, which gets between it and the sun. Often I have seen a plane,—British, French, or German,—engaged in taking photographs or observing artillery fire suddenly brought down by a hostile plane which swooped down on it out of the clouds. When a German plane comes over our lines,—which is comparatively seldom,—the anti-aircraft guns open up, and soon the sky is dotted with scores or even hundreds of white puffs of smoke where the shells burst. The Germans use shells which give big puffs of black smoke. I have rarely seen an aeroplane brought down by artillery fire alone. Usually it takes a plane to bring down a plane.

I hope you had a pleasant time with Emma, and found her well again.

Your loving son,

CLIFFORD.

I have reopened this letter to say that your birthday parcel of Feb. 21 has arrived. It contains many useful things,—a book "Cyrano de Bergerac" with "Mrs. J. S. Thomson" written on the fly leaf. Please thank her for me. The watch cover is also enclosed, and will be

useful, also soap, shaving powder, etc. Your sending sardines and sugar leads me to suppose you believe that we are suffering from lack of food. This is not so at all. We live very well in our company Mess. The food shortage does not affect us, Molly, so do not trouble to send me food. Thanks very much for everything. Your parcels always contain things that I need, and I know you want me to mention it when I receive something I do not need.

With much love,

CLIFF.



APRIL, 1917

Asking His Batman if He "Could Ride"—Writing 11 Days After the Taking of Vimy Ridge—Luxurious German Dugouts—A Flock of Dragons—The Farewell Message.

*April 3, 1917.*

MY DEAR RAE,

I received your parcel safely two days ago, and was much pleased with the contents. The candy was delicious, and the precipitated chalk and other articles will be useful. The little candles were suggestive of Christmas tree decorations, but gave quite a good light.

Has spring arrived yet in Westmount? I wish it would come out here. Two days ago we had quite a severe snow and sleet storm. The mud out here beats anything you ever saw, and gives a lot of trouble to the poor horses and mules. I shall be very glad when things dry up, even if the weather gets warm.

I hope you are keeping well, and still enjoy your work at the library. Write soon to

Your affectionate brother,

CLIFFORD.

*April 5th, 1917.*

MOTHER DARLING,

I have your letter of February 1st, and also the one begun February 6th and finished March 9th. I wonder if you know how eagerly I look for your letters, and how much I prize them when they come. They are always interesting and cheering.

You must have enjoyed your little rest with Emma. She says in her last letter that you are looking well, for which I am very thankful. I want you to keep well and strong until the happy day when I shall return home.

I have written to Mrs. Grafftey thanking her for the candy, also to Aunt Lale. Victor's candy has not arrived, but please thank him for sending it, and also Mrs. Barker for the socks. By the way, I am almost out of socks at present. I wear only one pair at a time, but several pairs gave out within a couple of weeks not long ago.

You may be interested to know that most of the men in my platoon, as in the rest of the Battalion, are farmers, ranchers, cowboys, trappers, etc., from the far west and northwest,—splendid stalwart men, most of them. Recently I had occasion to ride a rather restless

horse. When I came back, I called for my batman to take it to the transport lines. As I had never seen him on a horse, I asked if he could ride. He said "Yes, sir," and vaulted into the saddle. I saw at once that he was a perfect horseman. Since then I have learned that he is the champion rider of Alberta and Saskatchewan and used to be much in demand to ride wild horses at "Stampedes" (*i. e.*, horse fairs or riding competitions) in the west. And I asked if he could ride!

There is never much that I can write about, and just now there seems less than usual that I can tell you, although there is so much news in the papers. I met Gordon Crossley a few days ago for the first time since leaving home. He was looking well. With oceans of love, mother darling,

CLIFFORD.

*April 20, 1917.*

DEAREST MOTHER,

So much has happened during the last ten days that I have had neither the time nor the repose of mind to write a long letter. I sent you a field post card<sup>1</sup> the first opportunity I had, and now that I am looking forward to a

<sup>1</sup> This field post card was dated April 17th.

few days' rest, I can write a letter more fully.

Yes, I was in it! and I am glad and proud that I was. You probably know more of the success of the great offensive than I do, for newspapers are very scarce articles out here now. But, on our part of the line, everything went smoothly.

The Huns were completely surprised, strange as it seems, and made little resistance. Our artillery barrage was wonderful beyond description, lifting forward from objective to objective with clocklike precision, and practically obliterating the German trenches as it passed them. The men followed the barrage steadily and fearlessly, and prisoners were streaming back five minutes after we went "over the top."

Most of the prisoners were entirely cowed, and thankful to be prisoners. They worked hard carrying in the wounded. One slightly wounded officer, however, was very cocky. He appeared at the entrance of a dugout as I passed. He was very indignant when I had him searched for papers, and was furious when I sent him back with three of his own men under a single escort. He actually refused to go without his greatcoat, which he had left in the dugout 30 feet underground. As we had

no time just then to act as valet to Hun officers, and, as the exploration of a German dug-out requires care, he had perforce to go without his coat. We had been warned to be on our guard against infernal machines in dug-outs, but, so sudden was the attack, that the Huns had no time to prepare traps for us.

Some of the German dugouts, especially those of the artillery, were wonderfully comfortable. Some had electric lights, arm chairs, cupboards, beds with *white* sheets, etc. These were not the front line dugouts of course. An hour after the attack, all our men were smoking Hun cigars, and were laden with souvenirs of various sorts. I was fortunate enough to secure a pair of field glasses, one of the things I have long wanted.

After we had taken and consolidated our objective, fresh troops went through us to capture a distant wood. As they pressed on behind the barrage, which moved forward like a flock of dragons, the sky suddenly became overcast, and a blizzard raged for a few minutes. That picture is one I shall never forget—the dark scarred wood in the distance, the line of bursting shells creeping slowly toward it, the long lines of khaki figures following the barrage, and minding the shells and bullets

which thinned their ranks no more than the driven snowflakes which overcast the whole scene. It is a wonderful picture, and I wish I could paint or describe it adequately.

I came through it all without a scratch. My namesake whose initials are C. H. was wounded—not dangerously. I trust you were not worried when you read his name in the casualty lists.

The Germans must see in this blow the beginning of the end. It is only a question of time before Germany will be defeated on a purely military basis, apart from the economic stress to which she is subject. The only question is whether her armies will be crushed before her economic situation reaches the breaking point or before her people rise in revolt.

I do not want you to find this an alarming or disquieting letter. To me, it is the most thrilling letter I have ever written you. I hope you will find it the same. The greatest victory of the war has been gained, and I had a small part in it.

With greatest love,

CLIFFORD.

\* \* \* \* \*

MY DARLING MOTHER,

I am sending this note to George for him to give you if I am killed. It is just a last message of love to you, Molly, for I do love you more than any one else in the world. You have been the best mother I ever knew or heard of, and my greatest grief is the sorrow which my death will cause you. Please do not grieve too much, mother dear. Remember that I died doing my duty—the very best I could do for the cause which we all believe is right—and that we shall be together again in heaven, where God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. God and heaven seem more real here in the presence of suffering and death than they ever did before.

Give my love to dear father. He has been all that a father could be to me for many years, and I am deeply grateful to him. If I had lived, I should have striven to be a credit and a comfort to him always.

Emma and George and Ned and Rae and Croy—I think very tenderly of all of them, and feel that I have not deserved all the love which they have manifested toward me. I pray every night for their welfare and happiness.

Molly dear, there is nothing more I can say.

This is just a message of love and gratitude and, I trust, of comfort. Do not grieve, mother dear. All is well with me, and we shall meet again never to part.

I pray that you and father may be very happy together. May God bless you both in your work and in your home life.

Good-bye, my own darling mother,

CLIFFORD.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*



MAY AND JUNE, 1917

Letters from Fellow-Students Brown, Davis, Chalmers  
—Pi Kappa Chi Memorial Resolutions—Extract from  
a Letter Written by the President of the Baptist  
World Alliance—Letter from a Fellow-Soldier—Let-  
ter from Dr. John Clifford—A Message from Clif-  
ford's Mother.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PI KAPPA CHI  
FRATERNITY OF JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

*227 South 41st Street,  
Philadelphia, Pa.,  
May 12, 1917.*

DEAR MRS. WALLACE,

I just heard the shocking news of Clifford's death this morning from Mrs. Brown in Baltimore. While I have realised ever since he went to France the fearful risks he was encountering I had confidently expected that he would some day return to us. Even now I can hardly believe that he has been killed. Both Mrs. Brown and I are deeply distressed. We sympathise with you in your grief. Of all the boys in Baltimore, I think that Walter Sutton,

Stewart White, and I probably knew Clifford best, and perhaps the fact that I lived in the fraternity house with him for two years has given me a juster appreciation of him than either of the others has. During that time I came to love him, and, more than that, to admire him. His absolute honesty in every respect, his kindness, his conscientiousness about his work, his loyalty to his ideals, his modesty of manner, were only some of his praiseworthy characteristics. His death on the field of battle for the sake of the ideals of humanity was quite in keeping with the general nobility of his life. I know that he went to war from no motive of adventure, but because he felt it his duty to do his part in maintaining the cause of liberty and righteousness against the forces of injustice and oppression.

Without being at all aware of the fact, he has had a large influence in inspiring others to the same sort of action. His example has stirred the fraternity so deeply that when the time came for the boys of the United States to offer their services, the active chapter of Pi Kappa Chi, with but a very few exceptions, has given itself to some form or other of activity to aid in the prosecution of the war. I am sure that if he had known how much his in-

fluence had been in arousing higher ideals in the souls of his friends, he would have felt that his sacrifice was not in vain.

For my part I shall always have the loftiest memory of Clifford, who could uncomplainingly give up a promising career, in which he was undoubtedly destined to reach the top, to die bravely fighting for the cause of human liberty. There are many other people too, I am sure, who feel as I do, and you may be sure that we all join with you in your sorrow, and hope that you may be able to bear it bravely.

With the deepest sympathy,

Most sincerely,

W. NORMAN BROWN.

*Baltimore, Md.,*

*May 14, 1917.*

DEAR DR. WALLACE,

Your telegram and letter advising of Clifford's death were both received; the former yesterday afternoon—the latter this morning. To say that I was shocked would be putting it very mildly. I cannot realise that he is no longer with us in the body. The first of my University friends to be taken away—and so soon. The loss seems even more terrible than it would naturally be.

You and Mrs. Wallace will doubtless be interested to know that yesterday (Sunday) afternoon a memorial service to Clifford was held at the fraternity house. There has never been a larger gathering of the men in the history of the fraternity, and we all felt that Clifford was present at the meeting with us once again.

"Jimmie" Brown, who is now in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania, was notified on Saturday night late of the meeting, and came over in the morning to be present at the service. Walter ("Butts") Sutton, as fortune would have it, was also in town from the seminary at Rochester. It was a distinctly impressive service. Sutton, Brown and myself gave a few reminiscences of our friendship with Cliff, and what he had meant to us, and a quartet of the fellows sang "Face to Face" and "Lead, Kindly Light." Dr. Hogue happened to meet one of the fellows who was going, and when he found out the reason of the meeting came along, and led in prayer. The solemnity of the occasion was heightened by the fact that the majority of those present have already enlisted in various branches of the governmental service and were merely waiting to be called to the colours, and every one felt that

he could not be satisfied until the ideals of liberty for which Cliff so nobly gave his all, came to be a real fact, and a number consecrated themselves to see that his life had not been spent in vain, and to give theirs also if need be, to help bring the victory for freedom and democracy.

Convey my deepest sympathy to Mrs. Wallace. May the "peace that passeth all understanding" be hers and may her heart rise triumphant over her grief in the thought of having given a son for such a divine cause.

Sincerely,

FRANCIS A. DAVIS.

*Rugby Rd.,*

*Guilford, Md.,*

*June 3, 1917.*

DEAR DR. WALLACE,

Pi Kappa Chi Fraternity is sending you, under separate cover, a set of resolutions which were read and adopted at a memorial service for Clifford. The resolutions are the formal expression of our sorrow that Cliff has gone, but they can not hope to express the real loss which we older fellows, who knew Cliff well, have felt and do feel. But with that sorrow, we have, also, a tinge of gladness that he be-

longed to us, and belonging to us, that he died so nobly. That feeling was the keynote of the memorial service which we held for Clifford. On Friday we heard of his death; on Saturday night we decided to hold the service on Sunday; and the next day every Pi Kappa Chi man within a radius of 200 miles, excepting only three, was gathered to do honour to Cliff's memory. It is hard now that he is gone, but we think the world a little better for his having been in it, and that is man's only excuse for living.

It was our intention to have these resolutions presented to Cliff's mother by one of the members whom we were planning to send to your home. Our plans have been changed, however, with the death of Cliff's mother, and we decided to mail the resolutions to you instead. It is really useless for us to try to say anything to you in your double bereavement, and we can only assure you of our truly felt sympathy.

Very sincerely yours,

Pi Kappa Chi Fraternity,

ALLAN K. CHALMERS,

President.

IN MEMORIAM

LIEUTENANT CLIFFORD ALMON WELLS

*Killed in Action April 28th, 1917.*

At a Memorial Service held by the  
PI KAPPA CHI FRATERNITY  
Sunday, May thirteenth, Nineteen hundred  
and seventeen, these resolutions were  
read and adopted:

*Whereas*, Our beloved brother, Clifford Almon Wells, hath been killed in action on the great battlefields of France; and

*Whereas*, His family hath lost a great and noble son; and

*Whereas*, The *Pi Kappa Chi Fraternity* hath lost a loyal and splendid brother;

AND WHEREAS,

His Country hath lost an intrepid and sterling soldier, who eagerly offered and gloriously gave his life in the cause of universal justice, the liberty of the individual, the rights of humanity and a durable world peace;

*Wherefore, be it Resolved*, That we, members of the *Pi Kappa Chi Fraternity*, sharers of the heavy sorrow of her who gave the hero birth and upon whom the irreparable loss falls in different measure, extend to the stricken family of our dead brother in Christ our heartfelt sympathy; and be it further

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be taken to the bereaved family, spread at length upon the minutes, and retained in perpetuum among the records of this fraternity.

ALLAN K. CHALMERS,  
President.



EXTRACT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE  
REV. ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR, D.D., LL.D.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE,  
TO MR. RICHARD H. EDMONDS, EDITOR OF THE  
"MANUFACTURERS' RECORD" OF BALTIMORE,  
MD.

"I am saddened beyond expression at the double sorrow which has come to Dr. Wallace. Clifford was one of the noblest and manliest men I have ever met; and Mrs. Wallace was marked by culture and consecration to a very rare degree. I have already written to Dr. Wallace."

FROM LIEUT. A. R. JONES, P. P. C. L. I.

*School of Musketry,  
Hythe, Kent,  
June 17, 1917.*

DEAR DR. WALLACE,

It is with my deepest sympathies that I write to tell you with what sorrow I learnt a few days ago of the death of Mrs. Wallace. The news came as a great shock to me, as it was only a few days previous that I heard that Clifford had been killed. It has indeed been sad news to me, hearing of your double loss; and to me the loss of two very good friends.

Mrs. Wallace makes one more now, whose face I shall miss when I return. Whenever I think of Westmount Baptist Church, and picture it in my mind, I picture Mrs. Wallace sitting in the seat just to our left.

Clifford I saw several times before he went to France, and he always impressed me as being a fine, splendid soldier. If all our officers had been such as Clifford, then Canada would hold an even prouder record than she does to-day, for not only could she point to their incomparable record in France but also to their lofty ideals and most splendid be-

haviour while in England. It seems ever the same, that the best are taken, and those whom we think could be better spared, remain. When I think of Herb. Rittenhouse, and Elliot Scott and Clifford and others, and think of the value such lives as theirs would have been to Canada in after years, I realise then the price that Canada is paying; a price which nothing but *honour* would justify.

I would again express to you and yours my very deep sympathy in this your double loss.

Always yours very sincerely,

REGINALD JONES.

A LETTER FROM THE REVEREND JOHN CLIFFORD,  
D.D., LL.D., THE VENERABLE ENGLISH FREE  
CHURCH LEADER, AFTER WHOM THE WRITER  
OF THESE LETTERS WAS NAMED.

*18 Waldeck Road,  
West Ealing, W.,  
22nd June, 1917.*

DEAR DR. WALLACE,

I am grieved to hear of the afflictions through which you are passing. It is indeed a heavy trial for you in this sore time. I had not heard of the sacrifice of your son in the fight we are waging for the more precious spiritual treasures of humanity. It is a great offering you have made, and is not forgotten of God. And I fear the tragic loss of your beloved and cherished wife may be, though not so directly, yet indirectly a part of the same sacrifice you have been called to make for the Kingdom of God. May He graciously sustain you! He surely will! For "He is mindful of His own," there in the land of perfect blessedness, and here in the school of discipline and preparation. "His love in times past," to us and to our brothers and sisters in their griefs, makes it impossible

to doubt the sufficiency of His grace or question its immediate availability.

With sincere deep sympathy,

I am affectionately yours,

JOHN CLIFFORD.

A CARD OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*On the morning of that fatal Friday, the eighteenth day of May, my wife and I decided that the acknowledgment of the messages of sympathy relating to the death in action of our Clifford should be engraved upon a pure white card bearing our names.*

*It is left to me to do that which we intended to do; but now the message is sent in answer to a far greater number of messages, and its meaning is intensified by a second and even more terrible bereavement.*

*Her name is attached to this message because our lives have been as one life: the message is ours and not mine only.*

*These are the words chosen the eighteenth day of May:*

*The sympathy of our friends has been very precious to us in our great trouble. We earnestly thank you.*

*Frances Barbara Moule Wells  
O. C. S. Wallace*