

(On Active Service)

"^{WWWW} 2 letters after
"TH^{WWWW} armistice



Mrs. John Wagner
Doblington,
Ontario
Canada.

Frank H. Phillips

RECORDED MAIL
1918

1918

DO YOU WANT
ONE

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Belgium
Nov. 13/18

Dear Folk at Home.

Can you realize it back there
here that the war is over? I guess you don't
notice much difference over there and we heard
the last boom (given 8 o'clock the day before yesterday)

The rate the Boche were going back we knew
the end must come before long and we had
it figured down to a few days but even so it
seemed to be sprung on us. We were marching
up the line with full packs when a staff
officer pulled up to our officer in a car and
told him that hostilities ceased at 11 o'clock.
Needless to say everybody went nearly wild,
we never noticed the packs at all after that.
He came thru' these Belgian towns with our
chests stuck out as cheer after cheer went
up from the civilians. They had a big flag
from every house almost and the colors up
everywhere. It has the 12th of July celebrations
be at all to pieces.

It is fine to just sit and think the big
European war is over and of all the experiences
that are in store for us in the following months.
The big question under discussion now, of course
is when are we going to get back to Canada. Of
course it will be upside six months if all goes
well. I would like to be back for a while

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Well if all the Belgians are like these
people they are splendid. Nobody could make
us more at home than they do. They are washing
for me today, they wash our dishes, keep our
coal fires going etc, its some change from a
month or two ago.

Last night they set us up a supper, I never
seen the like for a long time, I could ~~not~~ eat half
it, carried it out in mess tin rather than
leave it. It was the first time since I came
~~to France~~ that I tasted cooking right from the oven. You won't
believe me.

I received your letter Oct. 16th by the
Ladies Aid C. I. C. box. The flu is real serious
hope to hear the plague is over by next letter.
Well I don't feel like writing much,
I'll try & remember it all till I go back &
tell you all about what we are doing.

I am going to put in a piece of poetry
that Alex Walker made up in about 10 minutes
here this morning. I think it covers it pretty
nearly all.

Love to all

Russell

Belgium

Nov. 19/18.

Dear Folk at Home:

Well soldiering is pretty good since the war has ended. Since I wrote last the censorship has been partially lifted and now I can tell you where I am anyhow.

You will no doubt know that the Canadians landed in Mons at the finish. We are in a small town near Mons at present in a private house. For a billet, we have a splendid home like place, sleeping in the kitchen on the tile floor.

I was in Mons a couple of times, last Saturday night I was at the theatre there. The Third Division concert party put on their show in the theatre, it was fine. Everything is running quite normal there now, the only difference in the last ten days is that German soldiers were billeted there previous & now

Canadians walk the streets. It was rather a lift to the Can's to capture Mons, which had been so historical since '14 but I think they were well deserving of the honor because they fought their way right from Arras.

I haven't seen a paper of any description

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in the last ten days since hostilities ceased so I haven't heard anything further. We are quite satisfied however when we can see the go out on a bright moonlight night now and we are not looking for Fritz over with his bombing machines. From prisoners who have returned they say our fellows certainly gave it to Heinz from the aeroplane, day & night.

I don't know whether we are going to Germany or not, we are supposed to be on our way now but I sometimes think we will never go. If we do it will sure mean that we will not get home for awhile yet. I hear the German people at and at the point of starvation & from the riots etc. I don't think they will need any troops of occupation there.

The people here at a great time buying all their brass. Heinz was after all the brass he could pinch everywhere. These people had the brass around their fire place, their hanging lamp etc. all buried. He was sure up against it for brass.

We have been awfully lucky getting good billets it seems to me. These people here I think we fairly well to do before the war and surely are like real people. There is the man & wife with two little boys. The boys are awfully

cute nice little fellows and show by their manners that they have been brought up.
Mr. Ceclope (that is their name) was a pigeon fancier before the war, had about 200 pigeons. Mrs. C. was a school teacher, I was showing her the pictures I had of the Dunblane scholars & she said she was an "institution" also. These Canadian snaps are interesting to these people, we all have a few that are emblematic of Canada.

Last night for supper she made us up a big plate of French fried potatoes & tonight a dish of rice, both found unusual good, she knows how to fix things up to taste better than some of these people. The last place we were at, a poor miner & his wife they sure gave us the "widow's mite". It is a great district for coal mining from Valenciennes to Mons. There are big slag heaps in every direction, Fritz used to mount his machine guns on them.

I received your letter Oct. 14th today. I hope to hear of the influenza being checked, it is awful the people who are dying. France isn't the only place to meet death.

I am sending some post cards the last place we were in. These post cards names it that I think are good souvenirs now, I'll be able to link up the trailing around we will be doing.

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Tom is on guard tonight so I will be sleeping alone. We have all kinds of shining up, guards etc. now, just like the camps in England. I'll be glad when I get that little discharge.

All good night, I think I will write later now.

Love to all

Russel

8/16/00