

For God, For King & For Country

First letter from Eng.

Y·M·C·A

Y.M.C.A.

Y.M.C.A.

H.M. FORCES ON ACTIVE SERVICE

PATRON
Y.M.C.A. NATIONAL COUNCIL
H.M. THE KING.

PATRON
MILITARY CAMP DEPT.
H.R.H. DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

Reply to B Company 160 Bat. 79 Regt

Stationed at Witton Camp,

Godalming, Surrey.

Oct 29th 1916

Dear People; Well here we are in

old England and it is raining too.

We arrived here last night about seven o'clock it being exactly two weeks from when we left London.

It would take about six letters to give you any idea of our trip, sufficient to say we enjoyed the novelty of it but were glad to get here and have a still bed for a night.

I wrote you a letter and a couple of cards on the way to Halifax and gave them to kids to post so I guess you received them if they were posted.

We landed into Halifax Tuesday morning about daylight. In the forenoon we all were taken to the Y.M.C.A. for a bath which we certainly needed and needed again now.

We boarded the boat Tuesday afternoon then and sailed Wednesday evening about dark.

We sailed on the H.M.S. Metagama. There were two other troop ships left with us and we were accompanied by one cruiser. The other boats were the Northland & the Cameronian.

On the boat we were ushered into little rooms about 6' x 8", containing four bunks, two about two feet off the floor and the other two above them.

The beds had sides on them and were quite comfortable but the rooms were too stuffy as we were right in the bottom and no port holes could be opened.

The biggest objection on the boat was the grub, and it was simply rotten. Without any exaggeration I believe half the fellows would lose about ten pounds. It was just like what you hear horse buyers say, when they are buying horses to ship, if they are not fat when they go on board they will look pretty tough when they are taken off. I think it tried some of the best of them, and gaunted them pretty good.

We got fish & beef that I couldn't eat all after the first day or so, the smell was enough. I never ate one potato at all, they come from the Canary Is & they were about the color of a canary. Two or three times we got good eggs, cheese & jam.

Well we had a fairly smooth sea till Monday night. Monday I worked in the pay office but that was the last. The storm started sometime in the night.



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Reply to Company Bat. Regt.

Stationed at

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I went down for breakfast in the Morning and went up on deck immediately where she was going pretty good and in about five minutes away went my breakfast, but that was the only meal I lost. I went to bed shortly after that and never ate anything till the next day at noon when I paid a quarter for an egg & two little pieces of toast. Once a person took sick and took a dislike to the food he was up against it for the smell of the dining room would nearly sicken you. I got up Thursday noon and was all right to the end.

But say the storm was fun for those who were not sick. Miss gon on Thursday night she did roll. You could hardly stay in bed. The sailors said it was the worst they had seen for 25 years. The other boats disappeared from us & we saw a Norwegian freighter lying deserted in the morning. During meal times was the funniest part. I was up for two when it was going good. About twelve I was sat at a table & when a good swell would come away would

go dishes, tea soup meat & everything to one end of the table and it was some misfortune. Nearly all the cups on our table were broken. We had to drink out of a bowl some of the time after that. We were right below the dining room and at meal times every big swell that come there was a deafening din of fellows yelling & & dishes flying. Then when you would start up to the deck the steps came up to meet you or you had to step farther than you expected sometimes and went lolling around a little as you were sick. Fellows were heaving everywhere some before they got out of the dining room.

We were sailing with a slow steamer the Northland or we could have made it in about five days the Olympic took four ^{Battalions} and made the trip in 3 days and eleven hours.

I suppose you saw in the paper that the Subs were very active about Thursday night. We were met by two torpedo boats Thursday afternoon which soon left us and they were supposed to have been the ones which engaged the raiders. We could see the ^{Smith} mouth of Ireland lights Thursday night and dropped into the mouth of Jersey about 10 P.M. Friday night. I guess we had a narrow enough escape between subs & storm. I knew the storm was tossing us pretty good that night but I thought maybe it was like that often.

On Sat. Saturday morning we were in at the

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Stationed at dock at Liverpool. We disembarked about 7.30 & left on the train in about half an hour. 191

The trains are very funny ~~over~~ here, small engines & the coaches are divided off into three or four apartments not connected at all with two seats running cross ways and there was seven of us in one of those. I enjoyed the day the best of any since we started. This Eng. is a marvel.

The country is a park, you couldn't have any idea without seeing it and the solid streets of tenement houses are another marvel. We came down through Birmingham & Oxford. I saw a flying machine overhead at Oxford I wondered if Jack G. was in it.

Well we are in this camp now 30 miles ^{west} of London. They say there are at this place 20 battalions and it is only seven miles from Bramshott. We have not seen ~~near~~ the camp yet, just our corner. We are billeted in huts as they call them but I would call them a floored driving shed set up on posts. They are frame & accommodate 30 nicely. We have a bunk (board) ^{electric lights} three or 4' off the floor, five blankets each, a good coal fire & plenty of

6.

rain outside to help us enjoy it.
There are several Y. Huts around where we can write, get books and where Sunday services are held. We had a good Chaplin speaking tonight from the west. The thing seems more real and gives you a different feeling over here. Everything outside is kept dark at nights and there are flashy lights or search lights shooting around the sky on the look out for T-6s.

Neil's Uncle Charlie Baker came over to see him today. He has just landed also. He expect likely we will be broken up now as the other R.S. have but we hope for the best. He expect to get off next week, that is beginning a week from Monday apj sight seeing.

Now I think I will shut off for this time and I will write in a few days again. If this doesn't get to you there will be a big spell some where.

When you write give me all the news, get thin paper. Suppose Art is home settled. The evenings are long now just as in Canada, but there will be no snowy blanket or skating.

You can give this to Uncle Roberts & other inquiring friends - as I will not be able to write to them all

Love to All Russel.

P.S. My Address. See Cpl. name
(write distinctly)

No. 452113 B. Company 160th Battⁿ

Withly Camp,

Godalming, Surrey
England.