

"Canadian Soldier's Letter"

Feb / 17

account of Neil
Mrs. Johnson per Poole
Johnson back in leave
Dobbinton,
Ontario,
Canada.





Witney Camp, Surrey.
Feb. 8/17

Dear People at Home;

It must be nearly two weeks since I wrote last but I thought I might as well wait till Neil left & tell you all that has been going on.

Neil arrived over last Saturday night and I just came back last night at midnight from two & half days pass in London with him.

He has fourteen days goes back on the 14th, next Thursday he leaves London I think he is just the same boy, not a bit changed and we sure have had quite a time since he come.

We were at the usual concert in the YM.C.A. when Neil walked inside. Elmer Stark it was who spotted him first & then he soon hunted up a few more of us. He is quite lleshy, just in good working shape, he & Dwight just about the same 174. Well we fed him all he could eat around here I think till Tuesday afternoon & then, thanks to Mr. Hacy I got a pass till last night to London. A great many of the fellows took

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weekend received boxes & we cleaned up on them one after the other. The box which you sent with the honey & date cookies came just in time. Monday night Lewis, Ed. M., & Dan Lamont (he had a foul supper in Skully I had to stay in charge of mess hall) and then Monday night Neil was sleeping with me we went up to the cook house and had another big feed. The night foreman knew Neil so told him to come up and he would have something out for him so we had a right good feed.

I don't know whether I have written since I got my watch or not but anyhow the parcel came O.K. the watch went off like a charm and the razor cut good the once I have used it. Thanks very much for it all.

There are two hundred & more away for three weeks to Seaford. I was bidden to go but knowing Neil was coming I asked Mr. Haig if I could stay, I was granted that request and then he got me the pass.

I am in charge of the mess hall for awhile. This week & I don't know how much longer.

Int. Morning

The last man on the job had it for about a month as I will likely have it for a couple of weeks yet till I will likely have to go to Seaforth. It is a good job, have to see that the mess hall is cleaned up and dishes washed properly after each meal.

On Wednesday Gil & I went out to Epsom to see gal chum Mr. Allister. He & Gil were always together in France they were saying until he was wounded. Mr. Allister is getting his sick leave & they were going to Scotland together last night. I guess they are off there this morning. This was Mr. Allisters second wound. He had a face wound before. He has a piece of flesh on his nose taken from another part of his body altogether. He is a real nice fellow, a good pal would reckon.

He stayed in the V. S. A. Y. M. C. A. but in London. It is a very good place, no better than our Maple Leaf Club I might say. They have Canadian pool tables there which seems like old times to see once.

We were down to Cuckingham yesterday to see the guards mounted on Thursday

Morning and then we went up to Westminster Abbey. It was Dickens' Day & a party from the American U. M. C. A. was putting a wreath of flowers on his grave in the abbey so we were in for that. Some of the most valuable things have about 10 ft. of sandbags over them now, in case of a bomb being dropped on them. The chair ^{when ornate top blown} & stone screen are removed for the recent so we missed seeing them.

We saw some of the ravages of the bombs. The ~~factory~~ office of "John Bull" was hit in the last raid and quite a mess made of things. It was supposed to be a shelter from bombs so quite a number had taken shelter and consequently a large number were killed there and there are still bodies being dug out. There are people down underneath still who are being fed thru tubes. I saw the tubes from a building quite a piece away where the food or (milk likely) for babies is being carried down the ruins.

Still old London carries on just the same, go to any theatre in the city, afternoon or evening & it is full.

Well this is Saturday evening now.
 A Canadian mail arrived at noon with
 the account of the big snow storm.
 I only got two letters, one of them being yours.
 There is still a lot of mail either lost
 or slow coming, all the mail we got today
 was written from the 13th to 15th am,
 none having been received from New Years
 before.

Niel & I had a picture taken together in
 London on post cards. They are to be done
 the last of next week. Niel also had one taken
 of himself.

Next time I go on pass, off come my
 colors and badges. When I go up to London
 or to any place where there are return fellows
 I feel out of place altogether because
 they look at the colors. Oh! 5th Division.
 They never say anything at least not
 many but still I feel sheepish. Down at
 Epson we were coming down the lines where
 they were lined up dinner, about 2000
 casualties and one fellow yells "There
 is the 5th Division now and then another
 fellow says "Thank God we have a navy."

Peg. Campbell is back here on pass now

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an old P.E.I. fellow. He is in that
foot ball team picture, a fat faced fellow
at the back beside George Dyc Arthur. He
came over with the first contingent, and has
spent 18 months in France, twice wounded
and has been back to Canada once, so
he has had a fair share of experience in
the last three years.

My bedmate has gone to Seaford
so I am bunking with Alf Hunt (Shen)
as he always gets.

I think that is all the news.
This time, the paste board boxes are coming
good now, ~~seem~~ to stand it real well
as a whole. I suppose there is a little
give to them which helps them stand the
knocks.

Love to all

Fassel