

Trent University Archives

Medd family fonds

Accession 81-001 Box 1 Folder 2 Letter 1

Letter: Arthur Ross Ackerman, Bustard Camp, Salisbury Plains, to his sister [in Canada], 25 October 1914, describing living conditions and camp life, English reaction to the coming of the Canadians, and expressing a general feeling that they might not be needed at all.

Notes regarding the transcription:

In this transcription, most misspellings and grammatical anomalies which occur in the original text have been maintained. Occasionally commas and periods have been added to assist in clarifying the sentence structure. Square brackets [] indicate indecipherable text.

TRANSCRIPTION

Bustard Camp, Salisbury Plains

October 25th/14

My dear sister,

Just a few lines to let you know that both Charlie and I are well, but beyond that I am afraid I can't write much more as I have exhausted all my news in previous letters to the other members of the family, which I sincerely hope they passed on, as I have asked them to do as we really do not get time enough to write to everybody, except at infrequent intervals, although I seem to have been fairly just this week.

It has rained here almost incessantly for the past three or four days and I may safely say that I have not been dry for the past three days and to make matters worse it has been cold and raw and it is anything but pleasant to have to get up before daylight and put on your wet clothes by candle light and go out into the rain once more, but then we did not come over here for a picnic exactly.

Charlie went up to London on Friday morning and has not returned yet, but we doubt he will be back by to-morrow.

There are hundreds of visitors come to our camp nearly every day and some women take it on themselves

Page 2 of letter

to thank us men personally for coming over here. I have been thanked myself about a dozen times already, and as a rule the first thing that

I am asked is whether I was born in Canada or England and when I say Canada, the usual reply is "My word, how odd!" We surely do get some great write-ups in the papers. On one occasion the London Times stated that we Canadians could always be distinguished by our easy gait and by the fact that we always wore soft slouch hats and carried a revolver on each hip with a belt full of cartridges. Can you imagine it. That is just one of the numerous absurd descriptions appearing in the papers. I wish now that I had cut them out and saved them as they would make fine reading for the people at home.

Tell Edna that I received her letter addressed to me O.K. which I told her had not arrived in my last letter to her. I supposed the dances have started in Peterboro again and it will not be a terribly long while until the [Bal Poudre] as I heard the men figuring up the number of weeks until Christmas yesterday and I believe it was only about eight. When we were marching through [] port the youngsters were asking us then for money to buy Christmas gifts with.

Page 3 of letter

I doubt however if we will be in England for Christmas but none of us know anything about it and we are all waiting patiently for orders to proceed to the front. In fact, a number of the men are doubtful now as to whether we will be needed at all or not, but here's hoping that we are, as we certainly deserve to have a little excitement after all our work in preparing for it. It is quite interesting here and one can almost imagine that they are at the scene of operations as we have aeroplanes hovering about overhead all the time and the cannon are incessantly away at imaginary enemies all day long, while bodies of troops and long strings of transports are forever passing in all directions. Altogether it is most businesslike.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of seeing a squadron of lancers go past on the dead gallop and it certainly was a splendid sight to see their lances all shining and the little pennons fluttering from each lance. I am sure it would have interested Sid greatly.

Yesterday we were inspected by Lord Roberts and his daughter and Colonel Rodgers of Colborne was given the honor of meeting them both as he was in command of our Battalion owing to Colonel Watson's absence. I suppose Edna has told you about poor Fields accident.

Page 4 of letter

I was on the same job two days later, but managed to escape with a pair raw shins where waggon box scraped there as it fell.

There is a possibility, the doctor says, of Fields being useless again as an infantry man, but he [wouldn't] know until after the x-ray examination which he has to undergo; however, here's hoping for the

best.

Well sister, I guess this is about all that I have to say just now so please give my best regards to Sid and the kiddies and any one else who will accept them and tell them that mail is always welcome.

Yours truly,

Arthur, 7586

When you answer this, please give me Pearl Buchanan's address, as I owe her a letter I do believe. ARA