

Cav. Bde Head Qrs
Expeditionary Force

Sept. 15.

My dear Mus

At last I have got a moment to write you a line. But shells are busting just in front so I may be disturbed before I get this finished. Four horses were killed with a shell about an hour ago about 100 yards to my right. We are all getting used to it now and dont bother unless they are actually bursting round one. I have just got the letters from you some clothes and some chocolate. Thank you most awfully for them. You cant think how those sort of things are appreciated on a show like this. Particularly the chocolate as at present we are living on native bread which is good but very hard and dry and bully ~~but~~ ^{but} which is also very excellent but rather dull. Up to the present we've done ourselves very well but the last couple of days food has been rather a difficulty. All the villages are deserted and you cant get a thing in them. All the wretched people have had to leave their homes and have cleared off.

Now I'll tell you all our doings since I wrote last. The last day I seem to have written you a respectable letter was Sept. 4. We had a well earned and much needed rest day and just lay about in the wood. Or at least most people did. I was rather busy. I had to go and draw pay for the men and take a prisoner up to Head Quarters to the Provost Marshal who is ~~Mousa~~ Tompkinson *rather funny* it was. The poor devil had been run in for being drunk. I found out on the way that he came from Enniskillen and knew all of you: *Murphy* By name.

He drives a car in the same yard as Michy Keenon. He was very tired and dead beat poor old man. I was awfully sorry for him (but he (looked like a drinker any car driven in Enniskillen.?) Bother ~~funny~~ coming across him. He was a reservist in the Royal Irish.

That night we were lugged out at 2 A M. and made send off our luggage. We did not stir ourselves till 4 30. So we had a long dull wait. We then marched about 12 miles into billets and got settled in comfortably and got some food. But we were disturbed again about at 4 30 and made move on about 6 miles. I went on in a car with the General and got the billets settled up and our dinner ready. I slew a duck and plucked it while I was waiting. Rather a laborious proceeding.

Sept 6. Started at 5 30 and marched to P We halted in a village and the general and I went forward and saw a huge column of Germans advancing. They had guns, transport, cavalry, and every sort of thing. Suddenly they all stopped turned about and started going back again. That seems to have been the start of their retirement. Our guns were dreadfully slow getting on to them and I dont think they did much damage. Their guns are wonderful, awfully quick and very accurate. They place them awfully well and its almost impossible to discover where they are shooting from. Three of the 9th Lancers officers were hit that day. They fairly poured the shells into us. They finished off at dark and we spent rather an uncomfortable night in a stubble field a few miles on. But luckily it was a nice fine warm night.

Sept. 7. This was rather a funny day. The starting point we were given was held by the enemy, so when the advanced Regt. got ~~off~~ ⁴

then they were fired on. The 9th were leading that day. They had quite a good scrap. ~~The 9th~~ Two troops of the 9th about 25 men in all headed by ~~the~~ Col Campbell took ^{on a} a very strong squadron of the enemy and went smack through it. Beale Brown shot 3 men with his revolver. The Col got two slight wounds, and Alfrey in the 9th was shot. Then we got the guns on them and gave them hell. Later on the 18th *practically* wiped out a squadron about 70 strong. They hid a troop in the corn and shot them down like flies, only about 5 escaped. I was away on a message at the time so didn't see it. They cleared off about 1 o'clock and sent a red cross wagon back for the dead and wounded. We sat on the top of a hay stack for about 2 hours and watched them carrying away the dead and wounded. That night we got into a village which they had just left. You never saw such a mess the they had made of it. Everything in the whole place was broke. There was straw and mess all over the place and all the yards etc were littered with dead hens and *heral* mess. The stink was awful. After a little trouble we got quite good billets for ourselves.

Sept. 8 We started at 4 30 and had a fight in a big wood. It was really rather unpleasant as you couldn't tell where the bullets were coming from. We had quite a good *Scrap* on the night at a station. The Gen sent me there with a message. I saw some of the blighters in a lane about 800 yds away. So I got hold of a rifle and had some shooting. I knocked one fellow down alright, but I think he was a running bird as I didn't see his body there later on. That afternoon the guns were very good and fairly *defeated* them. They got into a cavalry Bde and the gunner tells me that he saw 15 saddles emptied

with one shot. That night it rained hard and we stayed in the house⁴ of a padre. The Germans had been there the night before so it was rather uncomfortable.

Sept. 9. We were dug out very early and got going about 3 o'clock and got up behind a big wood on the high ground overlooking the Marne ~~Exw.~~ River. I ~~capt~~ ^{crept} forward and saw some of them getting on the bridge with the devil of a barricade in front of it. We sat about there for some hours, and then moved farther east and crossed without any difficulty. That afternoon the 5th Lancers captured 22 prisoners. The blighters fired on some of the Cav. Div. motor cars, so we sent a squadron after them and rounded them up. The Gen and I went on and saw the fun. That night we billeted in quite a nice little farm house, but rather dirty. However I got a bed with sheets which was very nice.

Sept 10. We watched a great battle between the Germans and French guns supported by a battery of ours. We were just on the flank and saw the whole thing. Their guns are awfully good. They select awfully good positions, and are very quick and accurate. I believe the French are very good. They have got a beautiful gun. But I Havent seen them shoot much yet. We saw the French Infantry come up in motor cars and do an awfully good advance, but it got dark just before they got in to the That night we billeted in a chateau quite a nice house but hadnt been lived in for some time. I got a good mattress and was quite comfortable.

Sept. 11. I saw old John St ~~Germans~~ ^{Germans} who had suddenly rolled up and attached himself to the 4th D.G.'s. We ~~got~~ ^{just} tracked along most of the day, and got a real good wetting. However we got into a really

good billet and got our mails and transport, the first we had seen of it for over a week; so we all had a good clean up and clean clothes.

Sept. 12. We started off at 4:10 and saw the German shells bursting over the French away to the east. The leading Bde had a good *hard* scrap through a village and were able to *push* on alright. It rained hard but we got billets - quite a nice farm house where Geoff ^{Platts Horroby} and I slept in a sort of loft which was quite comfortable.

Sept. 13. Again we get going early but found we were held up in a village at a crossing of the river. It took us some time to take the town but eventually we pushed them back. Then dashed ⁱⁿ ~~one~~ to my mind rather wildly, ~~in~~ ^{we} got a few of them with our guns but got a good shelling ourselves, which I am glad to say didn't do much damage. Poor *Jucas Tooth* in the 9th Lancers was ~~shot~~ and Pat Fitzgerald in the 4th D.G.'s was shot that morning but *otherwise there were very few casualties*

Sept. 14. We moved off at 3.30 and went in support of the infantry who are attacking a position to our front. We got a *pretty* heavy fire, at one time from a maxim which wasn't much fun. It was raining like ~~all~~ all morning. There was a big fight going on all day, and a night *attack* last night. I was on the go most of the night. I think this is going to be one of the biggest fights of the war. I am pretty weary now and will tell you all about the battle when I write again. The guns have turned their attention elsewhere now so I might get a little sleep.

Your Loving

Will you thank *Jess* ^{Pat} for her letter. Can you send me the following, 3 pairs of boots for my horses. Some packets of chocolate