

FRANCE, June 8th, 1916.

My dear Father, Mother, Herman and Auntie:

I know that you will be worried because I have not written you for so long, but Ed has I am sure, and you can always be sure that nothing has happened to the one as long as the other writes nothing of it. But I have had more to do lately than I have ever had before in my life, and it will be worse from now on as the other stenographer in this office is now a casualty.

You will have heard by now of the big battle we have just come out of. I am not going to tell you anything about it here, but I will talk on the good side of life as we have it at the present time. I have been so thankful ever since that both Ed and I should have come out without a scratch, and we were through it all for the three days. But I know that there are many praying for us, and if we can't trust God to carry us through anything why I do not believe prayer is any good. All through the engagement my greatest support was the thought that you were all praying for us, and if anything should happen it would be God's will.

Now I am not going to say anything more about the battle. You can imagine the rest, although your imagination can't make you see some of the gruesome sights. But it was surprising how small my company was in the roll call the next morning after the three days in the trenches. Of course, it wasn't steady fighting for three days, but it was off and on. The most of the fighting was on the 3rd day of June, and that will be a day that I shall always remember.

Now for the beauty of life. When we came out of the trenches we walked back to camp and there I found a bed already made for me by the other Orderly Room clerk who was left behind to look after the stuff. He had also brought stuff in to eat and then and there I had the first to eat and sleep that I had had for the three days. I went to sleep and when I woke up in the afternoon, about seven hours later, I found Ed and he was just opening a parcel from HOME. Believe me it was a regular feast.

The next day we did not do anything but rest, and the next day again we moved out of that particular sector away back for a rest where we will be when you get this letter and for some time afterwards. We have to get the Battalion fixed up again as it was nearly wiped out and that will take probably six weeks. Even after that we will not have to move back to that corner of hell again. We have done our turn in that place, and now some-body else has to do so.

We are at present in a lovely part of the country where the birds sing and the farmers work in their small fields and the sun shines and it's just lovely after what we have seen for the last nine months and particularly the latter part. The people here can not do enough for one. Just now the old lady came in with two great big pillows for us to sleep on. She said "the floor is too hard." Well a pillow will be considered more of a novelty than a luxury to me now. I am in a little country village you see. The place Ed is billeted is a little distance out in the country on a farm. I have, however, see him several times today. I am at present sitting in a nice large room which we have turned into our office. Just outside the great large trees lean over the road on all sides, and the people seem so quaint and old fashioned which makes things look artistic. It's simply lovely.

I have had an awful lot of work to do today. I have been on the typewriter steady since morning writing a report on the battle for the Colonel. I am awfully

glad that he came back all right as he is a fine fellow in every respect. Very few of our officers did come back, and they were all nice fellows. You know the officers in the Canadian Army are generally pretty nice fellows. I do not know much about what the Regulars are like, but I think they are all right too. But then I don't mind the work there is to do because I can sit at my desk and see everything that is going on outside, and there will not be so much work to do after things have been cleared up a bit and the casualties have all been reported to the Base.

Well that is all there is to write about just now. But I want to impress on you this: don't worry about us, just pray for us and leave God to do what He wishes to do. His Will be done in everything. All we have to do is to exercise faith and leave God to do the rest and we need not worry about <sup>what</sup> He does even though it does mean that we will never come back.

George Standing had just joined the Battalion. He was alightly wounded at the commencement and was sent back so luckily escaped most of it. George Hackett, the fellow Ed used to work with in Edmonton in the shop was killed. Those are the only ones that you know I guess.

Your loving son,

Inar Anderson

I.W.A.

P.S. Let this letter do for Helga and Freda. They have been good to write and I am sorry that I have not been able to answer oftener, but I will show my appreciation when I return which will be soon I think. I am pretty sure this is Germany's last kick.

We have received all parcels to which you refer mother, also Aunties, and many thanks for same.

I.W.Anderson.

Hazebrouck, France, November 4th, 1924.

Dear Ed:

I am going to write this letter to you, but am putting in three copies, one for father and mother, one for Carstairs, and one for across the river. Father and mother can send their copy to Chris and Minnie. You know, I am terribly busy, and what I write one can do for all. You are the one that will be most interested in conditions around here, so I am addressing the letter to you.

I thought of you often today and wished you could have been with me. Between us we could have doped out exact locations and positions. I had no trouble whatever down around Sanctuary Woods and Observatory Ridge, but was not quite as successful on Paschendaale Ridge. I believe I could find Paschendaale Bellevue Heights better were I to march up from Ypres at night instead of running up to the present town of Paschendaale on a local train from Ypres. I hopped up from Ypres this afternoon and returned almost immediately so had hardly time to get my bearings. I wanted to catch the 5:30 p.m. back to Hazebrouck.

Now, I'll start from the beginning. You know all about Denmark. That is the best country I have ever been in. I left there four days ago on the S.S. LACOUR, a good sized row boat, and the North Sea was rough as usual and all on board were sick as dogs. I had my first real taste of sea-sickness. We stopped in Antwerp seven hours during which time I had my hands full getting things straightened out for a young Dane dame travelling to Paris. She had never been out of Denmark and didn't know A.B.C. in travel, and had been terribly sick on board boat. I got her Passport straightened out and trunks transferred to an Express for Paris, bought her tickets, etc. and she fainted twice, once on the street, and once in the Post Office in Antwerp while we were wiring Paris for someone to meet her at the train. She had been terribly sick on board boat and was about all in. Before 3:00 o'clock when the train left she was feeling better and no doubt she made the trip all right. Everything was arranged so she had nothing to do but stay in her compartment until she reached Paris. I took the same boat from Antwerp to Dunkirk. I had originally intended to take the train from Antwerp, through Bruxcelles, to Ypres. It's only one hour via. train from Dunkirk to Hazebrouck. I had really always thought it was farther.

Well, the first thing I recognized in France was the Square in Hazebrouck. Next thing was the farm we were billeted in prior to going into the line to make the attack on Paschendaale Ridge. I am stopping at the Emile Estaminet here, the Madam in charge being a war time keeper and seemed tickled to see a "bop" Canadian back. She is very nice. She remembers the 49th.

This morning I took the early morning train to Ypres. Ypres is no longer the Ypres that we knew. It is now a beehive of industry. Everything is brand new or in the process of being built. Large modern hotels surround the station. The Cathedral is being rebuilt, and the Cloth Hall is also in the process of rebuilding. Neither are completed. Both, I believe, are being rebuilt with as many of the old original bricks as possible. Very few of the bricks of the old buildings are laying about within the ramparts, but after passing through the Menin Gate there are a few war raked buildings. Both sides of Menin Road, right down to Dormitory House, has buildings and shops galore. (Dormitory House, you will remember, was the cellar in which we established Battalion Headquarters temporarily after the 3-8 June scrap in 1916.) Well as soon as I got off the train, needless to say, I made tracks for Menin gate. You remember the way we used to sneak across the square from the Cathedral, past the Hall, both of which were absolutely flat, through the Menin gate to Holl's Fire Corner. Well I walked along that road quite bravely for the first time in my life, and for the first time in my life too, in the broad day-light.

At Nell's FireCorner, a road has been made leading off to the right which is called "Canadian Road." I followed this road down to the West side of Zillebeke Lake, then along left shore to Maple Copse and the old China Wall, and then only a rabbit hop up to Sanctuary Woods and Observatory Ridge which is the slaughter house of the Canadian Forces, taking into consideration the size of it.

I recognized the complete layout as soon as I got to Maple Copse. China Wall is no more, but a cemetery has been built named "China Wall" Cemetery, and I knew anyway where China Wall should be. No one will ever fool me on that. Nothing seemed quite right until I got to Maple Copse. Understand, that now houses are built all over. Everything is being farmed right up to Maple Copse, and what isn't farmed is turned into large Cemeteries. I recognized the lay of the land pretty well, but when one considers that we never saw the land from the top, but only from the bottom of trenches or while crawling about on our bellies in the middle of the night in "No Man's Land", you will know that we don't know much about the general topography. But when I clapped my eyes on Maple Copse, the past rose before me like a dream and I got my bearings. Now, the best thing that greeted my eyes, was this: nothing has been touched since the war from Maple Copse to Observatory Ridge, and from the South-Eastern part of Observatory Ridge right to Hooge. This is not because any attempt is being made to preserve it, because there isn't. In a few months there won't be a trace of trenches left as workmen are busy now flattening those trenches out, digging up old revettments, and every spade full of dirt is sifted through and small arms ammunition, bombs, etc. are being put off to one side and buried deep.

Well Ed, I wish you had been with me as I walked, or followed the old Communication trench the two or three hundred yards from Maple Copse up to Sanctuary Woods where we spent six or seven months, and the acre or two in which we spent the hottest time of our life from the 3 to the 8th of June, 1916. I thought of you holding down the latrine post together with Sgt. Bowsher. I think I found the exact spot. Ofcourse, the trenches are not in condition to get into, being all caved in, and what isn't actually caved in is full of water. They are all there though, German's and all. In fact, the German's are in best shape as you know they layed high and dry while we were low, and you will never realize how low we were until you look at it from the German trenches, in some places less than fifty yards from ours.

I got soaked wet hopping over shell holes, falling into them where I couldn't see them for grass, etc. I saw many of our old water bottles, and piles of old tins, you remember the kind we used to carry water up in, millions of small arms ammunition is laying about yet in rotten bandoliers, occasionally one can kick up an old rusted Le-enfield, and there are lots of the old German hand grenades laying about. You remember those can shaped things with a handle on them. They pulled a string in the handle, then three it and it was to explode five seconds after the string was pulled. Well hundreds of these are laying about. Lots of Machine gun belts too, and Eighteen pounders, as well as larger dudes. I also found both our own and German gas masks, even one of our old 1915 gas masks. You remember the one that looked like a sack and which we dipped in solution and pulled over our heads. I did not find an Mills Grenades though I looked out for them specially, and they are the ones I would have expected to find. I watched some workmen for about an hour just to see what they dug up, and they got something of nearly everything. Yesterday they dug up four Canadians, two 50th Bn. fellows, one 42nd and a Cameron Highlander. I was hoping one or two would be dug up today so I could see them. (Three Canadian instead of four, and one Scotchman)

Ed, that little chunk of ground isn't very big, from Maple Copse to Sanctuary Wood, but a little hell has been enacted there once or twice, and I am glad I got back to see it before it was dug up. It soon will be no more. I nosed about on that acre or two nearly all day, and I recognized every inch of it better than I had ever thought I would, and many are the things I thought of and the boys we both know who snuffed out in that little corner of the old front. I think I stood very nearly on the exact spot that old Bill Atkins got that little chunk of shrapnel through his head. Also Mart

Atkins, Bargar, Bamber, together with several hundred other Fortyniners. Many of our boys snuffed out on that half dozen acres of Flander's field. I managed to get my trousers torn on the barbed wire entanglements too, but that isn't the first time I have gotten them torn on that around there. It is the first time they have been torn in day time though and while I was standing up.

There are large grave yards all over the Salient. Nine out of ten are marked "Unknown British Soldier," or "Unknown Canadian Soldier." I am surprised that so few are known. Of course, those up around Ypres are known as you know most of those buried there died of wounds. Many graves are marked, "Unknown 49th Bn Soldier," or whatever Battalion they belonged to. You see, they can always tell what Battalion he belonged to by looking at his badges. The first name I recognized was the sheep herder, you know, F. Baldwin. He is buried in a cemetery to the left of Maple Copse together with about twenty others in a plot marked, "The following Soldiers are known to be buried in this plot." There are about fifteen or twenty plots in that cemetery marked the same way. I do not understand why they don't know the body if they know they are buried there. The next one I recognized was young Bargar. He is buried down in a cemetery right in Maple Copse, also in a plot with twenty or thirty others. Young Bamber is buried in the same plot as Bargar. There are many other Forty-niners there too, but none whom we knew as well as these. I didn't find any of the Atkin boys nor Nacket. Chances are Nacket was planted right in a shell hole and maybe has never been found or is in an "Unknown." There are many other grave yards all over the place, but they don't interest me much. I didn't stick around them much. I spent my time right around the area where you know that Fritz sniper had his pill box and picked off one or two regularly every day just for a past time until we discovered him and placed a charge of gun cotton under him via a tunnel from our line. You remember that bird, don't you? I'll bet that German is still sailing upwards. I thought of many things while stalking about there this forenoon and afternoon and would have given anything had you been there for at least one or two hours. I can appreciate now why we both wanted Observatory Ridge. Believe me, they sure had a birds' eye view on us, and it beats the deuce how we ever lived there at all. They were looking right down on us all the time.

Well I didn't have a film along so walked back to Ypres with the intention of coming back tomorrow. When I got back I found the train did not return to Hazebrouck until 3:45, and inasmuch as a train was just pulling out for Passchendaele, I took a fast run up there - just for one and one-half hour. I did not quite locate Bellevue Heights. I will find that tomorrow. If I ever get on that ridge I'll know it be among a million. I want to see that pill box that we attacked from on the morning of October 30th, 1917. There are piles of pill boxes all the way from Ypres to Zonnebeke, and lots from Zonnebeke to Passchendaele. The frog eaters use these pill boxes for hog houses. I am going to take some pictures of some of them so you can see if you recognize the German's old strong holds. If there was anything on this green earth I used to hate it was those pill boxes and no wonder after the cleaning up we got on the 30 October trying to take one of them.

The cemeteries at Passchendaele are also filled up with Unknown Soldiers. I saw one or two Fortyniners, one C.S.M. McDonald, do you remember him? I can't, tho he had an original number. I saw Cpl Nelsons grave, and he was killed the morning of the 30th, and that is why I think I must have been close to Bellevue heights. I was only up there a few minutes. I'll locate all that tomorrow. No one will fool me on Bellevue heights once I lay my kamps on it. I'm going to take the train up and walk back, down through Regina farm, across Abraham heights, to Ypres, or to the old camp where Fritz used to bomb us every day. If I remember right, the old Quartermaster was killed right below Bellevue heights the night you and he brought the rations up on the 29th of October. I don't just know where he got plugged, but you would know as you were right with him when he got his. I'll find it all tomorrow though.

Now, that is all I can tell you at present of what I have seen today. I leave here on the morning train again and will take some pictures tomorrow. I'm going down to Sanctuary Woods and Passchendaele both. A day after tomorrow I'll take in Loere, Branoutre, and the old Kemmel front, then ~~in~~ I'll migrate south through Neuve Eglise and Armentieres to Bethune. I don't think I'll bother about going to the old Floegstreert front though that is where we were initiated into trench life. We were not there long enough to know much about it there, and chances are there is nothing to be seen anyway. I won't go up to Dixmude as we were never there. Poelcappelle and St. Julien are both rebuilt, Zonnebeke too. Poperinghe is a beehive of industry, and is also rebuilt. The war babies in Caestre, Steenwoerd, Godewaersvelde, Boeschepe, and St. Jans Cappol, will soon be able to relieve their mammas of the jobs of dishing out the beer in the Estaminets. Vlamortynghes is also rebuilt.

The frog eaters are putting in a ~~new~~ sewer along the old Menin road, and it's interesting to see what they dig up in such a narrow strip. They dig up nearly as much scrap iron as dirt. I saw rifles, small arms ammunition, steel helmets, machine guns, and lots of 9.2 duds and eighteen pounders. This was away back not far from the Menin gate. Right between Menin gate and Hell's Fire Corner.

I think it is time I was closing now. It's getting late and a couple of the frog eaters are getting nosy. They drank the equivalent of twenty cents worth of beer and are beginning to feel the effects of it in their heads.

Now I will close and will write more as time goes on and I see something more. I think I have done pretty well for tonight. I got to get up early.

Aurevoir. and love to all.

Inar Anderson - trip back to Europe

Hazebrouck, France, (Emile Estaminet),  
November 7th, 1924.

Dear Ed:

I am going to write you again today. I promised you I would relay all news of the old front on to you, and that is what I intend to do. I have three extra copies in at the same time, thus I save in writing letters. You know, what I write you will do for all. You are the one that is most interested in this part of the old world.

I revisited Ypres yesterday and spent quite a lot of time around Passchendaele. I had a little trouble finding the old Bellevue spur, but after a while I discovered it. There are no trenches there anymore. Of course, you know there never were many there anyway. Fritz used pill boxes there, and they still remain and the frog eaters use them for hog houses, and mighty good ones they are too. The trenches there were improvised affairs, and, of course, didn't last long after the advance or retreat was made. That is not so around Sanctuary Woods and Hooze though, as you know those trenches were revetted. Of course, the trenches there are things of the past now too. Only in Sanctuary Woods, from the east side to Hooze, and from Sanctuary Woods back to Maple Copse are there any trenches, or signs of trenches, and they are caved in and full of water. What were left of them stirred within me a repulsive feeling though. I thought of the days and nights and months spent in them, wet, lousy, hungry, and cold; and always under continual shell fire.

Ed, I wish you could have been with me. In a few months there will be no trace of trenches left. Workmen are going over the ground with spades and gingerly digging it up, sifting out all explosives, bombs, etc. The little strip I have mentioned is about all that is left. Cows and chickens, and farm houses galore, roam all over the old Salient.

As I scouted about that little stretch of the front, I thought of many things that I had almost forgotten. There are a few things happened there I will never forget, but when sticking around, minor events came up. I remembered once while I was in the front line Orderly room, Colonel Griesbach came in ~~one~~ and told me that he had seen my brother and he had a novel sniping shield. I hadn't much to do so went up to see what you had, and when I found you, you were crouched up on the firing step with a periscope looking through a hole in those old Hughes shovels. I don't know whether you remember that or not. I sure do. You told me you thought you saw a Fritz. I also remember you were together with Bill Adkins and was ready to cut shavings to make a little tea when I left. Believe me, those were tough times. Bill Adkins was killed a couple days later after we had moved back to Supports.

~~That's brought back~~ When I looked at young Russel Bugar's grave I thought of the time Griesback came into the dug out and said there was a fellow laying outside with his head blown in and no identification marks on him, but he had a tattoo mark on his arm with initial under it, "R.B." I knew right away who it was as we had our tattoo mark put on together. I knew it was Bugar when I saw that tattoo.

I remember walking into that Woods the morning of the 3rd over the bodies of dead C.M.Rs, 42nd, and P.P.C.L.Is. And do you remember the way we piled the dead out of the trenches to make room for the wounded? You will also remember the way the wounded and dead were piled up against the old China wall. One sure remembers these things when walking over the old ground, and especially when the trenches, or remains of trenches, are still to be seen. We were all a bunch of fools to get into it in the first place, but laying aside that, one got to admire the pluck that sent a bunch of twenty year old boys forward without a whimper to almost certain death. You will remember old Hobbins calling the roll call back at "A" camp after we got out. Not one in ten answered it. So much for that. I took a stroll back to Sanctuary woods yesterday for one long last look at that knoll for I never expect to see it again, and don't

want to either for that matter. Our casualties, you will remember, were almost as large on Passchendaele Ridge, (Bellevue spur) but somehow that was open fighting and little or no concentrated bombardment. I can still see that file of Fortyniners sneaking over the top, through barbed wire entanglements, with fixed bayonets and in broad daylight in face of a solid wall concentrated bombardment. And then getting into the trench and starting to bomb the trenches out with the little Mills grenade. Then the counter attack bombardment every hour or two during the nights, and three days offit. I could almost see Captain McLeod coming down the trenches looking mighty sick with his arm dangling from the elbow, and Captain McNaughtan laying head down in a shell hole with his feet in the air, together with a bunch of stiff C.M.R.S. It was sure some layout. McLeod, you will remember, died at the base a few days later. Then there was Hackett with a bullet through the skull. The only guy that escaped that lucky was George Standing as he got out early with a thumb scratch.

I took a picture of the pill box from which we attacked on the morning of October 30th on Bellevue Spur. A New Zealand monument has been erected close by. You know the New Zealanders were the main guys around there. I wish I had had a shovel as I believe I could have found that half Indian Lieutenant from C Company, young Scott of A Company, G.M.S. Robinson, (you remember the fellow who came together with Whitebread) and a few C.M.R.S. I planted them all in a deep shell hole a few feet from the S.E. corner, the morning of November 1st. I stood pretty close to the shell hole that once was where poor old Rusconi lay head first in a shell hole with a sack over his head, and Stone in the next one. I also remember Nickotichen, the big Russian, got plugged right through the heart while packing a Lewis gun into position. All these things would come back to you were you to go over the ground again. I sure remembered many things that I had forgotten. I looked through the Register on Bellevue spur cemetery to see if I could find Rusconi and Stone's graves, but they were not marked. That cemetery contain 12,000 soldiers, most being marked "Unknown Soldier." I don't know where Captain Travers was buried. You will likely know that as you packed him back didn't you? You were together with him when he was plugged, if I remember right. So much for Bellevue spur on Passchendaele Ridge. I have left the Ypres Salient with no particular desire to ever return. I am glad I have seen it though. I took quite a few pictures which I hope will turn out o.k. Except for pill boxes and pastureland, there is no signs of ever having been a war there. (Outside of grave yards, of course) Pasture land, in most cases, is now marked and rough. One can hardly walk over for shell holes and ridges. That will soon be levelled out too.

All the graves are wonderfully kept and accurate records are being kept. Bodies are still being found. Farmers are continually plowing someone up, and on the old front that isn't farmed yet, hundreds are still laying about and being dug up. Of course, none are laying about visible. Just for curiosity sake, I walked into the office of the British War Graves Commission yesterday and asked for information relative to the graves of Mart and Bill Adkins. It took him about an hour to look through the files, but he finally found them both. I also asked for McNaughtan, (Capt.) but he has evidently not been found yet. Here is the information he gave relative to the Adkins boys:

432797, M. Adkins, 49th Canadians. Buried, Bedford House Cemetery, Enclosure No. 4, Plot 15, Row D, Grave 6.

432801, Pte W. Adkins, 49th Canadians, killed 7/5/16, Sanctuary Wood British Cemetery, Special Cross No. 1.

Pte. M. Adkins, body found at 28, Military Map I. 24.a. 8.1. on July 7, 1921, 500 feet East of Maple Copse.

You will notice, Mart's body was not found until 1921, and you will notice, that is about the spot he was killed to. They didn't know the date of his death.



Special cross is for those whom they know exactly where buried. They know the plot where Burger, Baldwin, and W. Adkins and those fellows were buried, but not the exact grave. I found out why that is. You know, these fellows were killed in ordinary front line duty, not in an engagement, and after they were buried in regular cemeteries the Germans took that ground and ofcourse the cemetery disappeared under shell fire. Well, when the old crosses were gone they didn't know who were buried there. Records only shows who were buried in a certain cemetery. Mart Adkins, according to records, was identified by his wrist disc. You will know that is a mighty good record.

Now you know all about Ypres.

This morning I took a train to Bailleul then walked to Locre and "ranoutre, thence on to Kemmel. Locre and Dranoutre were completely demolished after we left that front. The Germans once advanced to a point between the old farm where we were billeted on the side of Kemmel Mountain, and Locre. Both towns are rebuilt. The old farm where we were has new buildings. The barn has gone, only the foundation being visible. You remember the old house down in the ravine behind the barn. It is ruins, and a new house built further up the hill. Fritz had all that in the spring of 18. Kemmel was completely knocked down and is rebuilt brand new. The Government rebuilds all these place gratis and awaits German indemnity. The Chateau at Kemmel is completely gone, even the bricks are removed. All signs of that consists of the foundation and the old mote. I took a picture of that. It was dark and cloudy so probably won't be much good. I did not go down to where we helped to fill Flanders into sand bags one winter, but I could see from Kemmel Mountain that there was nothing there but farms now anyway. I walked over the old crest of the hill where you stopped a chunk of shell casing. You remember the time that shell casing flattened your amunition pouch out. Had it not been for that pouch may be I would have visited a homestead of yours on the side of Kemmel hill, and underneath a little black cross. I notice a few crosses standing on the side of the hill quite far up. Bailleul too was completely demolished after we left that area in the early spring of 1916.

~~Handwritten scribbles and crossed-out text.~~

Tomorrow I go to St. Hilaire. I'll send your friend Germaine your respects. I don't know whether or not she still taps the bottles there, but very likely, as it is not so long since you heard from her, is it? I'll only stay in St. Hilaire between trains as I want to be in Bethune by tomorrow night. From there I'll migrate to Bruay for a few hours to see whether my land lady's husband ever got back from the war. You remember we were billeted there three weeks after the Vimy scrap. I'll then go to Albert and along old Courcellette and Bapaume ground. That's another blood soaked ground. I'll tell you all about that joint when I get there.

Aurevoir, and love to all.

Inar.  
*[Handwritten signature]*

Hotel Lionel D'Hors, #39 Boulevard Ornana, Paris, France,  
November 12th, 1924.

Dear Ed:

This letter will be yours again as it deals with the front. I am putting in the usual number of copies, though, as what I have to say relative to the old front may be of some interest all round.

I think I wrote about the old Kemmel front last time. At the best, there is very little to say about that front. The old farm where we were billeted is still there, but new buildings. The Kemmel Chateau has not even the bricks left. Kemmel itself is rebuilding. The first thing these frog eaters do when building a new town is to build a steeple, then they place a bell in it and start building a church around it. When that is completed they begin thinking of building a house for their children and wives. Well Kemmel has its church of course, and they are now busy building the houses in which to live. Shops are already built. So much for the old Kemmel front. That was the quietest front we were ever on anyway, and done nothing much there but fill sand bags full of dirt. Do you remember that winter?

I left Hazebrouck after visiting Kemmel, for Bethune. You know, Fritz knocked Bethune flat after we left that area. It is also rebuilding. I could not get my bearings in that burg at all. Everything is being built differently. I took a run in a buss down to Bruay and located the old street where we were billeted. The dame we were billeted at is no longer there. Bruay is quite a live little City on account of that large coal mine you will remember. Next day I left for Lillers, and then walked the three kilometres into St. Hilaire. You will remember, St. Hilaire had no railway.

Your old friend Germaine was there as usual and I recognized her as soon as I spotted her, and she recognized me too. She is the same petite little dame as usual, had her hair done up in kid curlers and looked quite good in them. She had forgotten most of her English, but between us we made out alright. She remembered McAulay, Bewsher, Harris, and that bunch, and also the celebration the night McAulay and I left for England to get our commissions. "Buckoo zig zag that night," she says. But you are the one she remembers most effectonately of all, and as I left she told me to be sure to send her love to Monsieur Eddie, Madam Eddie, and the picanninies. She is spliced now, having married that French Lieutenant you remember we once saw home on leave from Verdun. He pulled through o.k. with one or two bullet holes in his legs. They were married last April and live in Bethune. She comes home once a month to help her mother. I saw the old lady too, and she talked like a gramophone for about ten minutes then said she had to go out and pick up some more turnips before it gets too cold. I didn't understand much she said except an occasional "tres-bien" and "bon Canadiens," so I knew it was alright. She looks no older, and that kid sister of Germaine's is growing into some dame for looks. You remember, she was not big when we were there, but is now as tall as Germaine was. Well Germaine dished me out all the ~~good~~ vin blanc I could consume, and told me it was gratis. She wanted to know why you stopped writing. I told her I intended visiting France again in four years. Germaine said that was "tres bien", and when I got back she would have quatre picaninnies, and she made marks on the wall to show me there would be about six inches in height between them up to the fourth one.

I should have said that I went from Hazebrouck to Lillers, then St. Hilaire, then Bethune.

From Bethune I went to Lens, and from there to Vimy. You remember where the town of Vimy used to be. It was just one-half mile from Petit Vimy, and you sure know where that joint is as if I remember right, you led the advance guard patrol into Petit Vimy to clear the town, or the ruins I should say, after the attack on the ridge. Well,

I left the Somme on the 7:45 and reached Paris 10:30, some hour to arr joint like this. First thing I thought of after arriving here was getting a room nearest hotel, but had hardly got out of the ~~seat-before-~~ coach before I was nabbed a petite young dame who wanted to help me get located. I shook her though, and got a room in a hotel close to the station. Next day I moved up here. It is not quite satisfactory, but I have looked around quite a lot but everything seems to be filled up. This is a real nice room, warm, and well lit, at 11 francs a day. That is about .60¢. It's 10 francs, but one has always to add ten percent on to everything in this burg for tips. A ten franc room here corresponds favorably to the rooms one can get in the Empire in Calgary. Meals can be had, four course, at five and six francs. So you will see nothing is very dear.

I have been here two days and am just getting my bearings. You know, when one lands in a town like this and can't speak the ding dong, it takes a little while to find out just where things are. I got a map, and I know now where the principal streets are, and places of particular interest. Yesterday I was along the Champ Elysees as far as the Arc De Triomphe and watched President Domérousque and M. Heriot place wreathes on the grave of the unknown soldier. There was also a little military parade, not much, but even at that, too much for this war impoverished tip-seeking nation of frog eaters. It has not been clear enough thus far to see Eiffel tower right to the top. I'll tell you more of Paris when I write again. It is some burg, and has a mighty good underground system, not quite as fast ~~th~~ as the New York system, but not as noisy either. It's more along the ~~New-Yer~~ London style.

I will likely go to Denmark for Christmas, then from there across country to Marseilles, via boat on the Mediterranean to Port Said where I will visit Jerusalem and Cairo, then down the Red Sea between Arabia and Egypt to Aden, then across Arabian Sea to Bombay, India, across country to Ceylon, across Bay of Bengal to Singapore, north to Shanghai, China, and Yokahama, then to Vancouver. I have investigated and inquired around a bit and find that work is scarce in South Africa. If that is the case, then I would be further ahead by taking the shorter and more interesting trip, and getting back in the early spring so that I can get back to the States on the Pacific Coast next spring and get to work again. Believe me, I'll feel like working then. I might want you to send me some dough to Kopenhagen about Christmas time. The trip so far has not cost much, but if I go that way then I had better get a good supply on hand as I won't be stopping long enough anywhere to have it sent to me any other place. You know what I mean.

Thanks for the letter I just received sent c/o British Consul. <sup>It</sup> That was tough luck that the barn burnt down at Percy's, but it could be worse. Things like that will happen at times. I am not certain that I will go to Kopenhagen, so until you hear again, just forward letters c/o British Consul <sup>for</sup> It's their business to look after such things and forward them on. I'll likely stop in Rome for a week or two, too. Of course, one never knows when he will get there.

Now I'll wind off. Regards to all. I'm going to send a package ~~one~~ <sup>you</sup> one of these days. Uncle Peter gave me a pipe about five feet long, and Uncle Chris also gave me one. Then I got a couple of Meersham cigar holders from each of them, and when I stepped on the train our cousin Marie Khyse handed a copper flag pole with a Dane flag on top of ~~it~~, through the window, as a reminder of Denmark. I don't want to pack all that around with me as my suit case is heavy enough now, so will pack it and send it ~~to~~. We got a good bunch of relations over in Denmark. I wish you could see Uncle Peter in his high hat and swallow tailed coat. Believe me, it isn't cheap clothing that bloke walks about in either. He is better dressed than the King of Denmark. He has a suit for all occasions. I didn't find out how much money he has, but Cousin Marie says I got my share now, when she seen the gold watch chain I had gotten as well as the long pipe. We had a good time at his birthday.

*I'm anxious to get a letter from you. Don't forget to write to Mrs. Hance.*

Mrs. Hance

the second I got off at the station and looked about a little, I recognized that ridge. I walked through the town of Petit Vimy, up the side of that hill, and stood once more on the crest of Vimy Ridge. I could light a fag there without drawing fire now.

There is really more evidence of a war, outside of cemeteries, etc., on Vimy than any other front I was one. All the old craters were still there, trenches all over, wire in front in some cases, and shell holes everywhere just like when we left. The only difference ~~on that~~ now and when we left is that the shells holes are growing grass. It no longer looks black, or like a ploughed field as it did then, but is green. One can't walk over it, though, without hopping all over and getting one's feet wet. There are still remains of rifles laying about, lots of German hand grenades, and our own too for that matter, egg ~~bob~~ bombs, etc., but strange to say, I have not yet found a #4 Mills. I believe the frog eaters have gone over the ground and got them out of the road. There are plenty eighteen pounders, 9.2s, one or two unexploded flying pigs, etc. laying about.

I stood on the lip of old Litchfield crater where we spent many rotten nights; and also walked around the edge where that dumb-bell from your Platoon took a shot at Bentley and I at a distance of less than fifteen yards when we were coming in from patrolling "No Man's Land." Do you remember that? I could almost feel the wind of that bullet passing my chin again. I also walked over the ground where McAulay, Bewsher, you, and I, crawled that night we set out to capture Flare-Light-Bill. Chances are we would have captured him had McAulay's teeth stopped chattering. The old Platoon and Company headquarter dugouts have disappeared as the frog eaters are farming the land right up to a point midway between the junction of Numbers one and two sap to the trench that connected Watling and Litchfield Crater. I was rather disappointed that was not to be seen. I took a picture of the high post on ~~Litchfield~~ Crater, and also one of the Pulpit post on Litchfield. I sure wish you had been there. It will be a long time before the land between the crater line and the edge of the ridge can be farmed. It will all have to be levelled out with a spade as no plow or team of horses could ever walk or get over that. Mount St. Eloy is the same as usual, and Neuville St. Vaast looks mighty sick but is starting to look up. It is already well supplied with Estaminets. The old caves are still there. I could not find the tunnel where we were billeted for a while.

From Vimy I went to Arras. It is also being rebuilt into a mighty nice City.

After leaving Arras I went to Albert. It looks ~~so~~ sick too but is starting to get cleaned up. The Virgin Mary on top of the Cathedral has fallen down, and it is in much more ruin than when we left. I went up on Tarra Hill and looked down over the valley just as you remember we done one night in 1916 shortly before we went in to attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt. It looked same as usual except there were no guns roaring, nor flashes all over the valley. Pozieres, Courcellette and Papaume are all being rebuilt. Contalmaison is also starting to look up. I was on the Sunken road where you remember friend Broome got plugged, also St. Major Ellis, and that bunch. That was also the place our old friend Colson disappeared and no one ever saw him dead or alive since. He must have had a direct hit. I am not sure that I located Regina trench though I would have liked to have seen it. Chances are it is being farmed. Do you remember that dud Captain from Edmonton? He was afraid to make a move that day without Sergeant Anderson being with him to tell him what to do. I can see him yet running around half wild wanting Sergeant Anderson and you asking why he couldn't think of someone else for a change. That dud's brain either worked in one direction only, or he knew a good man when he saw one. I remember Sgt. Major Patterson, (that short stout fellow) coming down the trench with the rum, and less than two minutes afterwards I came along the trench after him and there he was, the top half sitting on the parapet like a statue with a grin on his face, and the bottom half on the parade. He looked as though he had been cut in two with a sharp butcher knife. I could not locate Sugar trench either. That is probably farmed too. That big Swade ~~Sergeant~~ Sergeant on the transport ought to know where that is, also Walker, as they got decorated for bringing tea up to Sugar trench after the remains of the front liners straggled back. That was sure some farce. You will remember that too.

after reading this over I find a lot of mistakes but I havent time to re-type it now, and I don't believe you will mind.

Michichi, Alta.  
June 15, 1951.

Dear Uncle Chris & Aunt Minnie & Eleanor:

Well folks Uncle John has left us, however he has gone to a much better world.

Uncle Ed, Florence & Grandpa were out to-day. Uncle Herman, Aunt Helga, & Aunt Freda were here also.

All day yesterday Uncle John just felt fine. Yesterday morning the Municipality put some dirt in a low spot in the alley between the store and Walter Murdochs, however it was put in a pile and we had to smooth it out. Dad told me about it and I had to do some shopping for Mum and before I got that finished Uncle John had it practically levelled out. I started teasing him about not having any work to do yesterday because ~~xx~~ it wasn't busy in the store and he started in on me because as he said it I skipped out of that work. I never seen him in better humour than he was yesterday.

At supper time he came home (every Saturday night we have an argument about who will make the breakfast Sunday morning) and he started kidding Mum about who would make the breakfast. She said "don't think your going to get out of it Mister Man", and he said "I hope we get a good breakfast", after that he started to talk about the trip to Carstairs that we were going to make to-day. He was in the best of spirits.

He was feeling just fine all the time through supper and after supper. He was out in the porch kidding Dad & Mum and Mrs. Ritchie. Dad and he made a go-cart for hauling chick feed and they had to take it down to the garage to get the connections welded. You know Dad is excited when he is making something, he wants to get it finished, well when he took that thing to the garage he told Roy there was no rush and then all through supper and after supper he was wondering if Roy had it finished yet. Uncle John got a great deal of kik out of that.

Uncle John went over to the oil-house about eight-ten and got George Moeller a barrel of gas, nothing wrong with him, he came back over to the store and made out the invoice and kidded George some. Then just after George went out, Elmer Lowe was in there and he grabbed his left side just below his heart and said "I have a terrible pain", then he turned around and went out the back-way. Dad was down at the garage and he told Dad to come back to the store that he wasn't feeling very well. Dad asked him what was wrong and he said he didn't know, then Dad asked him where I was and he said he didn't know. With that Dad went into the store the back way and Uncle John went around the sidewalk. Dad came right through the store and was coming over to the house when he saw Uncle lean up against our car (it was out in front) as though he was going to vomit.

Well Dad thought that he was just sick to his stomach and as soon as he vomited he would be all right so he turned around and went back into the store. Uncle John then went into the house and Mum & Mrs. Ritchie were in the porch so he went up to my room. When he went in Mum thought it was Dad and she said "is that you Albert", he said "no it's me I don't feel very well", with that he started upstairs and Mum ran out and just as she got to the bottom of the stairs she said "what's wrong John", he said "I don't know, but I'm awfully sick". With that Mum went right upstairs and he had flopped himself on his stomach on my bed. He took two short gasps and Mum yelled at Mrs. Ritchie to come and get Dad. Dad went right over and he took a short breath and that was the end.

The whole thing happened in about five minutes.

When Mum went up she thought he was just about gone so she took his left arm and started to shake it. She thought this might loosen the clot. The next thing she thought of was convulsions, she rushed down stairs and got a pan of water to bathe his head, by this time Dad was here.

We immediately phoned the doctor (Dr. Gourlay, Drumheller) He got here about nine o'clock. He took one look at Uncle John and said he's gone. He then took out that tube like affair and placed it at his heart. He said it was a small blood clot in the valve of the clotary (I don't know if that's spelled right but it's something like that) artery. He told us that he could not have done a thing except what we did if he had have been in the store when it first attack him.

I didn't get this letter finished last night as the crowd around kept me from thinking of what to tell you however it couldn't have gone out until to-night anyway so I guess no harm was done.

We got a phone call from Uncle Ed this morning, he had received a telegram from Uncle Walter and he was in Nelson and would reach Calgary to-night. They are coming out to-morrow morning

We are holding a funeral here to-morrow afternoon at two thirty o'clock, it is in the hall. Then he will be taken back to Drumheller and shipped by train to Carstairs where another service will be held Wednesday afternoon at the same time. He will then be placed beside Grandma in the Carstairs cemetery.

We were down to see Uncle John at the funeral home in Drumheller yesterday. He looks just as natural as he can. He just looks as though he were lying there asleep/

Well folks this is all the time I have as we are quite busy and I have a few more letters to write too.

Dad is also writing a page to send with this.

Love,

*Gordon*

Albert Gordon Anderson

Michichi June 16-1941

Dear Chris & Mimi & Eleanor:-

Well Gordon is writing everything so there is very little that I can say. We have been quite busy. This is Monday and tomorrow the ~~funeral~~ funeral service will be here. John passed away at about 8.17 P.M. Saturday June 14<sup>th</sup>. He took a severe pain in his stomach here in the store and he walk over to the home and died as soon as he hit the bed. It was not over 5 minutes.

It is an awful shock. John will leave a vacant space in our home as he had been here so long and in my business I am going to miss him more than I realize. I believe if it is a nice day that there will be quite a crowd out tomorrow.

Had a phone from Ed today saying the Walters would be in Calgary 8 nights.

Well I must close for now and we will write again at the end of the week and let you know everything.  
Love from us all

Albert.