

**Glenbow Archives**  
**M-7484-5a, Hugh Murray McQueen's First World War letters**

[on letterhead: St. John Ambulance Brigade hospital.]

D 25

January 1<sup>st</sup> 1917

Dear Dad:

In hospital again with my side + going to Blighty for operation so before you receive this I'll probably be as good as ever, again.

Have been in this hospital since Xmas eve + certainly had a most enjoyable Christmas I was most lucky to be brought to this hospital. I certainly could not have been in a better or nicer place for Xmas in France. Everything that could possibly be done for our convenience + pleasure was done by the hospital staff. Here in our ward (D) we had everything from stockings + Xmas tree in the morning to a small concert of our own; And at night a fine concert was given in the recreation hall, for the whole hospital. The following night a company composed of members of the hospital staff played the opera "Mikado" + it was absolutely fine.

I wish you + Mother could be here to see + go through this hospital. I had often heard that it was the best in France + now I know it is without a doubt. Each ward has every convenience. The staff seems so efficient + everything is done on such a system that all hustle + bustle is eliminated - so making it the more enjoyable for patients + staff alike.

By the way, Dad, in the Casualty Clearing Station that I came through I had to look twice at the Sister to be sure it wasn't Mother. - almost a perfect resemblance.

Hoping everyone is well + enjoying the holiday season in Toronto.

Love.  
Murray

[Official army postcard – notice of arrival at hospital]

To be sent to next of kin, to whom it will serve as the official notification.

Mrs A. M. McQueen  
25 Foxbar Rd. Toronto. Canada

[postmarked January 6, 1917]

I have just arrived at hospital at [4B written in pencil]  
(The name and place of the hospital are not to be filled in by the soldier.)

Murray McQueen  
58<sup>th</sup> Canadians  
124756

Ward 7B.  
4<sup>th</sup> Scottish General Hospital  
Stobhill  
Glasgow.

Thursday 11/1/17

Dear Dad:

In the above hospital for the last six days. Its simply glorious to be back in a ‘civilized’ country again where you can understand what the people are talking about - although I got on fairly well with the French.

You will have had my letter written from the St. John’s Ambulance hospital at Etaples, France, saying I was to be operated on. Well, as things are now, I don’t know whether they will operate or not because as I am now I am perfectly alright. The trouble is I can’t do any long marches - get doubled up after about three quarters of a mile.

Once again we can write a decent letter + tell you where we’ve been + what we’ve been doing. There is just a chance that the censors will get it but I’ll take that chance + tell you about myself. The Tommies get a chance to tell their folks everything when they are back home, here, so I guess they’ll allow us the same privilege.

The reason we were sent away from England so soon after arriving was the “June Scrap” as it is known amongst the boys. In history I suppose it will be known as either the Third battle of Ypres or the battle of ‘Zillebeke’. We landed at Havre - the Canadian Base - at about four o’clock P.M. Instead of going to the “Bull-ring” (practise trenches, wire Etc.) for three or four weeks, as is the usual thing, we were marched right onto the little French boxcars the next morning + after about

sixty hours got out at Poperinghe, in Belgium. We marched about four miles + joined the 58<sup>th</sup> at 'D' camp. It was just before twilight that we got there + Colonel Genet (58<sup>th</sup>) received us with a little narrow-minded speech that queered him with the 70<sup>th</sup> boys right there + then. After a few words about his Battalion + this + that he had the neck to tell us "Boys - I want you to forget your original batallion - take off your 70<sup>th</sup> badges + wipe the 70<sup>th</sup> batt. from your memory" Etc Well, Dad, you can imagine how we liked that + what an impression it left. However, we found the 58<sup>th</sup> boys to be a nice bunch of fellows + before many days were as much at home as though we had always been there.

We did a five day trip in the line (In Sanctuary wood) beginning a couple of days later + went back to Steenvoorde - about 20 kilometers (1 kilo = 5/8 miles) for eight day brigade rest + from then on, the usual routine - in + out - in + out.

Nearly every trip in we were billeted in Ypres for four or five days. From there to the line where we were holding it is about four miles. When billeted in Ypres you are in reserve + do working-parties to the front line every night. That little sketch I sent you about the shell-helmet, I picked up in the old Belgian cavalry barracks in Ypres. We had just got there about 2 A.M. After an eight day trip in the front line + poor old Vern Manderwille (gone now) + I had gotten up with the sun the next morning + were doing a little looking around. It was Clare Sharky that picked up + gave me that likeness of Mother. He thought it was the very picture of Mother.

Say, Dad, you can't imagine the mass of ruins that town is. It was a big town, you know; twenty or thirty thousand people +, like all towns in these countries, everything was built of brick. Well, absolutely, there isn't a whole nor even half a building left standing. The old cloth-hall must have been a wonderful building when standing but, like the rest, it is a mass of ruins now. It is standing right on the town square + its towers made it a target for Fritz's gunners. There was - then, half of one tower left standing - split right down the centre + although 40' or 50' square, it seems to have been almost solid stone.

About the first week in September we were on our way to the Somme. Arriving at Albert we were bivouacked for two days + then up. Up! say if I live to be a hundred I'll never forget that first night in. the guide taking us in lost his way + instead of relieving the 49<sup>th</sup> in what is known as the Sugar Trench, we got up in front of the trench about 150 yards + were ordered to dig in. To 'dig in' is to dig a hole for yourself + then connect up the different holes + so make a trench. Well, anybody that can tell us anything about being under shell-fire after that night has got to show me. Clare Sharkey + Walt. Sheppard were digging in about 3 yds behind Baldy McEachern + I. The fellows were falling like so many blades of grass under a lawnmower. Fritz was dropping the biggest stuff he had, right on top of us. Shep + I were calling back + forwards to one another every little while; but pretty soon a heavy dropped, I thought, just about on them + I called to Shep - no answer. As soon as I got a chance (in a few minutes) I went back. Poor Shep was killed + Shake had disappeared. We thot then that Shake was blown to pieces but a few hours later I heard he had been wounded. That afternoon, before we started up, Shep had put a few things in a pocketbook + showed me which pocket he was putting it in - gave me an address in Toronto to send it to. He + I had been pretty good friends. I asked him at the time to get that "good-by" idea out of his head but he said he couldn't. He seemed to know before he went in that it was to be his last trip.

Well, Dad, my very best love to all at home. write to the above address but I wish instead [end of letter - incomplete?]

[telegram from Kate A. MacLean to Murray's mother, Mrs. A. M. McQueen]

Great North Western Cablegram

M225ny mg 12/16

Glasgow Jan 14 - 17

McQueen  
25 Foxbar Road  
Toronto (Ont)

Murray well anxiety unnecessary has written

Maclean  
402 pm

Telephone No. H 5813  
Telephoned to McQueen  
Time 418  
By WB To Be Del

[letter from Kate A. MacLean to Murray's mother, Mrs. A. M. McQueen]

221 Nithsdale Road.  
Glasgow.

Sunday - 14<sup>th</sup> - Jan - 1917.

My dear Sue.

Allie Kay + I have just got back from Stobhill where we saw Murray looking particularly well. We found the ward + at the door asked for Murray McQueen, a Canadian + ~~Murray~~ his name was called out, also "Canada" + Murray appeared from the top of the ward. He was surprised to see us - could scarcely understand how we knew he was there - but that was soon explained. We got chairs at his particular corner, where his bed was - + sat + chatted for a couple of hours. He said he had sent me three communications - 2 cards + one letter. I only got one card

He is in for a possible operation. He got hit by a bit of Shrapnel on the tender part where his operation for appendicitis had been - not wounded, you understand - but it's adhesions - as far as I can gather. He says he just feels fine + certainly he looks it. Likes the Hospital + the food - + the ward was really lovely - so warm + bright, flooded with Sunshine + looking out the windows the country was covered with snow. Murray thinks it's the most like home he has seen on this side.

It's a big Hospital - 1500 beds + the Head of the whole concern is our Dr. - Lt. Col. Napier - so after leaving Murray, we went to his rooms but he was out. A nurse said Col. Napier was very seldom in the ward but we thought if he might just have a look at Murray it would be satisfactory, for his opinion is well worth having + he has seen the Kay family through their many tribulations.

I told Murray to write John Peat + he would probably hear something to his advantage - Murray says he never had a operation for Hernia - it has always been the bruise on this tender part. He thought that even without an operation he would likely be six weeks at Stobhill - I hope so.

Murray had lost our address. He arrived on the 5<sup>th</sup> Jan - + has been out in the grounds + had begun to ask if any one knew a Mrs. Kay or Miss MacLean. If he had remembered the Catheart + looked a phone book it would have been all right - however that does not matter now.

We could not go to see him tomorrow + on Tuesday afternoon a lady is taking Murray + other three out - but Maggie + I will both go over on Wednesday + see what is being done + how he can get over here. Stobhill is under very strict military discipline + if they are at all late it's C.B. And we are such a long way off - quite an hour at the very best - which means fully hours travelling. If he could get over a little earlier on Saturday + Sunday it would be nice - if a little wire pulling can do it, we'll try. I trust he may be a long time here.

But this is a sad house with Jack missing - we cannot get away from it - it presses on us night + day. It is in the third week now since he disappeared - + as the time comes nearer for possible news we get more + more nervous + anxious - we fear our slender hope may be taken from us. But we cannot expect to hear anything before March - it is a fearful strain + anxiety.

Did you know that Maggie McKague is in training to be a Deaconess at 60 Grosvenor St. Toronto. After Kate's death she felt she must make something of her life.

The rest of us go on as usual - these dreary days. When Allie told Murray he had been one day in the Army - then a bad operation - Murray just said he was lucky.

I am sure you have had a terrible time of anxiety but I hope that is over meantime + I can't tell you how glad I am Murray is within reach - very much love to all.

Yr. loving cousin Kate A. MacLean

P.S. Your cable came in on Saturday evening between nine + ten. We phoned Stobhill to speak to Col. Napier but he was in bed. Allie + I cabled you this afternoon (Sunday) about five o'clock - shortly after leaving Murray. I hope it got quickly through.

Stobhill 19/1/17

Dear Jean:

Seemed mighty funny but I received a letter of yours + one of mothers yesterday dated Oct 20/16 + Oct 27/16. Long time in coming but better late than never. You seem to be having a fine time at Varsity. You mentioned something about Den Cantleys Cousin + that Den was in a Siege battery. Working on heavy guns is an awfully good job. Almost bomb-proof - away behind the lines you know with good billets Etc. The infantryman is the only one who sees all the fighting - worst billets - poorest grub - poorest pay - all the danger - most work + is looked upon as nothing more nor less than a dog both in + out of the army. I suppose Marg is acquainted + having a good time by now. + so Mae has been working at Eaton's.

Say Jeannie, you might see if you can't meet Vera Wright - on Avenue road quite a piece above the C.P.R. See if you can not get her address in the phone directory + send her a card with my best regards on it. Say that not having her address I requested you to do it. I'd like awfully well for you to meet her because she's awfully nice.

By the way Jean, if you happen to see Mr. Hanna, Mr. Armstrong, J.E or C.O. Fairbank tell them that now I'm in England for a few weeks, it would be rather easy for any of them to pull a few wires + get me a good job in the army in Canada. That would be fine for a couple of months wouldn't it? Lots of instructors needed over there you know. Had a letter from John Peat. He's looking up my mail for me. Aunt Kate + Mrs Kay were up yesterday. I'm going out to their house tomorrow, Saturday. Drop a line to 304 Gladstone Ave. when you get a chance Jeannie.

Love to you all  
Murray.

[on letterhead: For God, For King & For Country. Y. M. C. A. H. M. Forces on Active Service]

30/1/17

Dear Mother:

Another new address for you. It's getting awfully monotonous - just get nicely acquainted + having a good time in one place + am moved to another. I'm properly fed up.

I am now at a big Canadian convalescent camp in Epsom England. Its a sort of a miserable place - cold + dreary - but, I hope, will improve on acquaintance. Was awfully glad to see Hughie Sharkey here last night. He's looking fine but had a couple of nasty little wounds - one in his wrist + another in his shoulder.

I liked it fine in Glasgow, Mother, but was not operated on. It seems that an operation isn't always successful for "abdominal adhesions" (which I have) especially when a person has been

operated on before. You see it was a rather large heavy piece of high explosive shell that hit me, right over my appendix scar. I'm still rather lame but outside of that complaint I feel fine.

Aunt Kate + Alley Kay took two of us to a picture show on Saturday in Glasgow. It was a perfectly wonderful theatre. Absolutely the prettiest place I've ever been in. After the pictures we went up to a tea room + Mrs. Kay was waiting for us. We had a fine afternoon all the way. I was going out there to-day - Tuesday - but was called away in a hurry on Sunday + here I am. I'm writing to Aunt Kate to-day because I wasn't able to get them by phone on Sunday. We left Glasgow at 9.45 PM Sunday + were in London 7.15 AM Monday + got to this desolate hole (?) about noon.

I've just been talking to George Brown - he's with the First Hussars. He was on a working party near us (tunneling) near Arras + came up to the front line to see me about 2½ months ago + here we have run across one another again but in a place which is rather more healthy - i.e. not so many little explosions going on.

Received Mac's letter, Mother + papers which Jean sent from Petrolia. Evidently Mac had a good time while in Petrolia. Had a parcel from Pearl, while in hospital, which was returned from France.

There are quite a few fellows going back to Canada, just now, on Staff jobs of one kind or another but I guess it is necessary to use quite a bit of pull. Much as I dislike that word - Pull - I would sure take advantage of it now if I had some.

However, Mother, its supper time so I'll have to close.

Love to you all.  
Murray  
#124756 - 58<sup>th</sup>  
Hut 22 G Division  
Can. Conv. Camp  
Woodcote Park.  
Epsom  
Surrey

P.S. Use the Bishopsgate address because I might move any time.

[letter from Kate A. MacLean to Murray's mother, Mrs. A. M. McQueen]

221 Nithsdale Road.  
Glasgow.

31<sup>st</sup> Jan. 1917.

My dear Sue.

Your two letters for Murray to my care came in yesterday morning so I went off to deliver them in person. But to my surprise when I got up to the ward at Stobhill the sister in charge told me Murray had gone off with several other Canadians to Epsom England on Sunday night.

I was so sorry not to see the last of him meantime. Time + again we tried to arrange that he should come to the house but it never seemed to fit in. However he says he will be getting leave + Maggie asked him to come back to Glasgow + spend it with us.

On Saturday Allie Kay + I met Murray + another wounded soldier + we did a Picture House + tea afterwards. Murray was looking awfully well but was still suffering from the eruption of heat spots. His new address is Canadian Military Conv. Hospital Woodcote Park Epsom - but I am afraid that won't help you for he will have left before you could answer this. I imagine John Peat may very probably be the best to look after his letters.

If Murray could get a job with John Peat he would be safe - + in that case he should apply to be re-instated in his Commission. Of course it all depends if he is passed for active service again.

We hope to see Murray again very soon if he gets leave + I have some socks ready for him.

Very much love to all

Yr. affect. Cousin

Kate A. MacLean.

[letter from Peter Morrison to Murray's mother, Mrs. A. M. McQueen]  
[letter damaged - holes in paper]

Scottish Land Court,  
14<sup>th</sup> February 1917.

My dear Cousin,

I received your letter a [few?] days ago, and have written to [your?] cousin Miss MacLean, with a view to taking a run to Glasgow to see Murray before leaving for the country. I understood

from your last letter he would not be coming to this country before December last, and am disappointed that he did not call to see me or communicate with me when he was in England, prior to his [missing words] France. I trust he'll [missing words] his usual health before [missing words] must have had a narrow escape.

I am just back [from?] home where I was attending the [funeral?] of our Aunt Mrs. Bruce [illegible] and her husband, both being found dead in their house on 26<sup>th</sup> ulto. Our Aunt has been blind for three years now, and the husband had to look after providing for the house. Apparently he got ill - from all appearance through falling in a fit on the floor, and our Aunt must have died from the shock at not being able to succour him. They were both found dead on the floor. This was the Doctors version to me when I arrived and to all appearance his [missing words] was according to [missing words] neighbours missed seeing the husband about the two previous days but owing to an intense cold prevailing that week, they thought nothing of that. The third morning however on visiting the house they knew something was wrong and called in the Policeman. I posted a paper to you last week with notice of their deaths. It cost me nearly £ 30, between my own expenses going and the funeral expenses. Travelling is now double here what it used to be.

Our last remaining aunt, Mary, is still bedridden and nursed like a child - for over [missing words] now. She is the [missing words] with the old home, [missing words] she will survive in her present weak condition. She is however well looked after, few invalids if any in that quarter getting such care and attention.

The Book arrived [all?] right. I will read it when travelling in Summer. Meantime I have no time whatever for reading.

My Cousin Dr. MacLean and I got into touch at long last, in October. He is at present in some war Hospital in the South of England, but intends coming to Edinburgh next month for a while. We are fast friends.

Now I must stop. This is merely a line to inform you of our aunts death, and with love to Grace + you all

Your affection [missing words]  
Peter [Morrison]

[P.S.] I trust thing are well in Alecks home, also your sister [in?] Fort William

[P.P.S.] Send on to Alec as soon as you read.

[clipping from Woodstock newspaper, Friday, February 16, 1917: "Mail Scattered by a Big German Shell"]

22/4/17

Dear Mother:

Rec'd a couple of letters from you + Jean last week but they were written early in April - also one from Jean Cameron. The mails have been pretty well delayed both ways I guess.

Nothing interesting over here, Mother. I had a good visit with Dotty Lambert, Jim McDermid + the boys in London + since then have been doing a little soldiering + getting off as many parades as possible. There were two American Officers made speeches in our YMCA here to-night telling what the Americans had learnt from our experiences since the war broke out + how much good they thought it was going to do them.

I suppose you have the new house all settled with your own things before this + feel more as though it is home. So Marg was down at Petrolea for Easter. She will naturally be a little homesick for a week or so after getting back.

Baldy McEachern, from Alvinston is the lucky kid. He never got a scratch all the time since we went to France except an accidental bayonet wound in the leg - very slight - and on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of April, the night before the Vimy Ridge scrap started he was called out of support trenches + send back here to Blighty under age - if that isn't real luck why I never saw any.

We are filling out demobilization cards now. Where we come from, married or single, what we worked at, whether we can go back to our former job or not, are we willing to go on a farm Etc Etc.

I saw Bill Frazer when I was in London. He hasn't been over to France + doesn't want to go but is looking fine.

Love to all at home, Mother,  
Murray  
7 C'oy  
8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Bn  
S. Martin's Plains  
Shorncliffe Kent

April 26/17

Dear Dad:

Soldiering again. Had a good time in London on pass but never left London. There are too many good shows on. Douglas Grey + I were together. If you've ever been in Blind River, Dad, you have probably met his father - he's a tailor there. I hope Jean has gotten the music I sent her from High-Jinks + Chu Chin Chow. Mr. + Mrs. Jacobs - by the way it was Dotty Lambert made us acquainted with them when he was here - were awfully good to us. We were out with them to Mrs. Jacobs father's place to tea a couple of times. It's away out in Canonbury very close to where there have been a couple of Zep raids.

I went to see John Peat + was up at the Oil Well Engineering Office. I went on Pass on Thursday + went up to see Mr. Brown on Friday. He gave me the check you sent, Dad, but on account of it being Easter Week I couldn't get it cashed until Tuesday. So I left it with Mr. Brown + went up again on Tuesday. He came down with me + had it cashed + then took me to the "Shell" offices + introduced me to the Manager - a Mr. Abram I think it was. He knew you anyway + on that account - only - said he was glad to meet me.

Mrs. Sharkey sent Hughie a letter Mr. Armstrong had received from Lord Pearley regarding Hughie + Clair getting back to Canada, but there is nothing doing so Hughie has made up his mind for France again. We are at the 58<sup>th</sup> Central Ontario Reserve Battn. now getting a few weeks training.

I was talking to Major Gorman the other night. He is a private in the C. A. S. C. now + looks better than he did when I saw him last. Bill Balls is here. He left France last August + has been in Blighty ever since. There is a young fellow from Windsor here. He has been around with Hughie + I quite a bit - knows Donna MacLean pretty well. Harvey is his name.

I hear the 149 is down in Bramshott. Its a wonder some of them haven't gotten too old to come over - they've been in training so long. I'd give about three months of my time here in Blighty to meet Beech Edward for about ¾ hours by himself. He'd take back a few of the things he said when Dunc + I were on that recruiting trip.

I haven't had mail since leaving Epsom.

Love to all  
Murray  
address -  
58<sup>th</sup> Bn  
c/o 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Bn  
Shorncliffe Kent

9/5/17

Covent Garden Hotel

Dear Dad:

Jim + Dotty sent Hughie + I a telegram + we got a two day pass to come up + see them. Its almost like being home for a couple of days. Things are pegging along alright I'm feeling fine +, the boys say, looking well also.

I think it will please Mother to have a talk with the boys on account of them having seen us.

We'd like to be going back with the boys but I guess we'll be taking a boat in an easterly direction before long.

Well, love to all at home Dad.

Murray

Shorncliffe June 21/17

Dear Dad:

Rec'd several letters from home the other day; letters dated from April to the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. The mails are awfully irregular just now altho' they seem to be getting better lately. Hughie had some mail from his mother + sisters + a letter from Marguerite Cameron.

I thought I had told you that I got the five pounds which you sent to John Peat - got it while I was in Epsom. I'm positive I told you about it in a letter.

We have been rather fortunate, in a way, in our reserve battalion. They took it upon themselves to keep all casualties in England until all the new men coming over have been sent across. Of course that is only in our battalion + it is Toronto or around Toronto that we are reinforced from. However it is the most aggravating + monotonous thing in the world to have these new sergeants + officers drilling us + trying to teach us how to use a bomb or a rifle Etc. They know just about how we feel about it + most of them consider themselves the most unlucky fellows on earth when they are attached to No 7 Co'y - the casualty Company.

What you say about conscription coming into force + getting a few of those ladies' boys around home - Petrolea - is just my size only you forgot to mention Lew Gleeson as one of the first. I would, + Hughie is the same, give a bunch to be here when Jack Kelly, Lew Gleeson, Buzz Brown + a few of them are leaving Blighty for France. If we wouldn't put the dirt up in their necks a piece I don't know why.

Marg must be some pianist to be able to play at a recital in Toronto. I suppose she'll be playing at Massey Hall before long. Tell her not to forget the 'Chicken Reel'

So Mac's got a "Hunky's job" eh? Well tell him he's got an arm-chair job to what he's going to have if he doesn't get that army notion out of his head. It's jake in Canada, hell in France but worse than hell in England.

To tell the truth, Dad I'm sorry to hear that Jean is in Munitions because they work the dickens out of Muniton girls over here + I know Jean wouldn't stand it. It'd be pretty soft for you eh? if Mother + Marg could go to work. I guess Mother has her work cut out at home with early breakfasts Etc.

Well Dad, I'm busy at Bombing courses, Machine Gun courses Map-reading Etc. [next several lines erased, perhaps by censor] but no harm was done except a small bump on my head which wouldn't even get me light duty for a day.

Well, my love to all Dad,  
Murray  
124756  
No 7 Co'y 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Bn  
St. Martin's Plains  
Shorncliffe  
Kent.

P.S. Did I tell you I had been talking to Private Fred Gorman - never saw him looking better in my life. He gone on draft to North of England with the C. A. S. C. - bombproof.

June 30/17

Dear Jeannie:

You will probably have gotten several letters at home from me lately. I seem to get a bunch at a time, sometimes written a month apart so I guess they are going over there in the same way.

Someone from home told me in a letter that George Moncrieff had reverted to the rank of Lieutenant to go to France for TEN days. Awfully obliging of George to go to France for so long. I don't suppose he'll get any farther than the base at Le Havre or at the outside to within about twenty-five miles of the line. We have a few, or at least a couple, of officers, in our reserve here who have done the same thing + believe me they are a pest. They know more about France than fellows who have been there for months. We have a lot of fun listening to some of the things they say about "the way they do it in France. However I'm enjoying myself + never felt better in my life except when I have to do a little too much walking. But I manage to have a pretty easy time as a rule - old soldier, you know.

Well, Shin, there is nothing interesting here to tell you about. I'm glad you have met Mabel Kilner. She + Hersky used to be pretty good friends - Herschkowitz - comprez? Give her my very best regards.

By the way, Jean, I had a letter from a little girl I used to know in Toronto who said that Marjorie Cooper had given her my address. I guess about half of Petrolia is in Toronto now.

Jean Cameron is still sending me the papers from home but I guess the old town is just about 'napoo' (army term for dead or killed)

Well, Jean, be sure that Mack gets into heavy artillery before they make him get into Infantry

Love to all

Murray

P.S. am sending a couple of snaps taken here in England numbered on the back.

No 1 - Taken when having a walk through a real typical little Old country village. Hughie on left.

Harvey (from Windsor) then me

No 2 - Getting rid of some company

Same Day

Dear Mother:

The wonderful parcel you sent me was received at the best possible time - the day after coming out of the trenches. You see we left the trenches about 10.30 at night; got back to camp (about 8 miles) about daylight + slept all morning When I got up the parcel was there. Mother, neither you nor anyone else who sends a parcel out here can realize what it means + how much it is appreciated.

Clair + Hughie Sharkey + Baldy McEachern + myself went over in the field + divided tobacco etc. except the cake. Everyone in our hut had a piece of the cake. Hughie + Clair have had a couple of bunches of Tobacco which they divided with me as though I were another brother. The three of us always are together moreso than though we were brothers though.

Rec'd registered letter from Mrs. C. OF. with the gold sovereign + this telegram (what she received from Dad). Thanks very much for it Mother.

Love to all

Murray

[on letterhead: Y. M. C. A. and Canadian War Contingent Association with the Canadian Forces]

July 12/17

Dear Mac:

Received a letter from Mother yesterday saying she had gotten Jim McDermid's note. Glad to hear the boys got home safely.

How goes the munition business + what kind of stuff are you working on? From what I hear most of the shells made in Canada are 18 pounders commonly known as whizz-bangs amongst the fellows.

Not much news for you from here. I saw Bert Love a few weeks ago. He's looking fine + has a good orderly room job altho' he hasn't yet been across the way. He wanted to be kindly remembered to Jean + you. Hughie + I had another small trip to London for which we did a few days in Klink + expect to have another before long. I'd rather go back to France than form fours + be bucked around like they do here as most of the fellows who have been over would but they are not sending any casualty drafts now but I expect they will be in the fall. I see where Hugh Riddell + a bunch of the boys have commissions. Good luck to 'em. Hughie Sharkey + I have a pretty fair time as it is as you can imagine. This would be a swell country in peace time + civilian life, Mac, but its absolutely no good now for a soldier. That is as far as getting around + seeing the country goes.

I see by a petrolea paper which I got to-day that Grace Luckham is married, so I dropped her a note.

Just at present, Mac, I have no money to by a stamp for this so I may have to carry it in my pocket for a few days so don't be surprised if it's a little dusty

Love to all  
Murray  
(over)

[on back of letter] Dear Jean: I don't suppose it is Art Hunter that Jewel Paradis is engaged to but tell her not to forget an invitation to her wedding for Art + me. Murray

[on letterhead: Y. M. C. A. and Canadian War Contingent Association with the Canadian Forces]

Aug 17/17  
Shorncliffe

Dear Mac -

Yours rec'd yesterday + was mighty glad to get it. Also one from Mother + Jean + Marg.

Suppose Mother + Dad are still away. It will be a fine trip for them but rather lonesome for you people at home. Tell Pearl I'd be mighty glad of some of those breakfasts I used to have when I was working at the Auto factory. The stuff we're getting here now isn't just the best on earth.

You seem to be having a real time, Mac, between the Russell[?] + the Cadillac. Suppose you know Toronto like a book now. Got pinched for a quid eh? That'll teach you not to stand on the accelerator.

I see by this mornings paper that the Canadians have been in another big scrap at Lens. I heard a few days ago that it was coming off. Expect to go back within the next three or four weeks now myself. Saw Bert Love the other day again + he had a pretty nice little noseful.

Well Mac, my love to you all  
Write soon  
Murray

Shorncliffe Sept 4/17

Dear Jeannie:

Received the parcel + your photo + the picture is simply wonderful. It's the only one I have of you too, Jean. I wish you'd send me one of everyone at home. I've been showing yours to all my friends here + they want an invitation to our house if we get back alright. Had a letter from Mother + Dad written on the boat + mailed at Kingston, Jamaica. I guess they are having a fine trip + hope they have nothing to worry them during all their trip.

As you see Jeannie I'm still in England but from the talk that is going on here just now I expect to go back to France in the near future. In fact I may be gone before you receive this but nevertheless, Shin, still use the same address.

No I Co'y 8<sup>th</sup> Can. Res.  
Shorncliffe Kent.

I don't think you'd know my picture if I had it taken + sent to you. Anyone I meet here in England judges me to be about twenty-nine years old + I had one old lady tell me I was thirty-six

so I guess I must have changed in some way or another. I'm twenty-three now Jean (altho' I'm not certain whether it was my 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> Birthday) somewhat bigger than when you last saw me but otherwise just the same I think. Bill Kerby was over to see me the other day - on leave from France. He's with a labor Bn. + pretty lucky to be able to get leave so quickly. He's looking fine altho' working pretty hard. Rec'd Mac's letter. Tell him I meant exactly what I said about Lew Gleason. Not alone because he isn't over here (altho' that means a lot) but on account of a little trick of his which effects Hughie Sharkey + myself + which was about as dirty a trick as could be played on a fellow.

Hughie is being transferred over with Clair I guess which means that he has a pretty fair chance of getting to Canada 'apres la guerre fini'.

Well, Jeannie, all my love to Pearl + all of you  
Murray

France  
Oct 8/17

Dear Mother -

Arrived in France a couple (3) of weeks ago but didn't like to write home until I was sure you + Dad would be there because I guess Jean had enough to think about while you were away. Hughie + I are still together. He's sitting here in the billett writing home aussi.

We've been having fine weather ever since coming back until yesterday + since then has been raining + cold - like November + December weather at home. I'm feeling fine, Mother + always could do better soldiering in France than in England In fact, when I look back, I was always better satisfied over here. There has been some fine news the last couple of days but you people hear about that sooner than we do here except on our own immediate front.

I guess you + Dad enjoyed yourselves on your trip to Peru I hope everything was as pleasant as it had been up to the time you wrote to me from Jamaica.

I used the gloves you sent me in the parcel last Xmas for the first time yesterday + believe me they are comfortable. You see I didn't get that parcel until late in the spring in Epsom.

I received a parcel + letter from Jess + Ed just before leaving Blighty which I haven't acknowledge yet + am receiving the Petrolia papers from Jean Cameron every week. Quite a bunch of the boys have gotten home I see. Wallace Reid is amongst them. I haven't seen him for over a year - since we were in Belgium. Mother, I guess you sent me a jersey a year ago but I never received it. I wish you would send me another. an ordinary sweater with turn down collar on it - navy blue preferable. also a couple of carloads of louse powder - a small tin anyway + be sure its powder-form About the only way to get them off a shirt now is to boil the shirt for about

24 hours; then freeze it for a couple of days + then put the shirt in the fire + burn it up. Then to make sure of the thing - move out of that section of the country + start over again.

I still have the little sacred medal that Jean Cameron gave me + the lucky stone that Alice Pitken gave me before leaving Canada. I had the Canadian cent that Mizpah gave me but lost it in a money belt that I lost. The ten dollar Gold piece that Mrs. Fairbank gave me was - ah - used some time ago. Those gold-pieces + the above mentioned powder are the two handiest things in the army absoposilutely.

Received a nice box of cigarettes + lighter from a pretty thoughtful + swell little girl friend of mine in the north of London, a couple of days ago. And, what I mean, Mother, she's a pretty nice girl from a pretty nice home. So I guess Mrs. McQueen's oldest son isn't as slow as Mrs. McQueen's youngest son is beginning to think his older brother is, after all eh. Perfectly good cigarettes Etc. being sent to me + a perfectly good friend in Blighty isn't so bad for an old has-been is it?

Mother, about that extra fifteen hundred of Dad's - I've got a hunch we'll be home in a couple of years, but just right now, if Dad's having a hard time to get rid of all of it why - a -

I guess its about time for me to hit the blankets, Mother so will close with love to all of you.  
Murray

P.S. The same address as I used to have - 58<sup>th</sup> without any company put in until I tell you. I hope Jean has met Floss + had her up home with her. [illegible word]

Oct 8<sup>th</sup>

Dear Marg -

Many, Many, happy returns of the day.

Murray  
(over)

Just received a letter from Mother from Peru, from Jean from Toronto + from Dot Chambers - some place out here. Tell Dad to have a couple of dollar + a half a day jobs for Hughie + I when we get back.

Murray

[letter from Peter Morrison to Murray's mother, Mrs. A. M. McQueen]

1 Grosvenor Crescent  
Edinburgh 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 1914

My Dear Cousin,

I delayed answering your letter, duly received in summer, till my return from the Highlands.

I got back last week, after spending the month of September at home. Our Aunt is much about the same, still bedridden and cannot move but as she is left. She was never informed of Aunt Christy's death, and sometimes it is pathetic to hear her wondering about how she is getting along. Poor soul she has every care and attention but it is sad to think that she has no relative, or any one connected with herself, to attend her. I enjoyed my stay there all right, and always look forward to a visit to the old home.

I wrote your sister in summer and explained how I failed to get in touch with Murray. It was a keen disappointment to me, for I know he would need all the friendship he could get on this side, particularly so while at the front, and it would have been a great pleasure to me to have acted the part of a father to him while he was in the mother country, had I got in touch with him.

The last letter I got from his cousin Miss MacLean, she said she could let me know of his whereabouts when she got his address, but so far she seemingly has not managed, seeing I have had no word from her since summer. I am just wondering if he was invalided home, but if he were, I would probably have heard from some one. What surprises me is that my letters to him were not returned failing their reaching him. However I hope he is safe and well wherever he is, though I am certain he would be none the worse of any small comforts I could have supplied.

I have not heard from Dr. John MacLean since he went to France. Probably he has been too busy, since he took up the Hospital work there.

The war is still forging ahead, and to all appearance we are going to have another winter of it. But German Kulture must be thoroughly beaten, before the sword is sheathed, and to all appearance the beginnings of that end is now visible. It is fortunate that America has joined in the fray, were it only to prevent food stuff getting to the enemy, through the neutral countries of Norway + Sweden +c.

I trust this finds you all in your usual. You will be also, no doubt, feeling the prices of the necessaries of life pretty stiff. Considering everything, we are not so badly off, though many of the luxuries of pre-war days are denied us. We have ample of the staple food such as flour meal + potatoes, and while a nation at war has this, there is no fear of Him.

As I have no news which would interest you, I shall not trouble you with war news, as these you see no doubt in the daily papers.

I shall be glad to hear from you always. I hope little Gracie is flourishing. I lend her my special love, and with love to you all,

Your affectionate cousin  
Peter Morrison

Field Service Post Card

Mr. A. M. McQueen  
34 De Lisle Ave. Toronto Canada.

I am quite well and hope to receive your letter telegram \$ parcel at first opportunity.

I have received letter from you lately.

Murray McQueen  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 1917

France Oct 28/17

Dear Dad:

Haven't heard from home since you got there but suppose you have been home for some time now. Rec'd Jean's letter with the snaps + Marg's with her picture. All of them are just fine + I wish they would send snaps oftener. To tell the truth I didn't know Marg when I looked at the snap she has grown so much + I suppose Jean is a real society lady now. In fact I know she'll be the belle of the debutantes in her season. I think that by the time this war is over, on account of the kind of life we live out here, that at these pink-tea functions where there are girls, nice hot-air heated-room boys + a few of our army officers, fellows who have lived a private's life in this war will be about as popular as a skunk at a garden party altho', personally I never was nuts about tea-fights as you will probably remember. I'll have some fine stories to tell you when I get back Dad + maybe I'll be able to teach Jean a little of my French. I get on fairly well talking with the French people, in fact, when there are no French Canadian boys around I sort of act as interpreter. Quite a few of our fellows getting married over here. Right in the little town that we're in now four or five fellows (Canadians) have married French girls.

You'd enjoy motoring through this country in peace-time, Dad. Especially the part we are in just now. It is the cleanest + most picturesque bit of France we've been in yet + the people the most prosperous. All the houses are red brick with red tiled roofs. Little villages all over, not more than a quarter of a mile apart + about every other house in each village is an estaminet or drinking place. You'd appreciate the way the French people drink, Dad. I have yet to see one of them at all under the influence of booze. Walk into any of the little Estaminets at night, sit down

at one of the four or five little tables + sip french beer or red or white wine. They will sit there talking for two or three hours and not drink more than two or three drinks.

Tuesday Oct 30/17

Have moved since writing the above, Dad + are back again where we were when first coming to France. We are just waiting now for an order to move on up + will probably go in the line to-night.

I hope you + Mother enjoyed the whole of your trip + I know it would do you both a lot of good. Also hope you found everybody at home well on your return. Before you get this we will have been through some of the hottest stuff we've had yet, from the rumours now. So if you don't hear anything from Ottawa before getting this you'll know I have come through O.K. Hughie + I both fine + good for anything they want us for so

Love to you all  
Murray

[Letter to Murray from Floss; "Personal For Mother" written on back of envelope]

304 Gladstone Ave.  
Friday Nov. 15. 1917.

Smirlie dear

I would like to hear from you again, have just had one letter from you, that is when you wrote from England.

Jean tells me you are in France. She gave me a little news from what you sent them so that was some consolation, hope there is a letter on the way.

I trust that all goes well with you Smirlie. I pray for you every day, you know every little bit helps.

Have been wondering if you have met some little girl 'over theah' with whom you may be badly smitten have you, + if so tell me all about it but don't forget your old pal at any rate.

Say what color wool is best for socks in your opinion there are so many different ideas about that - white are said to be handy as it proves a very good hunting ground for live stock and then again they say the boys don't like them they show the dirt so (quite natural) so they dip them in coffee to make them a more serviceable color - tough luck having to dip socks in your coffee - guess its all in a life time.

Spent one nice evening at your home last week and met your Mother and dad and younger sister your mother is lovely I like her very much, your dad is a prince - he made a hit with me I think you look very much like him.

I hope I made a good impression because I like them and naturally want them to like me, and for your sake, it would be awful wouldn't it if they didn't think Smirlie's friends were as nice as they should be; we sat around a cosy fireplace knitted and talked hope you do not feel too lonesome to read about a cosy home corner, never mind old chap you were the chief topic of conversation, if you heard the nice things that were said about you it would make you feel good

Conscription and exemption are making things exciting in Toronto just now; and there is certainly a wide appeal to buy Victory bonds - Monday at 9 a.m. every whistle and bell yelled and clanged for 5 minutes and made all the din we wanted - they will get the money they need for the big Victory allright.

Will write you soon again and please write as often as you can will you do that. Mother and dad send their best regards

Good-night old chap wish you luck.

Heaps of love  
From Floss.

France Nov 27/17

Dear Jeanie:

Rec'd the Xmas box from home to-day + it sure is fine. Many thanks to you + Marg + Mac + Mag. And, believe me, Shin, it couldn't have come at a better time. Just when we are having a rest after coming through the worst yet. You can easily tell where we've been by the papers, because, of late, the papers have been mentioning the different corps + divisions that have taken part in the different battles. A fellow who comes through the engagements lately sure is lucky + it makes one realize that he is being taken care of by Someone who has more power + control over things than anyone can imagine. Things haven't been just the most pleasant on earth but it gives a fellow an awful lot of satisfaction + takes a big load of one's mind when he can see that he makes things jump + move in a hurry when he pulls the trigger of his rifle or Lewis gun. It takes a fellows mind off the heavy stuff dropping around + in that way we've been alright lately.

Rec'd the five pounds through John Peat from Dad also at just the right time. Many thanks to Dad for it Jeanie. Also had a letter from Mother just before leaving Peru but she + Dad will have been home long before this. Those snaps of you + Mildred are fine Jean + the ones of Mother + Dad in Peru show that they certainly have benefited from the trip which I am tickled to death to see. Had a letter from Floss yesterday. She seems awfully glad to have met you Jean + I hope

you see her often. Do so for me, Please. Awfully nice of Mac to go to see her eh? + I guess if he says the word I'll have to retire because as men of society we'll be nil après la guerre.

Imagine those big dubs like Art Egon Etc. from home enlisting in the Navy, some in the flying corps + others trying to keep out altogether eh? Anything to keep out of the infantry it seems but believe me a few of them will wish they had one foot on the ground if they ever get over here in a machine. Tell Mac that working on a drilling rig had gotten anything beaten that I know + if he doesn't stay there he'll here from me.

Well, Jeannie, A Merry Merry Xmas + happy New Year to you All + Love from  
Murray

France Dec 8/17

Dear Mother:

Rec'd the finest parcel I've ever had to-day - the one from you. I'm using the writing case now + its fine. The only thing is I don't know how long I'll have it. We lose our packs so often that a fellow doesn't know when he's going to be using his own stuff or when someone elses. I had a nice parcel from the Khaki Club in Petrolea yesterday packed by Roxie Sinclair with a nice note in it for me saying she had slipped in some extras for me. Also, Mother, I had a parcel from my little friend in the north of London consisting of a fine big scarf she knitted for me, a large box of cigarettes + a nice writing pad. Its a peach of a scarf and will just be jake with that sweater Jeanie is going to send me. Got Shin's letter yesterday. She is sure having a great time with her Sorority dinners + receptions Etc. I'll give her a few lessons in army French when I get back.

Well, Mother I'm so glad you enjoyed your trip south + Jean says it has done you a world of good. You'll have a slight realization of how I'll enjoy getting home, now that you've had a while away but your stay away was somewhat different from this 'Tourists delight' that I'm having. However (not to appear pessimistic) I hope + expect the thing to be finished before I'm over the army age limit. We did our voting the other day Mother + believe me the 'White-haired Old Man' didn't get our support this time because when a fellow has to do 16 and 17 hours on post because some big boobs at home won't come out to help out, its time we made them come. I think the policy + sayings of some of those French-Canadian Politicians are disgraceful.

I must close, Mother, with the very best Xmas + New Year's wishes + my love to you all.  
Murray