

[3rd line] 14 August

My dear Hazel,

The mail is just closing and they say it may be the last for some weeks, so I must get some sort of note scrawled in time. I got three lovely letters from you on Saturday, dated June 15th, 19th and 21st. It was nice of you to write the extra one. There were several things in them that I want to answer at some length, but I have not time at present and anyhow I hate writing such things for the censor to read. There is a possibility that I may be in England soon and able to write uncensored letters. I have been "interviewed" by the brigadier and the general of our division, but that of course is a matter of form and doesn't bring matters

any further forward. At present I know nothing definite of my chance (and "chance" is truly the right word), and I will be lucky if I get more than a couple of hours' notice to leave, if I am selected.

You rather misunderstood me when I told you that Jim Barton was my platoon sergeant and I was second to him. As a matter of fact, I was then one of the "juniorest" of the twelve sergeants of the company. You see, there are four platoons in a company, each having three or two sergeants, and it was only in my own platoon (No. 12) that I was second. However, through the unhappy medium of casualties, I am just about in the position now that you imagined me in - next in seniority to the

sergeant-major and quarter-master Jim Barton has been S.M. since Reg. Thompson was killed, and I have been platoon sergeant.

It seems strange to me that you had never mentioned my name to Miss Daxon, or rather that my name would not occur naturally in conversation, because they talk so much about Ken, and I am one of his closest friends. As for "minding" you talking about me, I don't see why I should, especially if it leads to such nice things being said about me.

By the way, the "little village" of Hasebrouk is about ten times the size of the city of Nelson, so I am thinking you were not too modest, after all, in your knowledge estimate of your knowledge of geography.

No, I am quite sure there is no possibility of the war ending for two years yet, at least, and probably at the end of that time it will seem as far away as ever. Most people simply refuse to face the facts, and if anyone speaks of a ten years war he is howled down as a pessimist. In reality ~~we~~ it is more than a reasonable supposition that the war will last that long. I hope not, of course, and certainly I am no pessimist, for I am sure we will win in the end, but taking all the facts and viewing them in the light of history, that is what I consider most likely. It is not a cheerful opinion to hold, is it? but I try to be sincere and independent, and I can't force

myself to any other opinion. Now perhaps you understand why I do not wish you to consider yourself in any way bound to me. But I will speak more about that next mail. In the meantime I assure you that I am not in the least annoyed at your "confession".

I must close now, for the present

With much love from
Becil.

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