

2001H.6.5a (envelope: 3 ½” x 6 ” good, yellowing)

2001H.6.5b (letter: 9 ½” x 7 ½ ” good, yellowing)

One page letter (both sides) on “Canada YMCA On Active Service” stationary in matching envelope addressed to *Mrs. J. Burnett 308 Broadway Santa Cruz California*. Canadian postage stamps. Postmarked May 2, 1918 from Victoria B.C. On the back of the envelope is written \$4,250,000.00. Message marked *May 1/18*. Message: *Dear Mother, Having a little time to spare I thought I would drop you a few lines to let you know how I am getting on. I have been accepted without any trouble the examination is not nearly as strict as in San Francisco. There were only three branches of the service open Cavalry Field Artillery and Infantry so chose the Infantry as the officer strongly advised me not to take the Artillery as it is too strenuous, everything being on the run. Another reason why I chose it is that you can get a transfer to another branch of the service from it easier than from some of the branches but shall try and get on the ropes a bit before applying. I cannot say that I care much for the very little I have seen of it but of course do not know anything so far has been a couple of hours work this morning and nothing since I cannot say that I care about the food there being enough of it but not much taken in the Armory where we were examined and sworn in and taken out to Willows Camp for dinner told to report there by 10 P.M. and then came back to town to take a look around. I went out to Parliament Building and Beacon Hill Park it is very pretty the trees just coming into leaf and fruit trees in full bloom but you do not notice the beauty like first coming from the San Joaquin Valley. Yesterday was spent in getting one’s equipment together and getting a place to sleep. We are sleeping in tents on ordinary night but tonight being on fire [piguct] duty we sleep in a small bunkhouse and shall not lose any sleep unless a fire occurs. There were about twenty of us came up on the Admiral [Schley] to Seattle and a few went on to Vancouver but most of us came on the Victoria and all of those are gone but two of us the rest took Artillery or Cavalry. One of them was an old Horse Guardman had been through the South African War the last eight years he has been in moving pictures he took the part of [Balshay] as in Intolerance and knows a lot of the Movie Picture Stars. The weather has been fine somewhat cool in the morning. Now hoping you are getting better. I am your loving son Walter. PS My number is 2139394 2nd Depot Battalion Company No. 3 Willows Camp Victoria BC.*

2001H.6.6a (envelope: 5 ¾ x 3 ½” good, yellowing)

2001H.6.6bcd (letter: 9 ¼ ” x 7 ¼” good, yellowing)

Three page letter in envelope on “YMCA Canada” stationary. Canadian postage stamps. Postmarked “MY 0 ‘18” (May 10, 1918?) in Victoria B.C. Addressed to *Mr. W. Burnett 308 Broadway Santa Cruz Calif U.S.A*. Letter is dated 5/9/18. Message: *Dear Will, Just a few line to let you know how things are going. I am getting more used to it now though, I would not get into this sort of work for love of it, like some, there is too much of physical exercise and drills where you have to take what is said to you whether you like it or not though I must say that so far I have escaped being called down. The day is not long, we are up at 5:45 A.M. fold up out blankets and bed in a neat fashion and take a shave if you get time and have breakfast at 6:30. That is one thing I do not like having to shave once a day, occasionally I manage to dodge it but take a chance of being called down. At 7:30 we take physical instruction which means a certain amount of running and various exercises to strengthen certain parts of the body. Of course I know very little about it yet but I know it makes you quite stiff and the running certainly takes my wind though I am beginning to get over it a little bit. This work lasts one hour then we go back to the tents where we dress up in our uniforms and go on drill which lasts varying time*

sometimes going on a march and other times getting a lecture. We get in about noon and have an hour and a half for dinner then out for more drill and another lecture getting through at 4 PM and getting supper at 4:30. We get off Wednesday at noon for sports in the afternoon. One does not have to play but has at least to watch it for if you don't they will put you at some fatigue duty, you cannot leave the yard before 4:30 Saturday. Sunday one can get away at 1:30 but you have to be back at 10 PM that is if you have not got a special pass, there is no trouble in getting a midnight one. Occasionally you get on guard duty which is for 24 hours, three shifts take it, two hours on and four off. I had it the other day and did not mind it at all. I have been to the doctor four times since I have been in camp once for another examination and twice for inoculation and once for vaccination. It has not affected me yet and hope it still continues to do so except to make my arm a little sore. All this seeing the doctor is taken out of your working hours so you do not mind it at all. Last Monday we marched to the Parliament Buildings to give a guard of honor to some returned soldiers who were presented with Medals for bravery on the field. It is about two and a half to three miles from camp to our destination, at first you have to go some what stiffly but after going a short distance the order comes to march easy when you can talk and smoke as long as you keep your formation. The Victoria Military Band met us when we got near to the business section of the town but cannot say that I care much for it. I do not care for the shoes given you they are far too heavy to suit me, they say you get used them. Do not trouble to answer this right away as I think but do not know that I shall be on my way to England any day now and from what I hear that is where you get real work. Now hoping you are getting along alright, if not do not hesitate to get out. I remain your affec brother Walter. My No is 2139394 2nd [Depot] Battalion Willows Camp Victoria. At the top of the third page is an additional note P.S I have not heard from anyone yet.

2001H.6.7a (envelope: 3 ¼" x 6" good, yellowing)

2001H.6.7bcd (letter: 9 ½" x 7 ½" good, yellowing)

Three-page letter written on "Canada YMCA On Active Service" stationary with matching envelope addressed to *Mrs. J. Burnett 308 Broadway Santa Cruz California*. Canadian postage stamps. Postmarked May 13, 1918 from Victoria B.C. Message is marked 5/12/18. Message: *Dear Mother, I received your welcome letter yesterday afternoon, and thought that today being Sunday would try and answer it. I am very pleased to hear that you are feeling much better. I am getting somewhat accustomed to the work and like it much better, the lectures are quite interesting having had four, one on rifles, one on sanitation, one on the camp duties, and one on how to look after wounds. I like the Captain whom we are under, an Englishman by his talk, he enlisted as a private, spent three years at the front and got promotion by merit, he understands what it is to have been in the lower ranks. He was telling us a funny thing that occurred three years ago, the fence around the camp having quite a few pickets missing the troops in camp used to get in late through these gaps so as to miss any punishment for overstaying their leave so the camp Commander gave orders to paint the sides of these gaps with white paint, the troops who did the work must have tipped off their comrades because the only man caught was a fat Major. You ask me about my equipment, it consists of overcoat very thick and warm, coat, trousers, one heavy pair and one light canvas sided shoes, two woolen and one cotton shirts two suits woolen underclothes, one cap, four pairs heavy socks, belt, putties, five woolen blankets ground sheet and a bed ticking bag which we put straw in for a mattress, mess tin consisting of knife fork and spoon and the tin itself consisting of three parts, one for something to drink, one for meal and vegetable and one for desert or mush, we also have a bag to put all the clothes in and kit bag*

consisting of hair brush and comb, clothes brush, razor and shaving brush and tooth brush. To the best of my remembrance that is the lot. You ask me if I need anything at all the stuff I brought with me I shall either send it back to you or send it up to Frank, the trouble is that my suit was stolen from my suitcase within a day or two of getting here, quite a lot had the same experience. I do not know who did it at all unless it was some returned soldiers or some organizes band of thieves. So do not know if it is worth the trouble of sending home. I am very glad to hear that you enjoyed the Chautauqua (?) so much and should very much like to have been with you. Have not yet heard from Arch or Frank. Wrote to them a week ago. Expect to be going to England any time soon and from what I hear they work you there. I go into Victoria very little though camped on the out parts shall try and get in tomorrow night if I am not placed on guard duty as Maude Adams is coming in a Barrie play. We have a Y.M.C.A. building here it is certainly a great help they give moving pictures two or three times a week and expect to give something pretty nearly every night this coming week. Do not trouble to send any magazines or Scotsman up here so far I have had any amount to read I do not mind a local paper once in a while. I received the papers from Father and Mr. Grant will drop them a line thanking them. Now if you will please excuse this scribble the latter part being written with a suitcase as a desk in my tent. I must close. I remain your loving son Walter.

2001H.6.9a (envelope: 3 ½” x 6” good, yellowing)

2001H.6.bc (letter: 7 ¾” x 5” good, yellowing)

Two page letter in “Canada YMCA” envelope addressed to *Mrs. J. Burnett 308 Broadway Santa Cruz California U.S.A.* Canadian postage stamps. Postmarked May 16, 1918 from Victoria, B.C. Message marked *Victoria May 22/18.* Message: *Dear Mother, Just a few lines to let you know that some of us are leaving tomorrow. From what I can hear we are going on a ship which they are taking to the Atlantic through the Panama Canal and onto France, as guard to some Chinamen they are taking there. From what they say we stop at various places, and the trip will take in the neighborhood of eight weeks so it is of no use of you to write and I will whenever possible let you know how I am making it. I only hope that nothing occurs to send us the other way as I have always wanted to see the Big Ditch. They say that we land the Chinamen in France and then go on to England. A am enclosing this letter with Jessie’s and am going to write a few lines to Lucy as well so I will make none of them very long. I am sending my sweater, shoes, and part of suit you gave me as I have positively no room in my kit bags for them. I would have sent the rest of my stuff also but had it stolen last Saturday. The trouble is the camp is wide open where we are camped and there are a bunch of thieves hanging around trying to pick up what they can. Now hoping you are continuing to improve. I remain your loving son Walter.*

2001H.6.15a (envelope: 3 ½” x 6” good, yellowing)

2001H.6.15.bc (letter: 7 ¼” x 5 ½” good, yellowing)

Two page letter (double sided) on “Canadian YMCA” stationery in matching envelope addressed to *Mr. W. Burnett 308 Broadway Santa Cruz California U.S.A.* Postmarked August 31, 1918. At top of envelope is written *Canadian Soldier’s letter.* Message is marked *F. Company 1st Can Reserve Seaford Sussex 8/29/18.* Message: *Dear Will, I received your letter last week and will now try and answer it. I am very pleased to hear that business has been so good since I have been away. I have written twice to Mother, once when I got to London, and the other a few days after my return. I spent the last two days in London, returning by the South Eastern RR. I took a*

return by the LB. SE being all run by the Government. Getting off at Cannon St. Station. I took a walk past St. Pauls Cathedral, and then took a bus to the place where I was staying. After having got a bed, I took a walk to the Canadian YMCA on the Strand, where I had dinner, and in the afternoon, being a little wet, went to the Palace, where I took in the Hearts of the World, which was well worth seeing, though not as good to my way of thinking as Intolerance or the Clansman. In the evening I went to the Garrick, where I went with a YMCA party, where we saw a good play, By Pigeon Past, it was very good, and only wish that I could have been in London longer to see a few more plays. Next afternoon after wandering around the streets I took in the Zoo and enjoyed it very much, though I cannot say that I remembered anything about it. That evening my leave having expired, I took the train to Seaford, after a most enjoyable holiday. The training I am getting now is much more interesting that it was in H. Company and like it much more, having had [Yas] last week, and Bombing this. Prices are very high here, I noticed fresh eggs the other day in Seaford were selling at Six shillings a dozen and decent smoking tobacco at from 10 ½ to 11 ½ D per ounce, but do not trouble to send me any, as I can buy it through the Quartermaster's at from 4 to 5 D per ounce being duty free to Canadian Soldier. You have to order it a week ahead, and can only get four ounces a week, but that is more than enough for my needs. As for money I have plenty, now having got \$25.00 or \$30.00 more than I started with. If Mother wished I could let her have \$15.00 a month. Let me know and I will willingly send it to her. Fritz is certainly getting it now, and hope he soon gets enough of it, quite a lot of returned men think it will finish up this winter though of course it is merely a surmise on their part, and only hope it is right. I have done no swimming since I came here having intended to try it once or twice, but by the time I could get away the weather had changed so did not try it. The weather has been very good for England for the last three or four weeks not having had but very little rain some days being very warm. You are saying that the change made by the daylight saving bill makes a big difference in the pleasure you get out of life. Uncle Fred told me the same thing, saying that he thought it had come here to stay as people were getting that much more enjoyment out of life. Cricket and football are not played as before the war, county cricket not being played at present. I went to see some boxing bouts a week ago, Wednesday, and quite enjoyed them seeing some good hard scrapping. Please remember me to people in Santa Cruz I have not been to loge since leaving, not having had much time. Tell Lucy that I will try and reply to her shortly, and tell Jessie that I received her post card the other day. I wish that one could get some of your fruit here as this is reckoned one of the poorest years on record in this country, though good for various grains. Last year was a big fruit year. Now I must close hoping you are all well. I remain Your affec brother Walter.

2001H.6.16 (postcard: 4 ¼" x 3 ¼" good, yellowing)

"Field Service Post Card" addressed to Mrs. J. Burnett 277 Broadway Santa Cruz California USA. The postmark is dated October 22, 1918. On back is a printed message formula. The unwanted sentences are crossed off. What remains are the phrases "I am quite well." "Letter follows at first opportunity." And "I have received no letter from you lately." The card is signed W J Burnett NO 2139394 and dated Oct 19 / 18.

2001H.6.17 (postcard: 4 ¼" x 3 ¼" good, yellowing)

"Field Service Post Card" addressed to Mrs. J. Burnett 277 Broadway Santa Cruz Cal U.S.A. Postmarked October 25, 1918. On the back in a printed message formula. The unwanted

sentences are crossed off. What remains is "I am quite well." And "Letter follows at first opportunity." There is no date and it is signed *W J Burnett*.

2001H.6.21a (envelope: 3 ½" x 6" poor; ripped on right side, torn and creased)

2001H.6.21bcd (letter: 9 ¾" x 6 ½" good, yellowing)

2001H.6.21.e (ticket: good, yellowing)

Three-page letter on lined paper (double sided) in "YMCA Canada" envelope addressed to *Mr. W Burnett 277 Broadway Santa Cruz California USA*. At the top of the envelope is written *On Active Service* and in the bottom left is written *W J Burnett*. It is postmarked February 11, 1919. Inside is a "Returned Soldiers' Ticket" for the "Young Men's Christian Association of Canada" for the "Canadian YMCA" with the date "June 1919 stamped on it. The letter is marked *Ohain Belgium Feb 10/19*. Message: *Dear Will, Your two letters reached me on the same day, which was last Friday and will now try and answer them. I am very much pleased by the showing you have made in the business because I knew that the profit allowed was small and the uncertainty of the market in such a year as last has been, make a coming out ahead extremely good, and then the heavy fall rains I know what they mean in Santa Cruz. I only hope that you do not go short in the spring because of them. Now about that proposition of buying the warehouse and back property. I will leave that entirely with you as you being on the spot and keeping in touch with conditions are in a better position to judge than I am as being over here so long, leaves one out of touch with home affairs. You will probably be pretty tired of the whole thing, because of the hard year you have had and the lack of holiday and I know that I can help quite a bit when I get back, but cannot tell you when that will be, as we are still in the same place and do not know how soon we shall move. Rumors are all we get, and the latest is, that we are moving somewhere from the later part of next month to the middle of April to England, where we shall stay a month, out of which we shall get seven days leave, and then leave for Canada which I hope is true only I hope it comes at the earlier time, though I rather doubt it, as we are in the 4th Division and all the other three Divisions leave ahead of ours. The quicker they get us back, and into civilian occupation again, the better it will be, as I am getting very tired of marking time around here. Our cold spell is still on, though today is somewhat milder than it has been for some days. About the middle of last week we had an additional two to three inches of snow, which melted a little next day and then came clear frosty weather which is still on, and the only place it melts, is where it catches the direct rays of the sun, during the middle of the day, I am very glad that we have passed so much of the middle of winter, with so little cold weather, and know that this cold spell, is not be able to last as long as it would have done, if it had struck us about last Christmas. I went to Brussels last week on a forty eight hour pass, and enjoyed it very well indeed, though it was a little too cold to enjoy oneself, unless you were moving at a good speed as it was pretty cold. We took the 10th train from Central about 4 kilometers from here, arriving in Brussels within an hour, where we walked to the Anglo Belge YMCA, which is a big department store in peace time, and where you see soldiers of all the Allies, and there you can get meals and slept at the Canadian Y three of four blocks away. I took a bit of a trip around town by myself, and must say from what I saw that it seems to be a fine well built place, and in the afternoon, that is Monday as the first day I did not go out very much, took a trip under one of the YMCA guides, who took us to the Stock Exchange where there seemed to be any amount of noise going on, and from there on to a square which is called I think the Grand Plaza, or some such name which is the place where they hold anything of national importance, it takes one back to the Middle Ages, as every building is of some hundred years of age. One of the buildings in*

the famous Hotel de Ville, dating from the 15th century. We went through part of that and it was most interesting, the ceilings and the walls being covered with huge grade paintings, and the staircase which we came down by, being they say one of the finest in existence, from there we went to the National Picture Gallery, which has a splendid collection of paintings and statuary, and whole lot of the paintings being by some of the worlds great masters, which I am very glad to say that the Germans did not have time to take away. From the street which holds the Picture Gallery you can see the Hall of Justice, which the guide said was said to be the architectural triumph of the 19th century. I should like to have gone to see it but did not have time. That evening I went tot he Royal Opera House, and took in an Opera the name of which I did not catch, but it was one that I had never seen before and was very good. I counted forty-six in the orchestra, exclusive of the conductor, and it was certainly good. The interior of the building was beautiful, having paintings wherever available, but not at all overdone as it is a cheaper grade house, it had three balconies and a small gallery, the ground floor holding I should think nearly as much as the rest of the building, as the balconies were really boxes and only extended back a very short distance. That was the last place I went to see in Brussels, as I had to be at the train at 8:30 Tuesday morning which finished my trip there. I do not care for traveling on these trains during this time of the year, as they are not heated or if so not used on account of coal shortage and are beastly cold. You say that you are surprised at my not hearing of Uncle Freds death, but I am not as I kept up no correspondence with them, and did not see any of the cousins when I was at Dorking. So you have got the job of Sentinal at the Eastern Star, I can well imagine that you tried to get out of it as I know I would. I am sorry to hear about Adams losing his wife, and saw it in one of the papers sent me from Santa Cruz the influenza seems to have been a great scourge in US and Canada. I do not know how it has been in the Army, but do not think bad, as we have not had to wear masks, and directly a case develops they treat at once, which generally gets it before it takes a bad hold. That is one thing about the Army, the average of men's health is better than in civilian life, though one does not get the considerable treatment that he does in civil life, owing I think to the large amount of men who malingers when they have a chance. You ask me about money. Thanks very much but do not want any as I have not yet been broke, and got a 100 Francs for Brussels which was quite a bit more than I spent. Now I will close hoping you are all well and expecting to see you again before long. I remain your affec bro Walter.

Each page is marked in the top right corner with 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

2001H.6.23 (postcard: 3 ½” x 5 ½” good, yellowing)

Colored Post Card depicting a village street marked “Liphook Village.” Foreign postage stamp. Post marked June 3, 1919. Addressed to Mrs. J. Burnett 277 Broadway Santa Cruz California U.S.A. Message is marked Biamshotl- June 2 / 19. Message: *Dear Mother, Expect to leave here on the 6th by the Olympic, so hope by the time that you receive this postcard to be on my way to Vancouver. Have just finished a second leave which I spent in London and Dorking and enjoyed myself very much now hoping to see you shortly. I remain Walter.*