**Preface: This transcript was sourced online from the Canadian Letters & Images Project.**

**-Editor**

Shornecliffe

June 5th

Mrs. B. Shook,

Dear Sister,

Just a line to let you know that we are away for France. Our commander got orders to send 400 men in a hurry. Got word about 2 P.M. and we got away bout 6 and a nasty rain storm. Walked till about 1 A.M. the next morning. Make about 18 miles. We are having inspection today and I think we go over in a day or two. We are both well as can be expected only a little foot sore but very light harted. Wish we could hear from before we leave.

With love to all. In a hurry. Will. Address the same till you hear again

Shorncliff

June 5th

Mrs. J. Drader,

Victoria

Dear Mother,

Will try and write a few lines to say we are well and it seems as though they are not leaving us long in England as we were taken in a draft of 400 last night and are on our way to France and by what we are told will likely be in the trenches before you get this but we hear so many reports that it is hard to tell which to believe. We are getting the new web equipment and it is sure lots better than the Canadian harness. Well as news is scarce and they keep us busy I will have to close.

With love to all I remain as ever your son,

W.C. Drader

April 3, 1916, Edmonton

Mr. J. Drader,

Victoria, B.C.

Dear Father,

I will try and answer your last letter which I received a long time ago. Was glad to hear that you was having such a good time. I am sure it must be next to heaven to be at the wheel of a six cylinder on a good asphalt road. I never drove a six cylinder but if I do say it my self there are very few can show me there heels with a ford. I have sure used barrels & barrels of gasoline. I am sending a newspaper picture of the officers of the 51st which left for the front last Saturday.

Earl and I were down to see Eugene Friday night when they were confined to quarters just before leaving and I quite agree with you that he is a fine man and I am proud of him as a brother but I can’t imagine who Miss Martins is or how she got away down in California. Does her father work in the land titles office in Edmonton? If so I have heard of her before all though I did not know her name.

We are given to understand that we are to leave this month as we are under orders to be in readiness to leave on a short notice. At present I am on what they call fire picket. This is a line of duty which lasts for one (?) and once warned for it you can not leave barracks so all the excitement I will have for the next few days is writing letters. You spoke in your last letter telling me about ancesters. I have always wanted to know more about this as I have known no farther back than my own father. Well I can’t think of any news so will close for now, from your loving Son,

Will

Between Portage La Prairie & Winnipeg

April 23/16

Mrs. M. B. Shook

Edmonton

Dear Sister,

I can understand now why the soldiers did not wright much for how can you wright sitting four in a seat all that can get there heads out the window stick them out and yell and the rest yell anyway out or no out when we wake up the next morning.

After we left there was about two inches of snow some where near Wainwright but it disapeared soon after we got into Sask. And when we wake up this morning we are in Man. Things are terribley floded hear grain standing in the stook yet with jest the tops sticking out of the water. We have not been let out of the car yet but get out at Winnipeg for about one hour. We stay in Ottawa for six hours and arive at Halifax the morning of April 28th. Well I gess that’s about all I know jest now so by by from

Will

Eastbourne

Aug 7th 1916

Mrs. J. Drader,

Victoria

Dear Mother,

Received your welcome letter of June 8 and July 4 boath about the same time. Gess the last one must of took all the short cuts but it seems queer that you did not have word by the 4th of July that we are all transferred to the 49th Batt. as I wrote to you before I left England which was bout June 8th. Yes it is some exciting to be so near the big finish all though I did not have a chance to finish very much and I gess Eugene has all he can attend to these days though he said in a letter to Bert for him to take his time about getting well that they could get along some till he got back. My leg is getting well fast. I can hobble around a little bit on it now. They gave me a pair of shoes the other day and when I put them on they felt so odd that I counted up and found out that it was 37 days that I had no shoes on. I had a card from Bert this morning and I guess he is about well again as he said he was going back to Shorncliffe on the 9th. The weather has been fine here for the last month and they expect a good harvest in England. It is generally believed hear that the third year will end the war and I sure hope it does.

I think I like farming better than I do soldiering. Also I think Alberta suits me about as well as any place I ever saw. Have no hankering to take up a homested in no mans land till the belgins get their title back again. Well I don’t know of any news so will have to close hoping this finds you all well and that we will soon be back.

I remain as ever your loving son,

101578 Pte. Drader W E

49th Canadians

Military Hospital

Eastbourne, Sussex, England

Eastbourne

Aug 12 1916

Mrs. J. Drader,

Victoria

Dear Mother,

Jest received the enclosed letter along with five others in a big envelope from the Record office and opened it without looking at the address which on examining I find is addressed to Earl at Bert’s Battalion and the number which would have righted the other mistake is omitted and in the army the number is the most important part as it will stay on the right trail. I would send it to Earl but I don’t know where he is. Said in his last letter he might move about Aug 1st so maybe he is even now on the way. Well I hope that he never has to cross but if he comes over soon I hope I see him before I leave for France. There is no more news since I wrote before so will close with love and best wishes.

From your son in blue,

Will

Source: Canadian Letter and Image Project

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