

Ivy Cottage

Le Radley.

31st Jan. 1918

My dear Mr. MacNeahan

Your letter of the

4th of December reached a couple

of weeks ago in France. I was

very glad indeed to hear from

you that the documentary evidence

was not necessary. Your word

would have sufficed.

I hope and trust that you

and yours came through that

terrible catastrophe without injury.

I cannot imagine how frightful

it must have been.

Jean probably told you that

I saw something of her and Dick

at Aldershot this summer. It was

a very pleasant way of putting

the summer in and I particularly
enjoyed meeting them both.

I have it seen Dick in France
but whenever we happen to be
lying near the R. T. R. I'll go over
to see him.

At present I am revelling
in my first leave. Breakfasting
at 11. is the chief joy. The absolute
necessity of getting up and being
up by a certain hour - early too
if not all night and for nights
at a time - is the worst thing
about soldiering.

We were lucky at Passchendaele
and didn't have to go over the top
though we got our dose of shelling
which is in some ways worse.

Our last tour was very quiet.
I have nussed one by this excursion

together with a Lewis Gun course

I had just before coming across.

Ken Mackenzie is in London
counting votes so we had a couple
of days together. I am staying
with Gerrie now in a cottage
under the shadow of the Malvern
hills. A beautiful country.

Tomorrow I am off to visit
Oxford - Ken is joining me there
on Saturday and we are going
to stay with the Bellis so I look
forward to two happy days.

Then two days in town then
back to the war. I cross on
the 6th.

I was grieved to hear of the
death of an old friend the other
day. Dr. John McLeod of Montreal -
who died of pneumonia. Almost
charming fellow. Did you know him?

He recoll the lines beginning
"In Flanders fields the poppies grow
Beside the crosses row on row -"

A beautiful little thing.

Poor old Talbot Papineau was
another old friend that we could
ill spare. He was my best man.

I hear that Harry Stairs is
going back to live in Halifax.

I should think he would be glad.

Please write to me again.

I suppose you have lots of
letters to write but remember
that getting letters is our chief
delight in France.

Much love to you all.

Yours as ever

Gilbert S. Stairs