

Private Lloyd Estabrooks
page 2

Letters to Laurie Black
page 4

Tantramar Heritage Trust, Inc.

Executive Directors 2017-2018

President Barbara Jardine
Vice-President Geoff Martin
Secretary Rebekah Cant
Treasurer Paul Bogaard

Staff Members

Executive Director
Karen Valanne
Bookkeeper
Sandra Niles

Tantramar Heritage Trust

29B Queens Road
P.O. Box 3554
Sackville, NB E4L 4G4

(506) 536-2541

tantramarheritage@gmail.com.

heritage.tantramar.com



Editorial

Dear friends,

We do remember them. Join me on two trips of military remembrances, each one in a different World War! Colin MacKinnon remembers Private Lloyd Estabrooks from Middle Sackville who signed up to fight in WWI. Follow Lloyd's ambitions to join the war effort and how the times stepped in to intrude on his quest. Lloyd Estabrooks was in Saint John when a photo of Sackville's Victory Parade was taken on 11 November, 1918 (see below).

Then join the friends of Major Laurie Black who wrote to him from the European battle-grounds of World War II and discover how a deep personal family tragedy affected Laurie's own ambitions to contribute to the fight. Read carefully the names of the people mentioned in these letters, some of whom may be distant relations. I wish also to direct your attention to the letter dated 10 February, 1943, from Major G. Robert (Bob) Ross to Laurie in which Bob mentions that he includes "a few snaps" with his letter which he had "on hand" while the training area was "a sea of mud." Laurie's son, Larry Black, provided both the letters and photos to us, of which four of the photos are included here.

Furthermore, with the letter and "snaps" sent to us, Larry Black included a copy of a letter sent to his father, then OC of "C" Squadron, 8 Hussars, Sackville, and every member of "C" Squadron, from Lt. Col. Keltie Kennedy, then CO of the

Regiment, thanking them for volunteering "to go active" (8th Hussars was then still a reserve regiment). As Canada did not proclaim a state of war until September 10, 1939, this correspondence of September 1, 1939, shows the readiness of New Brunswickers to serve their country. It is worthwhile to include here a transcription of this letter in its entirety:

Hampton, N.B.
1st Sept. 1939

Major J. L. Black
O.C. "C" Sqdn.
8 Hussars
Sackville, N.B.

ACTIVE SERVICE

Please convey to the Officers and Other Ranks of your Squadron my appreciation of their offer to serve with this Unit in the event of Mobilization. I have already offered our Services to Defence Headquarters.

K. Kennedy
Lt. Col.
8 P.L. (N.B.) Hussars

Two World Wars lead us to where we, as proud Canadians, are today. We all owe a great debt to those who fought in both wars and lost their lives. We do remember them.

Peter Hicklin

Private Lloyd Estabrooks (1896-1918)

No. 4063177, 1st Depot Battalion, New Brunswick Regiment

By Colin M. MacKinnon

Lloyd Estabrooks, born on the 9th April, 1896, was the son of Thalbert and Alice (Estabrooks) Estabrooks of Middle Sackville, New Brunswick. Coming from a large farming family, he was one of the oldest of eleven children. Lloyd's siblings were brothers Raleigh, Corey, Atwell, Gerard and Ralph and sisters Helen, Louise, Evelyn, Greta and Dorothy. During his early years, Lloyd likely attended the Middle Sackville Central School on Church Street, considered one of the province's superior schools. The teacher at this school was hired with a first class license and the school's first teacher was possibly G. Talbot Morton (born circa 1871) whose annual salary was \$122.00 in 1896. I don't know to what level Lloyd attained in school but his wonderful script signature is done with a confident and steady hand (see Figure 1). The First World War (28 July, 1914-11 November, 1918) was raging throughout Lloyd's late teen years and the horrific loss of life throughout this conflict resulted in a perceived need by the Canadian government to raise new troops. Caught up in the controversial "Military Service Act" of 1917 (that allowed for the conscription of people for the war effort), Lloyd Estabrooks received a call-up to serve in the summer of 1918 (letter number 663186 FC).

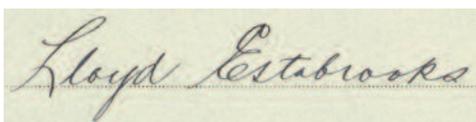


Figure 1. Signature of Lloyd Estabrooks in 1918.



First World War memorial plaque (about 4³/₄ inches in diameter/120mm), known informally as the "Dead Man's Penny", was sent to the family following the death of Private Lloyd Estabrooks (1896-1918) of Middle Sackville, New Brunswick (the discrepancy in spelling of family name on the plaque and in the text is described below).

On the 21st day of August of that year, Lloyd went to nearby Moncton for his military physical exam. His hearing was considered "Normal" and Lloyd had adequate eyesight (right eye 20/30 and left 20/40). His vision was fine for a soldier but he did not have the acuity required to be a pilot. He received a medical grade of A2. Someone attaining the overall category of "A" was considered "Able to march, see to shoot, hear well and stand active service conditions" while those in subcategory A2 were "Fit for dispatching overseas, as regards physical and mental health". Lloyd received an overall evaluation of "Good" for physical development.

On 29 August, 1918, Estabrooks travelled to Saint John, New Brunswick where he enlisted and was assigned to the 1st Depot Battalion of the New Brunswick Regiment (reserve battalion). While there, he was

described as being age 22 years and 4 months, weight 125 pounds, height 5 feet 6 inches, having a 34 inch chest and with blue eyes, light coloured hair and with a medium complexion. He prepared and signed his will on the 29th October, 1918, leaving his possessions to his father.

Sadly, shortly after arriving in Saint John, Pte. Lloyd Estabrooks took sick on the 12th November, the day following the end of the war! He was on parade but had not been feeling well. On the 13th, he complained of "headache, cough, soreness in chest, fever and malaise". By the 19th November 1918, just 8 days after the armistice came into force, his condition deteriorated rapidly and Pte. Estabrooks died at 11:45 p.m. of Influenza and Lobar Pneumonia (see Figures 2 and 3).

Lloyd Estabrooks was one of the many thousands of Canadians who succumbed to the 1918 flu pandemic, the so-called "Spanish flu". The ravages of the disease were so dire in New Brunswick that "in October of 1918, Dr. William Roberts, the minister of health in New Brunswick, outlawed the gathering of more than five people. Schools and churches were closed for five weeks in an effort to combat the spread of the Spanish influenza." (*Daily Gleaner*, Fredericton, 9 October 1918.). Being a young soldier and stationed on a crowded base with many other young people was a recipe for disaster from the spread of a respiratory virus.

Canada lost approximately 61,000 soldiers in World War I and the many

names on the cenotaph in Sackville attest to the sacrifices from the Tantramar area. In the closing days of the war, Lloyd's parents must have developed some hope, if not confidence, that their son would not have to serve overseas and would soon be able to safely return home. How could they possibly foresee the loss of their son at a time when most were rejoicing the end of such a bitter conflict? On the death of Pte. Estabrooks, his body was returned home. His body lies next to those of his parents at the Four Corners Burying Ground in Upper Sackville, New Brunswick (Figure 4).

Throughout Lloyd's brief time in the military, the spelling of his surname was plagued with errors that were never completely corrected. Although he was sworn in as "Lloyd Estabrooks", later documents sometimes had his name written as Esterbrook. This error appears to have been rectified by the battalion but his medical records continued with the incorrect spelling. A memorial cross was sent to his mother as well as a memorial plaque to the family. The name discrepancy of "Esterbrook" instead of "Estabrooks" was perpetuated on the bronze medallion that they received (see frontispiece).

November 11, 1918, parade in Sackville celebrating end of WWI.



Name of Deceased *Lloyd Estabrooks*
Residence *Sackville N.B.*
When and Where Died *Nov 19, 1918 Military Hospital*
Sex and Age *Male 22 years*
Occupation *Soldier*

Figure 2. Death certificate 19 November, 1918, for Lloyd Estabrooks of Sackville, New Brunswick. This soldier's passing was just eight days after the end of First World War.

CONDITION ON ADMISSION AND PROGRESS OF CASE

13th. Complains of headache, cough, soreness in chest, fever
malaise.
Took part in th parade of the 12th in spite of the fact that he
was ill, says he had fever at that time, with slight cough.
14--11--18. Exam of chest:- Crepitation and dullness-right lung.
Severe cough. Pulse fairl^y good. Temperature very high
15--11--18. Condition unchanged.
16th. Condition the same.
17th. Condition unchanged.
18th No improvement.
19th Condition unchanged.
19--11--18. p.m. Condition worse. Respiratione rapid, and labored
Pulse fast and weak.
19--11--18. Condition rapidly worse. Died at 11.45. p.m.

Figure 3. War records for Pte. Lloyd Estabrooks, page 15 of 18. Government of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx> (Accessed 10 June 2018).

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of Lloyd Estabrooks's death. This loss is all the more tragic (if that is possible!) due to the circumstances and timing of his passing. Although his military service was brief, Lloyd was willing to serve.

His name is not memorialized on the cenotaph in Sackville but his service and sacrifice should not be forgotten.



Figure 4. Final resting place of Pte. Lloyd Estabrooks (1896-1918), Four Corners Burying Ground, Church Street, Upper Sackville, New Brunswick.

Letters to Laurie Black During Wartime (WWII)

By Larry Black

The following are a few remaining letters sent to Major J.L. (Laurie) Black from fellow officers and NCOs with the Princess Louise 8th (NB) Hussars in 1942 and 1943 while they were stationed in England training and waiting to be sent into battle.

Major Black joined the 8th Hussars (then a reserve regiment) as a Lieutenant in 1921 shortly after he graduated from Royal Military College in Kingston. On promotion to Major in 1927, he was given command of "C" Squadron which won "Best in Regiment" in 1935. Most members of "C" Squadron were from Middle Sackville or Sackville. The Regiment was activated in 1940 as the 4th Canadian Motorcycle Regiment (8th Princess Louise Hussars) and Laurie went overseas in October 1941 as its second-in-command. Shortly after the regiment arrived in Britain, the Canadian Army Command assigned him to a special staff officer-training course at Oxford's Brasenose College. On its completion, he was promoted to Brigade Major of "E" Group, Canadian Reinforcements Unit (CRU). The first of these letters was sent to him while he was at Brasenose.

Laurie's rapid rise was cut short in 1943 when, back in Middle Sackville, his six-year old son Frankie was killed in an accident. Laurie requested compassionate leave. Denied that, he applied for a temporary transfer and, four months after the tragedy, returned to Canada. After a very brief stay with his wife in Middle Sackville, he was posted to Fort Esquimalt in British Columbia where he served variously as training and intelligence officer.

With the full support of his commanding officers in BC, Laurie applied regularly to be returned to his regiment in Europe but was turned down each time. His one chance at action came when he was named senior Canadian liaison officer attached to the staff of Alaska Task Force (ATF) under the command of US Major General G.H. Corlett (known as "Corlett's Long Knives"). Laurie was with the ATF when it invaded Kiska against the Japanese in August 1943 only to find (presumably to his relief!) that the Japanese had withdrawn.¹ In August, 1944, he was promoted to Lt. Col. and transferred to the Directorate of Military Training, Ottawa as a GSO 1 and then retired from active service in November.

* * *

These four letters below are remnants of extensive correspondence between Laurie and his fellow officers and NCOs with the 8th Hussars, many of whom he had known since they were boys in Middle Sackville or young

reserve officers in the 1920s. The first letter begins with a reference to an odd circumstance: when Laurie was attached to the Jr. War Staff Course at Oxford he was struck off strength (SOS) of what was by then the 5th Canadian Armoured Regiment (8th NB Hussars) by Lt. Col. H.S. Gamblin, leaving him without a regiment. The SOS was subsequently "cancelled in its entirety" by General Headquarters.

In addition to some personal information on 8th Hussar officers, NCOs and troopers, these letters also reveal both the high level of competency and comradery among 8th Hussar personnel and a limited insight into the daily lives of these young men as they prepared to go into battle.

All letters were carefully censored so no locations are mentioned and the envelopes had their examiner's number on them. Many of the men mentioned were promoted as the war went on but the ranks given here, for the most part, are the ranks held at the time the letter was written.

1. For details see Larry Black and Galen Roger Perras, eds. *Black's War. From New Brunswick's 8th Hussars to California's Corlett's "Long Knives", 1941-1944*. Waterloo, ON: LCMSDS Press of Wilfred Laurier University, 2013; and Canadian Army (Active). Certificate of Service and Record of Service, Lt. Col. J.L. Black.

Letter No 1

(All spelling and punctuation in these letters are as in the originals.)

Major J.B. (Jack) Angevine
to Laurie Black, 16 February 1942*

Dear Laurie,

Rec'd your letter this P.M. and glad to have heard from you.

Some time after you left Capt Hunter discovered that someone had pulled a "boner" in instructing us to strike you off strength. Therefore the SOS entry was cancelled and a new entry put through attaching you. As I see it now you are still on our Strength and simply away on course.

I am enclosing copies of the paras, affecting you, from Part II Orders. You will note that there were evidently two letters sent out from the War Office under different dates.

I heard the C.O. asking the B.M. on the phone to-day if he had anything definite on your return, etc. So I asked him to-night what information he had. He said the B.M. had no official information but that it was his opinion that you would be going to a Staff job after completion of the course.

Therefore, the latest we have is that you will return here unless you receive orders to the contrary prior to the completion of the course. Then again there is the chance that you might return and get an appointment later. That's about all I can tell you Laurie — nothing very definite, but you will at least know how the land lies.

We are pretty well settled here and the sgns seem to be doing a pretty good job in their own admin. Everyone is getting an hours P.T. every day now and the cross-country runs commence again on Sat.

We are leading the whole Bde in the qualifications of Part II drives and are well ahead of the GG's who are next.

We had several M'3's in a Worship Week parade to-day & it went off without a hitch.

All the clerks & cooks, tech storemen are qualified, as well as 20 more Dr. ops.. In addition I'm just now sending in rolls of a large number of Drs mechs — motor mechs and fitters for test. So you can see that we have not been standing still.

Four of our chaps won bouts in the Bde boxing semi-finals and are boxing in the final to-night.

Bob [Major Robert S. Black] & Coll [perhaps D. Colin MacDougall] are in



L-R: George Lawrence, unidentified soldier, Bob Ross and Col. MacDougall pose in front of tank.

Scotland on 7 day leave, also [Capt] Harry Gilmore & Dale (?).

The Col expects to go on leave next week. Don't see how I can get away until March. The work has been busy, however, in the orderly room and I'm pretty tired with so much night work. Everyone seems to want returns or rolls of some description. The L.A.D. [acronym unknown] is here now & I have all their rations to supervise too. We also have a Dentist. For want of a suitable place we had to put him in the 2 i/c's office.

No-one has taken over that appt, except that Bob Ross [Major G. Robert H. Ross] has more or less acted in that capacity. However, he has all he can handle with his own Sqn & he is head of the Bde Class II trade test Board.

Sgt [A.D.] (Doc) MacRae is C at E and SOS to the N.E. T.D.

* Letterhead

** Major "Jack" Angevine, from Montreal, joined the Hussars in 1922 and went overseas with the regiment as a Captain. He served as Adjutant in 1940-41.

Suppose you have heard that [A.C.] Spencer is out and [C.R.S.] Stein is our new Brig? Also Turnbull goes to 1st Bde as BM and [J.D.B.] Des Smith to CO of RCD's. Johnston of BCD's gets G-III and I believe Philips who was at HQ in Borden in Canada will be BM. [F.F.] Worthington gets new Armd Div — and so it goes.

Lt. Col. [F.D.] Dodd Tweedie was in the other day. He is C.O. C+ Y's now as Lawson is out. Gillespie of RCD's in E.

Guess I have rambled long enough for now — I hope the course is going OK.

Sincerely,

Jack**

P.S. Let me know if there is anything I can do for you or send you at any time — I don't mean money.

Letter No 2

Major G. Robert H. Ross
to Major J.L. Black, 10 February
1943, on 8th Hussar Letterhead.*

England 10/2/43

Dear Laurie,

Received your air-mail yesterday. Pretty quick crossing. Mailed at Victoria on Jan 28th and arrived here on Feb 9th. I will look after the cigs when they arrive and thanks very much for thinking of us. Some of the boys have been doing very well on cigs lately but there are big gaps in the shipments and there is usually a few who are buying the English variety at the canteen. One really has to have the habit to smoke them though. So many horses have been shipped out of the country that the quality of the tobacco has fallen off.

Glad you got my card OK. We presented all the men with eight or ten cards apiece and there was a mighty heavy mail out of here for a few days. We bought 10,000 cards altogether. Seemed like a hell of a lot but they were all purchased or distributed and mailed. The men appreciated them very much. We thought it was a nice card. The local selection available at the shops for purchase were pretty awful.

I will get after [Major D. Colin] MacDougall about answering your letter. He is now at #3 CACRU on a four (?) months tour of duty with our reinforcement Sqn. He has been there about a month and seems to rather like it I think. Occasionally homesick for the Unit no doubt. He was down here last Saturday night to a dance we held. His love life has been very successful of late. Believe it or not old Mac is the heart-breaker of the Unit. Just got back from the S.O.S. myself on Friday last. That reminds me: I wrote a bit of verse while there which

received notices favourable and otherwise. Sorry I haven't got a copy right now but will strike one off and send along to you within a few days. I can hear you saying "Why, the damned fool." Very undiplomatic I assure you. Didn't get a bad report though, although it could have and should have been better. Some day, sometime, somehow, I shall develop the ability to osculate the posterior and then the sun will rise in all its splendor and the garden will bloom again or something no doubt.

The poor old Padre (Markham) [Rev. Capt C.J.] has eventually been eliminated from the Unit and is now functioning at #1 CACRU. He was considerably over age and had been expecting the move for some time. [Capt. C. Douglas] Doug Everett has returned to the homeland as instructor at an Infantry Training Centre. Over age also. Jack Angevine is at CMHQ in A.G.Br. [Major Sim R.] Sim Jones is G-3, Armd Bde – 4th Div. [Capt. C. W.] Bill Gilchrist has gone to North Africa as P.R.O. (Capt). Have had a lot of other changes also and there are only seven officers left of the original 4 Cdn Armd Regt: "So sad, so sweet, the days that are no more." They are as follows:

[Capt. A.G.] Sandy Merritt
(still QM).

[C.F.A.] Kit Graham (Lt)

[P.M.] French Blanchet
(Maj – 0C "A" Sqn)

[H.G.] Howard Keirstead
(Capt – 2 i/c "HQ" Sqn)

[J.S.] Jack Boyer
(Capt – 2 i/c "A" Sqn)

[C.A.] Cliff McEwen
(Capt – 2 i/c "C" Sqn)

[Capt. B.M.] McAlary
(still the best P.M. in the army),
and myself still 2 i/c.



Col. MacDougall enjoying a cigarette.

Of course we have [Major Frank L.] Price here so that is one more of the old familiar faces.

We are fairly well up on equipment now but are in the throes of reorganization on the new British establishment of one Armd Bde per Div. You will be glad to know that the Regt remained with the Armd Bde in this Div. Bde now composed of L.S.H., ourselves and BCD's. GGHG now Div. recce regt. 1st H [Hussars] and F.G.H. to Army Tank Bde with Sherbrooke Fusiliers.

Did you meet [Brig. George William] Robinson, our new CO? He is a really fine chap and liked by all of us.

I am enclosing a few snaps which I have on hand and will try to have some more to stick in letter with alleged poem. We are in a Hell of a wet section of the country now — rains every day and training areas are a sea of mud.

Oxford was very nice and very little wet weather there (SOS), but it rained regularly here. We hear that Bob [Major R.S. Black] is coming back. Presume you knew about it.

Will close now Laurie and give you some more of the dope when I can get another letter away.

Adios,

Robert

* G. Robert (Bob) H. Ross joined the Hussars in 1927 and went overseas with the 8th Hussars as a Captain. After the war, he was promoted to Lt. Colonel and in the late 1940s served as CO of the Regiment.

Letter No 3

Major G. Robert H. Ross
to Major J.L. Black, 6 April 1943,
on 8th Hussar Letterhead.

England 6/4/43

Dear Laurie,

Rec'd cigarettes OK and am distributing them to the needy as and when anybody's stock becomes exhausted. Thanks very much for the kind thought, cigs are always appreciated. Am enclosing acknowledgement card and sent note to your man [Norbert] Cormier who wrote me when he made shipment.

Everything fine here. You must know of course that Bob [Black] is back here now. He is at present at #3 CACRU as we have no vacancies for field rank in the Reg't at the moment. Bob, MacDougall and [Major S.R.] Sim Jones all arrived here last Saturday for one of our famous unit dances. Was sorry that I couldn't stay to see them but had some knitting to attend to in London and was away for the week-end attending thereto. Called then up from London at the height of the festivities though and from the general incoherence was satisfied that a good show was in progress. Will get to CACRU shortly to see I hope. Sim Jones is now on staff of 4th Armd Bde - 4th Div. and I understand he is going on a course shortly. MacDougall is running our Sqn at #3. Has had about 3 months of it now. I think I told you before but I am not sure that we have a man in his place — Maj G. Carrington-Smith. Was in P.F. before the war and for awhile was with [Maj. Gen., F.F.] Worthington at Camp Borden with A.F.V. School. You may know him — not a bad chap.

Frenchy [P.M. Blanchet] is still commanding "A" and Frank Price "B". We now have Angevine back commanding HQ Sqn. You may have



Robert (Bob) Ross in a military Jeep.

heard something about our recent large scale manoeuvres "Spartan". It was a big show and I am glad to say that the Regt acquitted itself admirably. The official report said: "A thoroughly reliable Regt, always at the right place on time." Quite true too and not applicable to a number of other units, etc. The men came across in fine style and I am convinced that there is no finer crowd in the show.

Laurie, I hear via Madame Rumour that there is a possibility that you may return here to England. What about it? Hope it is true. As you say returning to Canada was a mistake from a military standpoint although it was almost dictated by family affairs at the time. Let's have the news when you learn anything and we may have a full-scale reunion yet.

I am enclosing copy of some verses I perpetrated when at the SOS which caused a mild buzz at the time and from what I hear has achieved some further circulation since. Just in explanation: (1) Brasenose College is where course was held. (2) Reference to drink and "have another tomorrow" alludes to fact that you could purchase only one drink per day at the bar. (3) Burmese Nats are Burmese Gods, Devils and what have you and busts of these carved in teak lined the walls of the Indian Institute where we held many of our lectures.

Intended to send you some snaps with this letter but regret that I have no prints at the moment. Will send shortly. Best regards to yourself and family,

Robert

DEMENTIA PRAECOX IN C SHARP MINOR

or

NOSTALGIA AD NAUSEUM

Brasenose College old in story,
Synonym of Learning's glory,
Now behold the great transition
Tis a hot-bed of ambition

No longer student treads the quad
With aquiline nose inclined to God,
But earnest men in khaki brown
Striving to add a pip to crown.

No longer now the mortar-board,
But scions of the gun and sword.
Oddly meek and strangely quiet,
On a rigid mental diet.

Defend, withdraw, advance, attack;
The Staff solution or the sack,
Seize high ground for observation,
Show interest at the demonstration.

Cross a river, fight at night,
Use your tanks before its light,
As commander know your duty,
Make your TEWT a thing of beauty.

Concentrate on narrow front,
Don't let Recce bear the brunt,
Use everything you have ancillary
And don't divide the Div artillery.

Surprise and speed, quick penetration
Depends on keen co-operation,
And never have the least complicity
In anything but extreme simplicity.

Drive the Boche's recce back,
Send firmly home your main attack,
Finally to obtain salvation:
Consolidation, exploitation.

Use your tanks with gay abandon,
Shove them out to fight at random,
Tremble at the stands so muddy
Maybe you forgot to study.

If you should chance to be the chief
Answer questions clear and brief,
Never do that thing so awful
Never, Never, Never WAFFLE!!

Never question THE solution,
The Staff might think of retribution,
They stand with D.S. Notes unfurled
The Moguls of another world.

When the thread is near to snapping
Do not stat your forehead tapping,
Take a drink to drown your sorrow
Have another ONE tomorrow.

Students pale and students wan
 Heads in hands and minds near gone,
 Seeing things that are not there,
 Plucking Burmese Nats from air.

Cease to bewail your dreadful plight
 Another week-end is in sight.
 Get a girl, a room, some essence,
 Eschew your fear of obsolescence.

Reach for the higher things in life,
 i.e., someone else's wife,
 Forget for a time the martial law,
 Attack. Withdraw, attack, withdraw.

Forget that quickest penetration
 Requires full co-operation,
 Forget the point of least resistance,
 Forget attack by the shortest distance.

Forget the Burmese Nats and things,
 Remember only that time has wings,
 Recline in the hollow Lotus Land,
 Forget discussion at next stand.

Remember the Staff with dreamy kindness,
 God will cure them of their blindness,
 Their hearts are not as hard as vanadium,
 They are sorely tried by things Canadian.

The Canuck knows not the art of war,
 His head is empty to the core,
 But think of him not in thoughts baronial,
 Deal gently with the poor Colonial.

Now this is the end and no one grieves
 And I only hope that the Staff believes,
 That on my brain there grows a tumour,
 And saves me by a sense of humour.

GRHR
 Rachmaninoff

[Spelling and punctuation in poem are exactly
 as found.]

Letter No 4

Letter from G5 RQMS Frank B. Ayer
 to Laurie Black on Salvation Army Letterhead.*

England, 26 April 1943

Dear Laurie,

Rec'd your air-mail letter of April 7th on Saturday but did not get a chance to answer it on Saturday or Sunday night it being Easter time. I was beginning to wonder if you were getting my letters or not but I think most of them got there sooner or later. I received the cigs and still have them as at the present time we have two other outfits with us in the mess and one is western and we do not pull so well, so will keep them until we are on our own again.

Most of the regiment is out on scheme for three days so the Q.M. staff is catching up on its work.

I expect at this time you are in New Brunswick on leave and are glad to see the old familiar place once more, it certainly must be quite a change from Victoria. It is very pretty over here now, everything is so nice and bright and at times one stops and wonders if war is as bad as our mothers and wives (I have'nt one) seem to think it is.

Dave Gass is with the regiment now. I don't believe I would have known him if someone had not told me he was here.

Sky McPhee and I just came back a short time ago from nine days leave – on a couple of occasions got quite tight and nearly got in a row but managed to squeeze out none the worse.

I expect Mrs. Black will be glad to get back to her own home again. Expect you will miss the family but as you say one never knows what will happen or where you will be tomorrow.



Thirteen Canadian soldiers in Europe – the men are not individually identified although the handwritten note on back of photograph indicates the presence of MacDougall, Angenine, Everett and Mac Grant and that McEwen was away on leave. Frank B. Ayer is not noted here although he may have been part of the group (but not identified).

Ronald Butcher was up to visit us over last week-end and I got one of the fellows to take him out and show him how a tank worked – before the days was over Butcher was at the controls and doing a pretty good job at driving. He seems to be a lot heavier than when he was at home but guess maybe he could stand it.

How are all your family these days? Did you by any chance see Elijah Hicks while you were home on leave?

All the boys from home are fine. Have not seen Bob [Black] yet.

Hoping you are well and that you get the break that you have coming to you.

As ever,

Frank

* Frank B Ayer, from Middle Sackville, went overseas as Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant and was promoted to Regimental QMS.