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GEORGE PETER MacLAREN PAPERS

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George Peter MacLaren (1878-?)

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MG 30, G 163

Consists of seventeen letters — sixteen letters of Major G.P. MacLaren of the 256th Railway Construction Battalion, later the 10th Battalion, Canadian Railway Troops, World War One, to his wife in Toronto, Ontario; one letter to Mrs. G.P. MacLaren from Annie Wheller, Somerset, England.

LETTERS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

1. Annie Wheller to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated at 84 Station Rd., Glastonbury Somerset, England, 4 March 1915.

Describes briefly her voyage over to England and the depressing aspects of the military black out over there. She thanks Mrs. MacLaren for her kindness in Canada.

2. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated at Halifax, 26 March 1917.

Briefly describes his trip to Halifax on the troop train and his accommodations on board the MISSANABIE. He mentions a couple of fellow officers - Jim Murton, Clarkson Jones, Capt. Wilkes, Capt. Elson, Capt. Drummond (these last two were adjutants of the Battalion).

3. Major G.P. MacLaren (diary-letter) written at sea, 25 March - 7 April 1917.

MacLaren describes his voyage over on troopship MISSANABIE in convoy with CAICARIAN, METACAMA, SOUTHLAND, SAXONIAN and LAPLAND. Description of convoy. Mentions Col. McConnell, Major Clarkson-Jones, Major Murton, Lt. Hamilton. Refers to Blacks in No. 2 Construction Battalion. Gives initial impression of Purfleet camp in England.

4. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S., dated at Purfleet Camp, 9 April 1917.

Describes to his wife his trip over to England, the convoy, and his work in constructing railway lines near Purfleet. Mentions camp conditions at Purfleet.

Good description of voyage of voyage over.

5. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated at Purfleet Camp, Essex Co. England, 16 April 1917.

Describes morale of his men, mentions names of his fellow

officers - Jim Murton, Clarkson-Jones, Bob Jennings. He outlines his plans for his leave and describes the English girls he has seen.

6. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated at Purfleet, 28 May 1917.

Describes new equipment he has bought and his attempt to see a friend - Arthur Brooke. Mentions fellow officers Tom Jones, Capt. Palmer, Jim Murton, Dave Blain and enlisted men Hardacre and Fox. Describes a bit of his camp life, a German air raid and high cost of living in England.

7. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren (incomplete), dated at Purfleet 15 June 1917.

Talks of slowness of mail from Toronto, describes visit of General Turner.

8. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "France", 5 July 1917.

Mentions places in France and Belgium that he has been stationed and describes his camp life briefly. Mentions Col. F.F. Clarke, Louis Fritsch, Tom Jones, Bob Jennings.

9. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "somewhere in France", 15 Sept. 1917.

Describes his accommodations and dug-out and mentions his fellow officers and their company commands - Tom Jones, Bob Jennings, Major Bond, Major Coe, Chil Hervey. Identifies various companies in his battalion. Relates rumour of Russian situation.

10. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "somewhere in France", 18 November 1917.

Thanks wife for food and clothing. Describes briefly conditions at front and a couple of mutual friends. Mentions two of his fellow officers - Capt. MacDonald and Capt. Dr. Stewart.

11. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "somewhere in France", 26 November 1917.

Thanks his wife for her letters, photos, clothing and food. Mentions he is going on leave to London. Mentions a few mutual friends. Relates rumours of British success in Italy.

12. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "somewhere in France", 29 November 1917.

Describes the very muddy conditions in France, (near Ypres, Passenchendaele) his expected leave to Paris, and his war weariness. Hints at trouble in Canada. [Conscription ?]

13. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated "somewhere in France", 11 December 1917.

Describes his leave in Paris with a Lt. Jules Ferry, mechanical transport officer, from Sudbury and mentions he has heard of Halifax explosion disaster.

14. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated near Ypres, Flanders, 16 December 1917.

Describes his exact location, mentions Russian Italian war efforts failing. Describes mutual friends and German night bombing. Mentions Capt. Gordie Moffatt M.C. and other fellow officers. Relates rumours of treachery in Halifax explosion disaster.

15. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated France, 27 December 1917.

Describes his Christmas celebrations, describes the weather, mentions fellow officers Dave Blain, Bob Jennings, Clarkson Jones. Comments on 1917 Canadian election.

16. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated France, 7 November 1918.

Thanks his wife for clothes. Describes his new C.O., Col. Harding. Also mentions Col. Dr. S.P. Brown, and "Doc" Stewart. Describes German atrocities and his own feelings on the subject. Mentions a dance he was at the previous night.

17. Major G.P. MacLaren to Mrs. MacLaren, A.L.S. dated France, 12 Nov. 1918.

Remarks happily on collapse of enemy forces. Describes meals with fellow officers George Harding (Col.?) and Bill Swan. Mentions flu epidemic and his eagerness to get home.