

7LGA/2/1/22-Written from 'Boulogne Base'

Dearest Ivy Best thanks for yr welcome letter of Nov 14, received today. It wd be v. nice if Alan came out for a day or two. I am sure he wd be interested & he cd bring you back much more news than I am able to send. We hear hardly anything here - I mean in the papers except old English papers, but I am so busy all day that there seems no time for reading. This hospital is running nicely now. The RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps] has been most helpful & generous to us & we have mastered most of the essentials of routine [?now]. We have 60 beds full & can take about 70 when the rest of our blankets arrive. Annie & Eliza are doing splendidly & are the greatest comfort. They welcome the ambulances with cups of steaming cocoa & soup & supply the receiving room with towels & boiling water & soft soap (all most necessary) & at intervals they visit the wards where they get most cordial greetings. The men are really very nice. We get so fond of them. They love having fires in their rooms & English food & comfortable beds & having letters written to their wives etc etc & a girl quarter master who is very attractive as well as efficient. I am thankful we came out. It was quite the right thing to do. The people here are a little tiresome about the house & furniture & exorbitant in their charges but I suppose that is inevitable. Mr Campbell who is with us here is a very great help to me over difficulties of that kind. Dr Murray went back to Paris ten days ago & is out of reach as posts take more than a week between us. She is v. anxious not to give up Claridge because we are told Paris will almost certainly be the main hospital base in the near future, for the French if not for the English. On the other hand, we hate being apart - & I miss her help very much here where there is a great deal of organising & business in addition to a lot of surgery. We had an easy afternoon today: no fresh arrivals: & we spent it unpacking bales of presents from England - lovely things came. The sea is perfectly lovely here. Wimereux stands rather high & there is a sweep of coast. The sea has been quite rough lately & at night the search lights over it are beautiful. There was a great turn out today for Lord Roberts' funeral. I happened to be on the quay about some business & came in [?illegible]. It is rather a fine way for the old man to die isn't it? Alan is so precious that I feel as if he shdn't volunteer. It makes one's heart stop - but he & you must decide. The thing has to be fought out & nothing matters except that we shd each of us do our best - only he can do so much by staying at home - My admiration for men has gone up so tremendously I feel quite different about them now & it us such a blessing to do so. For years at home I had seen only their worst side & now I am seeing a splendid side of courage & self sacrifice for an ideal, that no woman would better. The Tommies are wonderfully articulate & sweet to us & grateful in words for the little that we are able to do for them. It is very interesting to be here & such a comfort to have the chance. If Alan doesn't come over soon I think I will take a couple of days off & come back to London - or perhaps I shall come in any case though I don't much like leaving this place while Dr Murray is away. I am so interested & pleased to hear of DFA & Diana. I know Colin will come all right. He is just at a rather difficult age but he is a dear child & he is bound to get alright. What a mercy you weren't killed by the car accident the other day. These might-have-beens make me feel creepy. Please give me love & news to the beloved [?illegible]. And take plenty of care of yr dear self. Have you seen Dr Turnbull lately - if not I shd much like you to. Very much love to you all my dear Yrs LGA Colin - Colin Anderson, nephew DFA - Donald Anderson - nephew Diana - niece Annie [Goodwin] and Eliza [Fenn] - LGA's parlour maid and cook, who wernt with the WHC to France