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U.S. Air Service,
A.E.F. France.
March 14, 1918.

Mother precious,

I am overwhelmed by the flattering or rather complimentary tone of your ~~letter~~ recent letters. It is delightful I must confess to realize that you enjoy my letters describing the life and experiencies over here. But, Mother dear, you must remember that you are my mother and because of your great love ~~of~~ anything which I do is liabled to be augmented and overapreciated in your dear thoughts and you must therefore be careful not to expect the same sort of appreciation from others. When you refer to me as hero and that sort of thing I feel like I've been pulling up green corn or "camouflaging" as someone else. ~~As a matter of fact~~ You should have heard the howls of laughter as I read aloud to the fellows the clipping you enclosed from the paper which published one of my letters in which I was referred to as "this gallant young Southern hero". Oh slush! Mother, I am not heroing over here - not yet at any rate.

Picture a young man in vigorous health after nine hours sleep in a comfortable bunk, rises and dresses leisurely, takes a splash in the wash room and goes over to a bang-up breakfast of soft boiled eggs, bacon, white bread, oat meal, butter, coffee etc. and sometimes fresh fruit. He then attends his first formation and attends a class on some interesting subject - aerial gunnery,

bombing, theory of flight or goes over and shoots clay pigeons for an hour or so, or maybe its machine gun practice or with the pistols, or then again all warmly clad he goes over for a flight or two in this wonderful balmy climate. He comes back to barracks in time to wash up for noon mess and a chat with the fellows, then mess and its no mean mess either, with fine food, ~~and~~ good company and a splendid spirit of good fellowship, interesting conversation and plenty of wit. After mess a siesta or a stroll and more classes or flying and before evening mess there is time for a hike, a base ball game or anything else that he might want to do for diversion or exercise. In the evening there is music or moving pictures or reading, writing or tea parties with boxes from home and to bed again at 9-30.

And there you have a picture of an average ordinary days routine of my present existance—very ordinary—no hardships—Of course one doesnt have one's morning bath arranged for ~~him~~, or have his talcum powder warmed, in fact he is required to break his own soft boiled eggs, but outside of this his life is a very pleasant one. And as I have said before my principal hardship is being so far removed from the ones I love, and after all a fellow hardly deserves a Croix de Guerre or to be heroed for that.

A thing withwhich I have been deeply impressed over here is the amount of work, training and organization that is necessary back of the lines ~~before~~ in order to put over an effective punch. The business end of modern

warfare comprises by far the greatest part of it and the actual fighting at the front a very small portion of it. The amount of preparation and business organization that is necessary to make this fighting possible is astonishing - There are camps to be built and that means the building of a fairly well equipped town with its roads, its walks, its electric lights, water and sewage systems, the barracks, garages, hangers, machine shops, quarter master store buildings, railroads and their numerous buildings - And then there is the operation of all these various departments requiring knowledge and experience.

There is no question but that in our army we have men, and many of them, able and equipped with precious experience to handle these jobs and the Lord knows we have plenty of jobs. The biggest job, and one of immediate importance, which we are facing ~~just~~ now is the proper distribution of these jobs to the men who are best qualified to handle them. There is lost motion and lack of efficiency in placing a man who has spent years preparing himself in law in charge of a piece of construction or a railroad man in charge of a commissary department. And this assortment will have to start with the big jobs and work all the way down through the enlisted men. Of course this ~~work~~ has been started and will continue and business ability will be more and more the requisite qualifications for the business job.

So you see I am not yet in the hero end of the game and it will be some time before I am sufficiently trained to take part - I am in the business part the big preparation part of the game and like other games it has its hazards, like foot ball for instance. And once in a great while a fellow gets hurt but it is very seldom that the accidents are serious.

A few days after I arrived at this school one of the men fell while doing his spiral and was killed. I didn't know him for he had come over before me and was in a more advanced class. We all attended the funeral in military formation and it was very impressive. We marched slowly down the road to the little new cemetary; first the band then the cadets, the carrage and the officers. The men all marched well too, for it seemed that it was his parade and they would all do their best. The coffin was lowered, the bugler sounded retreat and while the chaplain was saying the few formal words of the ceremony, I couldn't help but picture by the side of the grave a grey haired father with bent head and a proud but aching heart with one arm about a dear little woman whose heart was in the grave there with her son; and maybe a sister and a sweetheart nearby.

There were two new graves already dug by the side of this one and I guess many of us looked about among our comrades and wondered who among us would occupy them, for one never thinks that it will be he who will take the next final altitude flight to that great celestial airdome.

In marching to the cemetery only the drum sounded with its

slow monotonous blumb — blumb — blum, blum, blum. And after the service and we had resumed our marching formation on the road once more the band struck up a lively march as much as to say "Men, don't let this bother you, it is part of the game, and we have our work to do".

The feature of the following day was a formation for baths - There are compulsory baths each Thursday and since that is the only bath obtainable it is needless to say that there were no absenties. We were marched up to the bath house where they had full steam on. We were divided into two groups and while the first group bathed the second prepared. There were lots of hot showers and one very cold one just in front of the door which every one had to pass under in order to get out. It was very crowded but a lot of fun and we succeeded in getting a first class bath and felt wonderful afterwards.

Sunday was a perfect day, balmy and sunny. ~~and~~ Just the kind of day when I used to want to take off my shoes and stockings and go bare footed for the summer. Three of us started across the fields for a walk. The bees ~~and w~~ were conspicuously busy for it is already their harvest time - Flying ants were crowded up the fence post and taking their first "hops". A rabbit ~~was~~ disturbed from his nibbles ~~and~~ bounded across the wide field, birds were singing every where and they held ~~pos~~ entire possession of the air for there was no flying for the day.

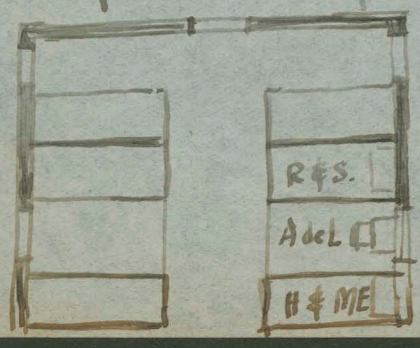
It was a real Sunday and my thoughts turned to Crows Nest and I could see and smell all the freshness of Cousin Kate's garden - the dog tooth violets, the crocosses and daffodills and ~~the~~ the cherry, peach and apple trees all in blossom, and Cousin Frank is looking for the first Dutchman's breeches on the rocks by the dining room wing. We crossed the field and down a winding road for about three miles to an old, old village. The most conspicuous feature of the village was an old tower about which ~~the village~~ it seemed to have grown. The fellows with me had their minds set on things more sustaining than crusty old towers so ~~after~~ it was nt until after lunch that I could get them to go over with me. We went all through and had a bully time rummaging around and I ~~made a sketch~~ was busy making a sketch when an M.P. (military police) tapped me on the shoulder and told me that we were not allowed in the village and to clean out. M.P's are bad people to argue with so ~~as soon~~ I finished my sketch and we left.

Life here continues to be interesting and altogether the most comfortable I have found yet. Tell Jim for me, ~~that~~ although he will never believe me, that in my clay pigeon shooting my on first shoot I got 15 out of 25 and am getting better right along. Also please thank him and Anna L. for the cigs they were very much enjoyed -

General Pershing and Sec. Baker have just made an inspection of the camp. They must have been very favorably impressed for in the first place this is a bang up camp and in the second place we pulled off the most thrilling twenty or thirty ring circus you can imagine. Machines everywhere and every machine doing something different. Some ~~in formations~~ some doing tight spirals, ~~and~~ some doing Immelmanns and some the most remarkable things with their tiny powful motored planes that fairly made your flesh crep to witness and all the while the groups of machines in formation were traveling around making perfect turns and keeping their distances exactly.

One of the fellows was asking a German prisoner the other day who was going to win the war. He said - "Vhit Got and Germany fighting against the Allies I thought we could win, but since America's joined the Allies I dont know which vill win".

One of the fows who shares our appartment de luxe, as we call our "section" in the barracks, is Frank Roberts a very nice chap. By the way let me describe our appartment



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The bunks are arranged in double decks and four to a section and a dressing space of some four and a half feet between sections and a window at the end of each dressing space. This space is our library, smoking room, boudoir and drawing room and is generally a very busy little space particularly about ten minutes before "lights out" when all four of us are unfolding our blankets and making ready for the night. Being thrown into such intimate and close contact with ones fellow occupants it behoves one to ~~be~~ exercise great care in the selection of ones neighbors. Being one of the first of our bunch over this was quite easily accomplished - To give you a more accurate picture I have just finished a sketch in my sketch book which will be finished soon that you may see.

Above me reposes a big tall Westerner, a Hoosier named Harter - Good natured, as true as steel, full of energy, makes you think of an overgrown boy or an awkward bear (as though there ever existed a graceful one) - always restless to be doing something and is always ready to join in on a hike ball game or most anything that you might suggest.

Opposite me is Frank Roberts a Princeton chap from Philadelphia - Frank is short, stocky, married and stutters most amusingly, and is good natured enough ~~to~~ not to mind being teased about it. He reads a great deal and writes every day to his wife.

Above Frank is Leonard Stanley of Truro and New York City and unblushingly confesses that he is a Yale man. He's one of the best soldiers in the outfit. A very modest fellow about everything except Squadron A of New York with whom he went to Mexico and about whose stirling qualities he continually raves.

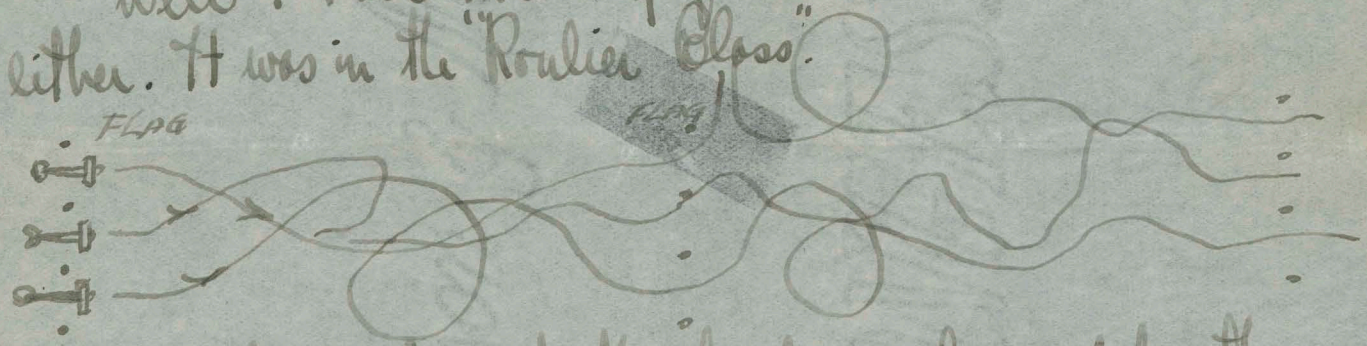
And now we'll go back to Frank R. One of the boys told him about a man on the street car who stuttered and asked the man next to him, "I-i-i-i---" is this ssssss--- stop Morningsssss Morningside?" He waited and asked the question the second time but the man whom he questioned just looked at him and didn't reply. Finally a kind old gentleman answered and told him that it was Morningside and the poor chap got off. He then turned to the other man and said "Why didn't you answer that poor fellow's question?" And he answered "Dddddd--d--d do you HHHHh think I want to get my blamed h-h-head knocked off!"

We took a walk a few days ago, a very long one and were all glad of an excuse to sit down and rest when we came across a couple of French soldiers who were graging some cavalry horses. We sat down and talked with them a while and old Stan. told them all about Squadron A. And thinking this an excellent

opportunity to serve the cause by showing these Frenchman a few equitarian stunts as they are done by the Squadron, he asked permission to ride one of the horses. The Frenchman very much pleased to be accomodating and of service to one great as this ex-member of Squadron A of New York very gladly granted permission. The horses had no saddles on and only a simple straight bit. Stan picked out an old raw bony one patted him and arranged his maine in a very professional way. I was really beginning to be proud of Stan. He mounted quite well and they started off on a nice slow trot. Stan was doing fine especially in the absence of a saddle. But they had only gone a little way across the field when something happened. I dont know just what it was. A bee may have bitten him. He may have detected something in the atmosphere that was strongly suggestive of the Throne or maybe Stan unexpectingly said something to him in his half-breed French that was offensive to a self-respecting French cobbery horse. But whatever it was it worked marvels with that old nag. Across the field he tore in leaps and bounds. He had a wonderful assortment of stunts and he tried them all on poor old Stan. But Stan was with him at every bound sticking to him like grim death. At last he straightened out and started to run. and headed for a

group of farm buildings. And as in most groups of this kind the central feature was a pond of very dirty water with a green scum on top and a foul odor. On they came until the horse seeing the pond ~~the~~ suddenly decided to go no farther but Stan continued and landed or rather "pan caked" right in the middle of the pond, ruining a brand new uniform, and dampening his ardor for Senadron A. He was some mad boy as he emerged from the pond with festoons of green stuff hanging down his face.

Well I have had my first smash - not so bad either. It was in the "Roulier Class".



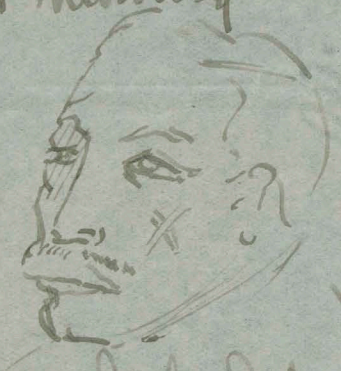
A certain portion of the field is set apart for this work and every one is required to do twenty turns ~~in the~~ before being put on the faster machines. This is for the purpose of getting you accustomed to "taxiing" a machine with a fuselage. The one on which we trained had four points in contact with the ground (that is usually sometimes of course there were a great many more) and the faster machines have only three - the two wheels and the tail skid.

The machines are queer little monoplanes with very

small, clipped wings, making the machine impossible to fly but it taxies as fast as a real machine and is much more difficult to control.

There are several machines placed side by side and the courses all marked out by pretty white flags. All the courses are exactly alike and there really should be no preference but it is queer to notice how every machine seems determined to switch to another course. They looked like ~~funny~~ silly big birds cavorting over the course. In the British schools they are called penguins and that is exactly what they remind you of. All morning I had done famously and I was feeling pretty cockie. So about my eighth trip I pulled back the levers and went zooming along with tail up. Oh! Fine! I cut for the end of the course and when the ~~th~~ machine slows up it is much harder to control I started circling to the right and I slapped on the left rudder and would have been all right but just then a tire popped. I made a quick turn then over on the nose. I ~~sat~~ shut off the gas and crawled out amid the hoots of laughter of the other nine in my class. Later on I was somewhat repaid seeing three other members of the class do the same thing.

One is never badly ~~wo~~hurt in this work and fortunately I didn't get a scratch. Some of the others were bruised up a bit and one section was very much cut plastered the next morning.



This is how Jerry Stivers looked on the morning after the day before and normally he's quite a good looking fellow.

Last Saturday I returned from a lecture to find a message on my bunk telling me to telephone Lieut. W. Jack Hoover at T. I was delighted to have an opportunity to talk to Jack. I couldn't get him on the wire however and while I was trying again the following morning Frank came over and told me that he was waiting for me at the barracks. He had motored over with a Major who came on an official call. It was fine to see him and to hear all the news from home. We had a little talk, I introduced him to some of my friends, ~~and~~ had lunch together and then he had to leave. He promised to come back again soon and I shall try to go over to see him but on account of my schedule it will be impossible to see much of him in T. He doesn't know just ~~what~~ where he will be sent, and although he has completed his training I am very much in hopes that he will be sent here for a bit of work at our school and maybe I will be in the same squadron with him and

maybe we will be sent to the front together. I should like that very much.

And while he was here your precious letter was received we had a good laugh over your buying antiques nouveaux. But mother! How could you! I never before associated cruelty with your nature, and yet you drew such a vivid picture of that H.C. fud till I fairly ached inside. From what the papers have to say ~~I didn't~~ about wheatless, meatless days I didn't dream such food existed. You must have had a corking time and I know that the relaxation from strenuous business did Bonsin for a world of good.

And remember about the letters — ~~only~~ for family use only [NOT TO BE USED EXTERNALLY]. I would feel very much constrained if I thought that they would be otherwise and besides they would have to receive special Censorship and finally I have ~~my~~ grave doubts about their worth as publishable material.

Mother the sweater is a beaut it fits exactly and is beautifully made it is particularly acceptable just now for the one which Margie made for me some sort of gun has just swiped from me. The wristlets and the socks are also very much appreciated particularly the pair with the pink stripes, and they are just that becoming.

I am happy to say that the YMCA affair in T. was all satisfactorily mended. The two ladies were reinstated after having received the apologies of Mr. Carter and the secretary transferred to a less important post. I now feel that my vacation was well spent.

You didn't mention Uncle Jimp's condition in the Montgy items. Has he recovered from his serious illness? I hope so.

I was so interested in ~~you~~ the Mobile feature of your trip I know Cousin Joe made a lasting hit.

With a heart full of love for my family and especially for you, my precious.

Penrose.

P.S. Thanks for the cards and the dominoes. I forwarded them to the hospital and enclose their note.