

K 19204 the Aero Squadron
San Antonio, Tex.
May 27 th 1917

Prof. Simonds,
Galesburg, Ill.

Dear Friend:

I certainly appreciate your interest in me and I will be glad to let you know how I fare.

There is no danger of my getting too deeply into trap-shooting because it don't run in my blood. However I am not above

the game when I only have about ten or fifteen cents to lose.

When I left the Barracks, I had my complete equipment. We came down in one Pullman, just one carload of us. After arriving in San Antonio, ^{we} were taken to a detention camp where grass never grew and sandstorms happened every ten minutes. I suppose that we were put there to let what dormant germ that might be in us come forth. None came and we were taken away from that ~~nepheo of Hesse~~ after three days and put on an old aviation field. There we stayed only one day and were brought to this place, which in comparison to the old field is a heaven. Here I was lucky enough (I don't know yet how it was) to be assigned to the fourth Aero Squadron. All the men who were not assigned to either of the squadrons were sent to a camp just one mile below this camp. Now there are over 5,000 would-be aviators there.

I can look across the aviation field and see the number of tents increasing every day. I think they stand about one chance in twenty five of getting on a squadron, as I hear they are not going to form very many more. The latest rumor is that every unassigned man under 21 in this dept will be sent home.

Here we live in Squadron barracks. To each Squadron are assigned 36 machines, twelve of these are supposed to be in active service, twelve in the shed ready to fly, and twelve in ^{the} repair.

2. Shop.

The food has always been good. Since we have been assigned to a squadron every meal is a feast and conditions perfect. In this branch of the army we enjoy privileges that the others don't. There is very little if any drill and big auto trucks take us to San Antonio every night at 6.00 and meet us at 10.30 and 11.45 and take us back to our barracks, a distance of about ten miles.

This afternoon a couple of trucks (each one hold

300040 men) go to Sulphur Springs Park
there we can swim, and those soldiers
who have had a weakness for liquor,
can drown their sorrows in soda pop,
now.

The squadron is divided up
into officers and crews. Every
man on a crew gets to go up
every week and helps take care
of the machine. I was on a crew
until last week. I was called into
headquarters and asked if I would
like to work with the quartermaster.
I said sure. He told me that it
is where I can get some stripes soon.
I was called into the office of the
supply sergeant yesterday and he
asked me my name and then
said: "All right, we will push
you up a notch next month." The
Q.M. tells me better stories of promotion
now being in the office I can go
up whenever I have time. I
have been so busy since I have
been in the office that I have
not had time.

I meet men here from all

party of U. S. and from other
lands than America. There
are many interesting and
well sophisticated men here.
So many of the rough, hard-
boiled kind believe that to
be a real Army man, one
has to be worse than the
last, and they tell stories
about themselves that
one never would find out
in private life. I suppose
they expect respect or awe,
I don't know which. There
are college men from every
college in the middle & west,
even Bill Jacobs is here from

3. Lombard.

It seems to be a weakness of the majority here to grow moustaches. I think tho, ^{that} rather than a weakness it is the result of dull razors and a lack of will power to continue the suicide when tho it can be avoided.

The captain has given me permission to make application for Reserve Aviation Commission Officer. Then when I get that, if I do, I can be a pilot if I so wish which I think I shall.

The Q.M. target and myself

have a private room of our own.
I find him a very interesting
companion as he has studied
medicine three years and travelled
for about seven. I got to ~~go~~
go with ~~him~~ him when I was assigned
to my new job. This noon we
office men were presented with
U. S. Aviation, Waltham wrist
watches. They are those kind that
one can see in the middle dash.

San Antonio is a sorta slow
moving city. I mean the atmosphere
is conducive to such. If I lived
here all my life I sure would
be one of the do-it-tomorrow-kind.
I would have gone to town today
but must wait until tomorrow
to cash a check.

Since I have been here I
have travelled all over the globe,
from N.Y. to Panama, Vancouver to
Honolulu, London and Paris and
a lot more places. We hear
new rumors every day. I am
half tempted to believe the last one

tho' as it has lasted for
two days. That is we will
either take the 1st Aero Squadron
place on the border or the 2nd,
on one of the Islands. There
we will practice with
field artillery divisions.
Perhaps ^{the trip to} France is not very
far off. I hope it is not.

I am certainly glad I
am here and am perfectly
satisfied with conditions. For dinner
today we had Pork chops, mashed potatoes,
lettuce, peas, bread & butter, swell cake, &
extra good lemonade. I ^{had} found
some time for study before I was
put in the P.M. office but am rushed
some now. The rush will be over
tho, when we get better organized
which cannot be when we expect
to move any minute. Your friend
Don Allen