

Letters Home: Army Air Service

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen

Between 1917 and 1919, *The Sheridan Post* and *The Sheridan Enterprise* donated considerable space to printing letters home from local soldiers and sailors serving both overseas and stateside. As part of the 2017-2018 *Wake Up America* exhibit, Trail End reprinted dozens of these letters, releasing them weekly via social media. For the most part, we have not changed the spelling of overseas locations, preferring instead to use the sometimes-creative spelling printed in the original articles.

These letters are from men who served in the Army Air Service (before the Air Force was created in 1947, both the Army and Navy had their own air services). In addition to squadrons of airplanes, the Air Service commanded numerous Balloon Companies.

ROY LEON HAYWOOD – Army Air Service

Roy Haywood was born in the mining town of Cambria, Wyoming, where his English-born father was a mining engineer. After the family moved to Sheridan, Roy grew up in a house on Loucks Street. As soon as he was old enough, he went to work as a timekeeper for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, and later trained for the position of machinist. Roy joined the Army Air service in May 1918, where he rose to the rank of corporal. After the war, he returned to Sheridan, married a local girl (Mary Pelissier), and went back to work for “the Q.” He died in 1929. The following excerpts are from a pair of letters Roy wrote while stationed at Camp Lewis in Washington State. While other missives in the *Letters Home* series address basic training itself, Roy’s letters describe the wartime Seattle-Tacoma area as he saw it from the vantage point of a sightseer in uniform.



Undated letter published 26 July 1918

The Pacific Highway runs through here all the way to the coast, and it is real nice traveling to ride over a good road like the one I was on. The road is made of concrete about eight inches thick and one-half inch of some kind of preparation laid on top, and it is wide enough for cars to pass one another at a high rate of speed; and when riding it seems more like one is flying, for there are no jars or bumps. ... [Going to Tacoma] we passed cars both coming and going, and for several minutes I tried to count the cars we passed, but got only up to 670 and then stopped, for it is almost impossible to keep track of them all.

After eating [lunch in Tacoma], I ran across two of the boys from my company. They told me they were going to go to Seattle by boat, so I decided to go along, for I had never been on a big boat before. On one side of the sound (Puget Sound), I saw very large shipyards, and counted 43 ships in the course of construction. Some had only one or two braces of the keel laid; others were ready to be launched, but all of the ships in this one yard were built of wood. Thousands of men were working on them. In the water, in front of the yards, there were 29 ships that had been launched, but not finally completed. Some were painted, and some not, and none of them had their smoke-stacks on yet.

We passed a big ocean liner going to Seattle. This was a real big ship. ... One thing I noticed, there were not many passengers, people are not traveling across the ocean now so freely.

Just before docking at Seattle, we passed another large shipyard. Here, the different ships were being painted the new way, or camouflaging. One I noticed in particular was a large ocean liner. It was painted at the front end of the ship - from the deck down to the water line - it was painted a dark gray, for about ten feet back; then a light blue, then a white, dark blue, black, white, blue, and so on, the whole length of the ship, and when we drew away from it, I could hardly see it at a distance of one mile.

[Once in Seattle], myself and the other two boys got a nice room at the Hotel Burke, and we got there just in time to rent the last room. Some of the soldiers were unable to find a room and had to stay up all night.

I walked around for three hours seeing everything I could; I went down to the dock where the big fishing boats come in and saw them unload tons and tons of fish. Here also were big sailing vessels; two, four and eight masts, some with their sails unfurled, while others had their sails all furled up. Small donkey engines were running up and down the dock, and with their whistling and wheezing, squeaking of pulleys from cranes overhead, along with the shouting of men, it seemed to me I was in some kind of a crazy man's paradise.

From here I went back up town and went on top of the tallest building on the Pacific Coast. From the top I could see for miles and miles, and it is a wonderful sight to stand there and look all around over the city and bay; only there can one realize what a wonderful country we are living in. I looked across the bay and counted all the vessels I could see ... over 300, so it does not seem as if Germany could ever sink all of them. In Seattle I saw thousands of sailors on leave from their ships, and they sure are a fine looking bunch of boys.

Undated letter published 2 August 1918

I went over to Tacoma again last Saturday, and went over to Seattle. Passing by the shipyards, I noticed most of the ships that were in the "ways" last week were mostly all finished, and some were already launched. Shipbuilding in Seattle must surely be progressing satisfactorily for the government.

I went to the Y. M. C. A. rooms and on Sunday morning ... after breakfast, I and my chum went down to the docks. Civilians are not allowed around the docks if they are not working there, and even then, they must show a photograph of themselves on demand from any of the soldier guards. I, being in uniform, had only to show my pass, so I was permitted to see everything I wanted to. I went on board one of Uncle Sam's newest merchant ships, which was just being loaded for its first trip across the water, and walked around the deck, went in the engine room, etc. The government is building this class of ship in great numbers; everything is standardized on them so it makes it easy to build them at such a fast rate.

The people of Seattle sure treat a soldier first class. Why, even the Japs, selling fruit, give the soldier the best of the deal. The only ones that take advantage of us are the hotel keepers.

CARL ARTHUR SIMMONS – 172nd Signal Corps Squadron

For the duration of the war, Carl Simmons served with the Army Air Service (he enlisted in May 1917 and was discharged in January 1919). He started out as a flying cadet with the 172nd Signal Corps Squadron and went on to be stationed in England, where he instructed British, Scottish and American flyers in the use of machine guns. A native of Monroe County, Wisconsin, Simmons arrived in Sheridan sometime around 1915. Before the war, he worked for Sheridan's San-I-Dairy; afterwards he was an automobile machinist in both Sheridan and Casper. In July 1918, Simmons wrote a letter to Sheridan resident C. J. Oviatt, in which he describes - as much as he could due to censorship rules - the life of an American soldier in England. The letter, which discussed everything from weather to money (plus a shout-out to the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A.) was published in *The Sheridan Post* on August 13, 1918.



Dear Oviatt - I have been here in England about five months, and I am getting "fed up" with it (that is what the English say when they get tired of anything). We are all anxious to get to France where we can get our Huns. I don't know when we will get there; I think my work will hold me here for awhile.

I am an instructor in aerial machine guns. I have English officers to instruct and some Americans and Scotchmen as well. In fact men from all over. I like the work fine. The English officers like to have us tell them about the good old U.S.A. They treat us very nice over here. ... It was hard for the boys to get used to tea over here instead of coffee, but we are getting coffee now and everyone is happy.

I suppose you wonder why I took up aerial machine guns, but if you stop to think of it that is your only show with Fritz - your machine gun. No matter how well you can fly, if you can't shoot your gun, and know it like a book, you had better stay away from Fritz, for he might get rough with you. It isn't like going out deer hunting in Wyoming where you can shoot at a deer, and if you don't get him he won't hurt you - Fritz might take to playing rough with you. As soon as I had finished my course in machine guns they put me to instructing and I have been at it ever since.

I would like to tell you about our trip over here on the boat but I cannot write anything in my letters about it. Anyway we had some trip and some excitement. The last two days we had company or visitors. It reminded me of good hunting in some big woods where there was only one rabbit and trying to get it.

We have plenty of excitement here. Your hair will stand on end every now and then. But I cannot tell you in my letter what the excitement is. ...

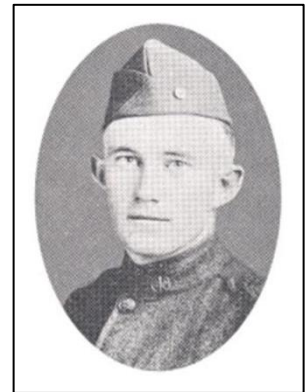
We have been living in tents ever since we got in England. It was quite hard when we would get a snow storm for we had only one stove in camp, and it was outside. It was the cook stove so you could only get within ten feet of it. But now the cold weather is over for awhile and we are sure glad. ... We have had some bad winds over here. One night I awoke and found that the wind had carried my tent away and the rain was trying to see how long it would take to drown me. But I beat it to it and found another tent for the night. When I first awoke I thought Fritz had made us a visit - but it was only the wind. ...

The American boys are doing wonderful work over here. They are going into their work with heart and soul. But one thing we must do: that is to thank the folks at home for standing back of the Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A., for they are doing wonders here - making everything as happy as possible for us. I think every man over here has got some of the Red Cross knitted goods and they sure do come in handy. I was in a hospital for 18 days when I first got in England and I can't tell you how good the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. were. The Red Cross sent us candy and cigarettes and a number of other things. And the Y.M.C.A. took good care of us all. The first warm day, when we could get out the Y.M.C.A. had us all playing and otherwise showing us a good time.

When we landed here and got our American money changed into English money we did not know how much money we had - for we had pounds, ten shilling notes, crowns, half crowns, florins, shillings, sixpence, threepence, pennies, halfpennies, farthings - all different coins. And when an English clerk would tell us how much we owed her for something we thought she was trying to sing something to us. And then it was funny to try to figure out how much it was. We would always lay a handful of money down and let her pick out what she wanted, so we never knew whether she took more than her share or not. But now we have got it down so we can count it faster than the English.

RALPH CLAYTON FERREN – First Balloon Section

Lifelong Sheridan County resident Ralph Ferren was born in Sheridan in 1897. As a child, he lived in Big Horn and on Murphy Gulch, but by the time he was a teenager, he was living back in Sheridan and working at Fred Schroeder's bottling plant. Ferren enlisted in the Army Air Service in January 1918, and was assigned to the First Balloon Section. The bulk of his training was in Camp Sevier, South Carolina, where he spent a good amount of his time in quarantine. His letters from camp, written in March 1918 and published in *The Sheridan Enterprise*, relate some of his experiences. After going to France and seeing action at Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne, Ferren returned to Sheridan. He went to work as a machinist for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad; a job he had until his retirement in 1965. Ferren died in 1974 and is buried in the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery at Crow Agency, Montana.



Undated; published 1 March 1918

There are ten or twelve of our bunch in the hospital, and one of them died last night. I think he had pneumonia. One of the boys out of our tent is in the hospital. He went there the next day after we got here, and we have not heard a word about him since we cannot get away to visit him and cannot find out any other way. They say the hospital is carrying about twice its capacity now. That is, they have about twice as many in it as it is supposed to handle. Well, the guard just went by and said "lights out," so I will have to close and finish this tomorrow.

Will try to write a little more this morning, but don't know how far I will get. A person never can tell during the day when he is going to have a little time to himself. We just got back from our morning measles inspection and, as it is raining most of the time, we may not have to do much today. ...

We got a floor put in our tent yesterday, and it sure makes things much better as this ground was awful damp. We are going to get electric lights in our tents too. They are going to work at it today, but I don't suppose they will get around to ours. That will be another big improvement. I really like this living in tents better than buildings because in buildings there are so many in one room. Up at Fort Logan there were about a hundred of us in one room, and it was always noisy and smoky and not as homelike as these tents. Of course, if it was cold here, would nearly freeze the way we are fixed up, but it don't get cold down this way. Except when it rains, it is nice and warm and we run around in our shirt sleeves. All nice days we have to furl our tent around the center pole and let the sun in on our bunks.

Well, I have been on guard duty twice since I've been here. They have a new bunch of guards every day. A guard is on duty two hours and then off four and on two again and so on for 24 hours. I was on twice during the night and twice in the day time. I was sure sleepy when I had to get up in the middle of the night and go on guard but, believe me, I kept my eyes open.

I heard this morning that we might be out of quarantine in a few days. Sure hope so, as I am getting anxious to look the camp over. They say there are 60,000 men here now and that the camp is 5-1/2 miles long. They have infantry, artillery, cavalry and aviation sections here. I think we will be moved to the aviation section of the camp when we are out of quarantine. We may go someplace else, though, you never can tell. ...

Well, I just got back from the mess hall and will try to finish this before dinner. They can't let us alone here even when it is raining, but call us up to the mess hall to a lecture or something. It is just like going to school, only it does not last but an hour or two at a time. Today we had to memorize a lot of general orders for guards. I knew mine already, so they put me in as teacher over some of the rest.

Camp Sevier, South Carolina, 3 March 1918; published 15 March 1918

Well, we got out of quarantine all right, but it did not last long. A week ago today the quarantine was lifted at one o'clock in the afternoon. We boys hit out and took in some of the camps that afternoon. ... That night we went over to Paris and took in a show. Paris is a small sort of town by the railroad station. There are two show buildings that must hold about 2,400 people apiece.

The next morning at nine o'clock the quarantine was put down on us again for some reason or other. Then they put us to work remodeling the camp: digging ditches, grading streets, etc., and we also built a hog wire fence about 7 feet high around four of the detachments. They are going to use that ground for a sort of receiving place to put new bunches in. ... We were expecting to

go out any day, but one of the fellows in our detachment came down with spinal meningitis and now we are in isolation, quarantine.

Friday night at 10 o'clock we were routed out of bed and told to pack up and be ready to move at 3:30. We got up and put everything in our bags except our bedding and then went to bed again. At 2:30 we were called, and the work of moving camp began. We first had to go down to the mess hall and carry all the supplies up here. (We are isolated on a hill about half a mile from our former position.) Then we moved our own belongings including everything but the floors in our tents. It was sure some job tearing up and moving in the dark, but we got everything out by daylight. It sure looked foolish to have to move at night, but when one of these doctors orders a bunch to be isolated, it has to be done. I think our officers received orders some time during the night to have us moved by daylight. Anyway they made us rush things, and we first just moved our stuff to the edge of the old camp, or I mean across the line which was about a quarter of a mile and then moved it on up here later.

As soon as we got up here and before we ever had all our stuff here, they set a bunch lining up and pitching tents and put the rest of us to digging ditches and fixing up for a new camp. I swung on the end of a pick all day yesterday and all day today. Our camp is in a square and all the streets have to be graded up and ditches dug down both sides and around the entire outside of the camp and also around each tent. The grading is all done with a pick and shovel, too, no teams. When you get 125 men to work, though, they can do quite a bit. We have most of the work done now. The work all has to be done just so, too. The streets are rounded up like a pavement and all sticks, etc., picked off. We have no mess hall here, but the kitchen is right out in the open and we have to use the ground for a seat and table. They will not allow us to bring our meals into our tents to eat. No eating in tents allowed. This is more like real camping out, just like we were out on the road on a hike.

I expect we will leave here shortly after we get out of this spinal meningitis quarantine, but for where I have no idea, but the lieutenant said he thought we would go towards New York. None of our officers knows what we are going to do. Everything is done from Washington and, when they receive orders to ship us some place, we will be shipped. ...

We had quite a dinner today. Had chicken, dumplings, cranberries and brown gravy. It sure tasted good for a change, believe me. Last night nine of the fellows that were on guard deserted their posts and got into the supplies and ate a lot of cookies, raisins, canned milk and other things. They had a good feed, I guess, but they were sure foolish. The cook missed the stuff first thing this morning, and as one of the guards was supposed to watch the supplies they were all called up. Those that were in it owned up, so it did not go so bad with them, but they could have been court-martialed three times because they broke three articles of war. They made them go

without their chicken dinner today, and all they got was a slice of bread and a cup of coffee. To make it worse, they lined them up and made them stand where they could see all the rest of us get our good dinner, and we were making fun of them all the time.

Well, I am on kitchen police again tomorrow and have to get up at 4 o'clock, so I guess I had better go to bed.

Monday Night, Mar. 4

Well, I just got off of duty a few minutes ago and will write a little more. ... We sure had a nasty day of it in the kitchen today. Just as we got everything out ready to serve, it started raining, and it sure made things nice. We got an old tent that had been about half burned up and stretched it up over in front of the stoves so it gave a little shelter, but we had to serve the line out in the rain. I made a run for my rain coat, so did not get very wet. It made things awful nasty to try to wash the pans and vats, and cook supper, but we got a pretty good supper fixed up. We had cocoa and I drank about two quarts.

MARK TODD DARLING – 78th Aero Squadron

A native of Bedford, Iowa, Mark Todd Darling lived in Sheridan for a brief while before the outset of the war. According to his draft registration card, he was employed as a shoe and clothing salesman for the Stevens Fryberger store (also known as The New York Store). During the war, Darling served with the 78th Aero Squadron at Taliaferro Field, near Hicks, Texas. Although he and his unit trained to go overseas, that didn't happen. While he was in Texas, he sent several letters back home to his friends in Sheridan. The first, printed in *The Sheridan Post* in May 1918, reports his arrival at Taliaferro Field. The second, written a little over a month later, is from the same location. After the war, Darling did not return to Wyoming; he relocated to Oakland, California, where he owned and operated a small family restaurant. After his wife died in 1931, he went to work as a clerk for the Hotel Harrison. He died in Oakland in 1958.

NOTE: We do not have a photograph of Mark Darling in our files. If you know of one and you'd like to share it with us, please contact us at trailend@wyo.gov.

I have not written before because in the first place writing time in the army is limited and besides they have been keeping us on the move so much that I have never known where I would be for a week at a time. We are now located fifteen miles north of Fort Worth, Texas. It is an ideal flying field, and the buildings are fixed in fine shape. It is a new field, only recently completed.

There we found the first barracks that I have been permitted to get into since I have been in Uncle Sam's employ. We had been living in tents until we got here, and it seems rather odd to again be living under a real roof, but it is much nicer and we have more conveniences.

I am with a regular squadron, and the report is current in camp that the squadron is permanent to this field. However, camp reports are not to be relied upon to any great extent, for an order might come any time that would change things all around.

Most of the boys here are anxious to go across, and I am free to admit that I share the general feeling. The sooner the orders come, the better we will be suited. At least I sincerely hope that we will not have to spend the summer in Texas. As yet I have not seen a great deal of the state nor have I had an opportunity to visit many Texas towns. I may not be a competent judge, nor do I want to slander the state, but what I have seen of it does not look good to me. I would not want to make this my permanent home. For that matter, the West is the only real country, and for me there is only one real state and that is Wyoming.

I am much pleased with army life and like it much better than I ever thought possible, and I am mighty glad that I joined.

A month later, Darling expressed some exasperation at still being in Texas, but overall, he seemed to be making the best of things.

Things are in good shape at this camp now, except that it is getting very warm. I am in another squadron now. It is sure a dandy - the best I have been with yet. The C. O. is a magnificent fellow, and the bunch as a whole are splendid boys.

My squadron is an overseas squadron, but of course we do not know how soon we are due to leave for France. It is rumored that we may be ordered to a northern camp. If my outfit goes, I surely hope that I can go with it, for I have had all of southern Texas that I want.

We are located fifteen miles northwest of Fort Worth. ... I do not like Fort Worth at all, but Dallas is a fine town. It is about thirty miles east of Fort Worth, and you can go over on the interurban.

Army life is all right, and I like it very much. However, the aviation section is not what I expected to find, but I guess it will have to do until the powers that be get ready to transfer me. A soldier cannot transfer out of it, but the authorities can transfer him if they see fit.

It is six months and over since I joined, but it does not seem that long, for time passes swiftly here. Have endured some hardships and at times have had things very easy. That is the way it is in the army as well as in any other kind of life.

EARL EDWARD GARBUTT – Aviation Service

Earl Garbutt was born in Sheridan in 1893, one of three sons born to postmaster Cameron Willis Garbutt. Edward's mother, Anna May Loucks, was the daughter of Sheridan founder John D. Loucks. Prior to the start of the war, Edward worked for the U. S. Government at the Presidio in San Francisco. Just before war was declared, he traveled across the bay to Berkeley to enlist in the Army. Like his brother, John Donald Garbutt, Edward entered the Aviation Service. Unlike John - who was killed in a training accident in early 1919 - Edward survived the war and went on to a career as a pilot. In the spring of 1918, Lieutenant Garbutt was stationed "Somewhere in France" at the Second Aviation Instruction Center. His letter from there, addressed to younger brother Cameron, was published in *The Sheridan Enterprise* on June 16, 1918.

NOTE: We do not have a photograph of Earl Garbutt in our files. If you know of one and you'd like to share it with us, please contact us at trailend@wyo.gov.

Had a sweet trip in the air yesterday. Have a new motor, and he lets me do about as I please. Made two complete trips all alone, but will say the landings were nothing to brag of. The motor was working fine and the sun shining bright. Went up about 300 meters or nearly 1,000 feet and made a big circle. It was a little bumpy, but not enough to detract from looking overboard. Even as low as 300 meters, the country looks flat and the forests look like green cushions. I was almost tempted to try jumping out on the forest - didn't, however.

We have an accident or two nearly every day, as all the flying schools do. But since they quit putting the motors overhead - and put them in front - the fatal accidents diminished. You remember how the old machines had the engine overhead and back of the pilot. Yesterday some fellow was starting on a trip alone, and his machine side-slipped and crashed to the ground. The ambulance rushed up, but the fellow was all right as usual.

Another fellow was making a landing and evidently hit a ditch, though I didn't see it fall. The first thing I saw, his machine was standing on its nose. The pilot wasn't hurt and just sat there flapping the rudder back and forth. It was sure funny - it looked like a duck with its head under water wagging its tail. About five minutes later the ambulance came rushing up. You see, the ambulance always stands at one side of the field ready to rush to an accident. Some time ago it got stuck in the mud, but finally got out.

It was sure funny yesterday when a machine lost a wheel when taking off. There was a pupil in the machine who perhaps would have tried to land the machine and, if he had been going fast, might have smashed up. So two fellows got spare wheels and rushed out on the field and, when the machine came back around, they waved the wheels in the air to show he had lost one. So the pilot gave it the gas and made another loop and landed it very slowly - didn't even snap a

wire, although the axle dug into the ground and the machine spun around. I'll bet the student was ready to jump.

JOHN DONALD GARBUTT – Army Air Service

One of Sheridan's "leading young men," John Donald Garbutt was the second oldest of four sons born to Sheridan postmaster Cameron Willis Garbutt and his wife Anna May Loucks (daughter of Sheridan founder John David Loucks). The eldest Garbutt son, Earl Edward, enlisted before war was declared; he became an Army pilot who served as an aviation instructor for the French Air Service. Following in his footsteps was John Donald, who enlisted in the Army Air Service in October 1917. By January 1919, the twenty-two year old was serving as an aviation instruction at Carruthers Field near Fort Worth, Texas. Before he could reach that exalted post, however, he had to undergo endless hours of flight training. In this letter sent to his mother from Texas in September 1918 - published in *The Sheridan Post* - Garbutt talks about the training, the weather, and how the two could combine in a number of life-threatening ways.



Dear Mother - Last week our class was held back on account of rain so I am still doing cross country formation flying. Cross country formation flying is lots of fun at first but it soon gets old and becomes work instead of play. Day before yesterday I took a trip of a hundred and twenty miles and back. We started early in the morning and upon reaching our destination were welcomed by a big crowd of people who took us in big cars out to their country club. We had breakfast there; danced awhile and then started back. We got back in time to have a little nap and shave before dinner.

Last week we had one of the worst rain storms I believe I ever saw and I came very close to being caught in it. We had just left the field and formed in a V formation. The sky was covered with heavy black clouds and as it was only 6 a.m. it was not yet very light, but our leader thought we could climb through the clouds and make it all right. After reaching the clouds we immediately lost sight of one another and also the ground and most everything else except the closer parts of the plane. Not one of us got through the clouds although some went up over a thousand feet.

It is rather hard to explain the way one feels after flying for several minutes through clouds so dense you can barely see your radiator cap and not always even see it. I don't know how the rest of the bunch felt but I know I was getting rather anxious to see either the blue sky or the ground again as I kind of had a feeling as though I was going to smash into a telephone pole or

a silo although I [saw] by my altimeter that I was up about 2,600 feet. I had had plenty of the clouds and as I knew our formation was broken up for good, I nosed the plane down. When I came out of the clouds my shirt was wet, my goggles so wet I had to keep wiping them off.

After coming out of the clouds I started for home but it started to rain and I began to doubt whether I would reach the field or not. However I managed to get back O.K., but the wind was blowing so hard I could hardly land. Three of our men crashed and a number of other men broke undercarriages and various other parts of their planes.

... One of our men today who was flying for the last time before getting his commission crashed, broke both legs and smashed himself up considerably, so he won't get his commission for at least five or six months more - tough luck. ...

If I can get through the next three weeks without a crash or something else happening, I will try and get home for a couple of days about the first or second week of October. ... If I get a leave it will only be for ten days, so I don't have much time to loaf, but ten days is better than nothing.

Garbutt received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in September 1918, two months before his Thanksgiving leave in Sheridan. On January 13, 1919, an airplane piloted by Garbutt went into a tailspin and fell 5,000 before crashing near Carruthers Field. Garbutt and his passenger - the plane's mechanic - were killed instantly.

ANONYMOUS

In March 1918, an unidentified Sheridan "boy" wrote a letter to his father, requesting support for the younger man's wish to enter into the aviation service. *The Sheridan Enterprise*, which believed the letter to be "one of the most inspiring statements of zeal for the republic and its principles which we have yet seen," published the missive on 22 March 1918. "The boy," continues *The Enterprise*, "is absolutely convinced of what he should do and is just old enough to follow his own mind, but he wishes to get his father's consent before taking the step."

NOTE: The father eventually conceded to his son's wishes.

To me, life is a second-place consideration. I would not move out of death's tracks one inch if the choice lay between it and honor. I have no fear at all of death. I give the matter no consideration and never think about it. When the Great Maker calls me, I am ready.

So far as dangerous service is concerned, if you will show me a sure death by which I can serve my country to the utmost, I will choose it immediately. Our country needs aviators and needs

them badly. Not the kinds that are found in every day walks of life. But men of daring and skill and such men are found only in lovers of their calling, lovers of aviation and danger. I am one of those, and it is my duty that I go. Not one of my grandfathers had stood listlessly by letting someone fight his fight. Why should I? Am I the only blot upon the flag that carries the coat of arms of the family? What could be of greater honor to a family, a father, a mother, than to have given one of themselves, a son to a cause to be won only by blood? Perhaps even by his blood. Am I not placed in this world to accomplish some good? What greater good might I accomplish than to die for my country, yes, my country and our country? Nathan Hale said when he stood upon his scaffold, "My only regret is that I have but one life to give to my country." He was a man. What, am I to shield a cowardly soul that I may enjoy the fruits of others' suffering?

I have been told that my place is to prepare myself that I may better help restore the Union to normal conditions when this great strife is over. Let us all prepare ourselves to restore the Union. Let the failures of life, the bums, the toughs, the inmates of the pens and the pimps do our fighting and pollute the soil of France with their blood? We banish them from our society, but we want them to uphold a sacred cause! They have failed in themselves so let them defend democracy! Let them make our freedom. Were those the type that upheld the honor of our nation during our previous struggles, the Revolution of 1812, the Civil and the Spanish-American wars? Are those our forefathers who bled for us, whom we love, honor and almost worship? Is our Union founded upon the blood of such? If so, I shudder at defending a flag resting upon such a foundation.

I claim not such a citizenship. If conditions are such, let me also be "a man without a country." Conditions are not such, I am proud to say, and no army constructed on such trash is going to share the honor of defending Old Glory. Not so long as there are red-blooded men of my age and loyalty existing. There are reconstructionists a plenty, but what we need now is American manhood to build an army which will hurl defeat into the gaping mouth of the Hun.

Cromwell's army was an army of men and was never defeated by those of that element which many co-called patriots would place at the staff of our flag. If the choicest of Americans do not respond, there will be no work for reconstructionists to do. I am one of American's sons and am standing idle while I could fly the flag of freedom from the bullet nose of a Liberty Aeroplane over the very crown of Berlin's despotism. I am one of the ones upon whom the life of a great nation depends, upon whom the honor of a mother and father and family hangs in balance.

Shall I forsake all for the sake of a living death, that of a coward's disgrace? Have I no love for the honor of my family? I do not wish a coward's disgrace, and I have the love of my family's honor, therefore I am going to do all that is within my ability, and you know what that is. These, my dear father, are my real honest-to-God convictions, and I think they are right.