

Camp Logan Houston Texas, Hq Co. 129 Inf.

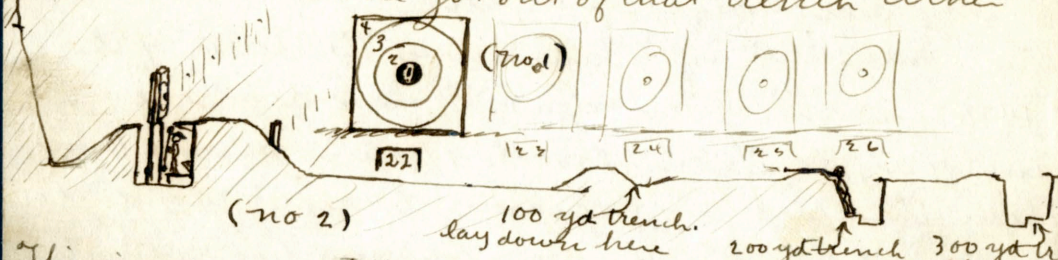
nov 23 - 1917

my dear mother and father -

well this is in answer to the letter of the 14th (noon) and your idea is a very good one - I am sorry I could not write sooner but we have been the last few days on the rifle range about 8 miles from here and just got in this evening. We marched out monday afternoon with full equipment and back this morning. I rec. letter of yours mon. fore noon. I got card refering to safe arrival of cornet and the letter about Roscoe and Mr. Snedden and was sure glad to hear it all more than you might think only I don't know why I did not mention it. Just had enough to fill up with with out it I guess. And about talking - I could spend a month at home with nothing to do but talk and not get near them. That is the way I feel now. There are so many things that are of interest to tell that would take up too much space on paper to mention them. Could not do it. I am sorry to say I shaved my little moustach off about the time it got to looking pretty good. I feel more like a soldier now since I've come from rifle range and have used a real gun, one that can send a bullet 250 yards over 3 miles. That is some shooting and such a pleasure I never had before. First day in morning I was operating a telephone on firing line trenches and in after noon I was in trench under the targets operating phone there



while in the trench under the targets you could hear the bullets whistle over your head going some. Believe me no one got out of that trench either.



This is a cross sectional view of the range. 1st trench is 100 yds from target - 2nd is 200 yds and the 3rd one is 300 yds. The target is a frame about 7 feet long and 6 ft wide. (No 1) shows how it looks to one shooting at it. The bulls eye is 8 in. in diameter. It sticks up above the ground or embankment just as in no 1 and each target is numbered. There are 300 of them in a row and that many men can fire at them at once. The trench the target is in is wood lined as the 200 + 300 yd. trenches are. Only it has a board protection over the top. The target is on a little elevator and when you shoot at it the man pulls it down into the trench finds the bullet hole <sup>Part of the hole shut.</sup> and marks it and pushes the target up for next shot. target is white with black circles as in fig one. There is no chance for a bullet hitting the man in the trench, he would have to crawl out to get hit. The big bank at back is to stop all the bullets. The target is numbered so you will know which one to shoot at for at a distance of 300 yds you can't tell one from another unless you see the number. So a man shooting could tell where he was hitting, the fellow in the trench has a pole with a disc 8 in. in diameter on each end of it. The disc on one side is white - that is when you get a bulls eye hit. on the other side is red - and that is shown when a hit is made



in circle no 2 and on other <sup>(2)</sup> end ~~one~~ side is a black cross - that is shown for a hit in circle no 3 and other side is black that is for no 4 - corners. and they swing a red flag when you miss the target. you see you shoot and they ~~don't~~ mark the hit, you call over the ~~phone~~ and tell them at the target to see where the hit is - they look and no hole is found then they wave the red flag. I saw one fellow miss the whole target every time he shot. The reason for marking your shots is to let you know where you are shooting so you can correct your aiming next time. The same target is used for 1-2+3 hundred yards. (The disc is placed over hole bullet made no you can tell where you hit) I shot all one day - some fellows had awfully sore shoulders. Those guns sure have some come back to them - you don't have to hear them to know they have fired. And the pounding and vibration along the firing line is something fierce on your ears drums. especially when you are aiming with a man on each side and ~~and~~ they both shoot before you do - it makes you almost dizzy and you will have to get an aim all over again. When you see those rifles fire and jerk back against the fellows shoulders you would think it would dislocate them. My shoulder is well muscled for this kind of work and did not get at all sore - I was so interested to hit the mark I did not notice the kick at all. I saw quite a few black and blue shoulders and a couple bursted lips but that was because the fellows were afraid of the rifles and were awkward and of course got hurt.



my score was one of the best out there. On the 100 yd range I made 49 bulls eyes out of 50 shots. Fellows looked up when they saw a white disc come up every time and asked who was shooting. I sure was surprised I could do so well as I never had shot one of the guns before but took in lots of items the day before while operating the phone. My first shot on the 100 yd. was very close to the bulls eye and the rest of them were bulls eye hits. Sure made me feel good. You can imagine how big an 8 in. black spot would look from our house to the railroad - down Dakota St. That is something about 100 yds.

On the 200 yd. range I made 44 bulls eyes out of 50 there. Not at all bad for being at twice the distance. Sure takes a very steady nerve and you get the rifle on aim you must fire it before you get it off aim, you don't want to get <sup>at</sup> all excited or shut your eyes before pulling trigger. You keep pulling trigger more & more all the time until it finally goes off and you don't know when it is going either until you are slammed in the shoulder. When the gun jumps after firing you wonder how you could possibly hit anything with it, but I guess the bullet is there before the jerk is noticed. On the 300 yd range I made 63 bulls eyes out of 75. 50 of them were with peep sight - made 43 and 25 were with battle sight - made 20 there - Battle sight you have to aim a way low or you will shoot over the whole target.



my score for all three ranges was 156 out of a possible 175. and there is one fellow I know that made a better score than I did. Only one tho that I have found and I was looking over all the records.

some went as low as 24 out of a possible 175. I also feel pretty good over that, that is I mean over my good score. I was corporal in charge of ammunition the day we shot and done more shooting than when the score was taken. I would issue the right ammunt to the fellows and if I wanted to shoot more could as I had charge of the issuing of it and could get all I wanted myself.

I guess I told you I am a noncommissioned officer now. Corporal. wearing ~~two~~ two stripes on my arm. not much but better than none. Puts me in the class where I tell fellows what to do instead of being told and have to do it my self. Some satisfaction to that too. I am getting new experiences every day it seems. for last day out on the range a forest fire broke out in the pine forest, ground covered with pine needles and over 1000 soldiers went to put it out - took all after noon and some stayed guard over night. Found some (percimmons) trees out there - sure were fine. Fire was hard to put out on account of the dead trees and rotten and dried out and on fire clear to the top. Had to cut them down ~~and~~ cover them up with dirt to put out the fire.



Had some fun. Sent some of the drafted guys out on the old stall of snipe hunting. Gave them a candle and a potato sack and placed them out in the woods. They sat there watching and whistling for snipes until about 11 or 12 o'clock <sup>before</sup> they caught onto the joke. One fellow got scared out there in the woods and said a bob cat tackled him and he nearly went nutty over it - had to take him to the doctor. Was unconscious for a while over being so scared. Talk about laugh. never laughed so hard in my life. Every body was enjoying the joke on the fellows.

Out on the range we had no board floors + walls and electric lights. used candles. Had no shave while there 4 or 5 days, sure looked like bums. Seemed like getting back home to get back here to camp. Altho it was a good time all the time we were there. Will send some souvenirs of the range and let me know when you get them and dont give any away.

I was at Ethel's again last Sunday all day.

I am afraid I will not get to see her very much more. It is very hard to get away from camp here.

I think we are going to be moved to another camp about first of year, dont know where it will be.

And if we are wont get to see my relatives any more. Some think we will go close to new York. But we dont know for sure any thing. But it is pretty certain we will be in the United States until next Spring at least. So once in a while



if you don't hear <sup>4</sup> from me when I am due to write, don't feel at all worried for we are going to be here for quite a while yet.

Today was our last afternoon to school for at least two weeks. We will form a school of our own and us non-commissioned officers will have to teach the rest of the company.

Have been getting some good lectures from a French lieutenant over here. There are 4 or 5 French officers in camp and some English.

Well we are going to have turkey and cranberries for thanksgiving dinner, and it does not seem possible that it is so near last of year and down here it seems like middle of summer. But I guess it is so for the calander says so.

Tomorrow we have field inspection - will try and get some pictures of it. I forgot to take my camera to the range with me and am sorry I did for I could have gotten some good pictures.

Did I tell you I have an Eastman folding camera. Double lense - autographic. genuine leather case with leather carrying case with shoulder and hand strap. It takes a picture  $2\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Has cable shutter release. real nifty little machine. Have not had it very long. The way I happened to get it



was a fellow in our Signal Platoon got it last pay day and about middle of the month went broke in a crap game and wanted some money and I got camera for a little more than half price. He only used two films in it. I believe I was rather lucky getting as good a thing out of it as I did.

The Engineer Corps here say they are going to Ft. Sheridan soon. If we leave here I sure hope we will get to go there too. I might be able to see some of you folks if such a thing would happen.

Well I guess as you said - I am your same son and really not much change in a way. You I have to laugh when I hear of the circulation of my letters after they get home. I often wonder how many can decipher them. I know you can and do you have to read them to the rest? Well I must go to bed as I have a big day before me tomorrow and write soon.

Your description of the war and the result and all is very true and does not seem new for it is what we have been looking for, for a long time. And as for reward here on earth is concerned you know it is not lasting but yet it gives a fellow something to work for so his life will not drag too much and helps pass away the time and every thing is needed I will assure you that - from your loving son,  
Paul B. Hendrickson