

DAUPHIN AVIATOR LEARNS TO SHOOT FROM AIRPLANE

Learning how to shoot from an airplane now is engaging the attention of Walter Shaffer, the Dauphin aviator, whose training in France has been outlined in the Harrisburg Telegraph. The aviator's letter home is one of the most interesting he has yet written.

Dec. 8, 1917. Somewhere in France. Dear Mother:

I've taken a chance, something I am quite accustomed to by this time, and written the name of the school I am now training at. Here's hoping it goes through. According to information I picked up from my American friends, the authorities don't seem to care what you address the inside of the letter by, but it's absolutely forbidden to put one's address on the outside of the envelope, as I have been in the habit of doing always. Mine not to ask the reason why, mine but to do or die, as we remarked as we were sent aloft at Pau to do aerobatics for the first time. Some of us did, too; but I'm still kicking, so I should worry.

Have been having a most wonderful and interesting time the last few days. In fact, next to Pau, I have not found any school so interesting as the one I just finished to-day, viz.: the shooting school. Like Pau, it was run on a systematic basis, something so rare in French training that it always pleases an American immensely when we find one run this way. Of course, the French get results in all their schools and good results, too, but how they do it in some schools is still beyond me, as everything seems to be run so loosely. At Pau and this shooting school the officials took a personal interest in the work and did not regard it merely as a tiresome job that had to be gotten through with somehow. This raised the morale of the pupils immediately and every one chirked up and tried his best, and, taking it all in all, we had a wonderful time. Beat all the Fourth of July's I ever had rolled into one and then some, because for once I had all the cartridges I wished to shoot and didn't cost me anything.

As for noise, when I walked into the place for the first time I thought I had accidentally butted in on a battle and began looking for the nearest exit immediately, for guns of all descriptions were blazing away all along the line. Then I noticed the target and was reassured, for, interested, amused and then anxious to have a try at it myself. What amused me was seeing one of the 2x-ft. targets set up on a long trench. It seemed so uncanny to see this big white target with its black bullseye moving along as if it had legs, while a machine gunner on the opposite bank peppered shots at it at a tremendous rate of speed, that I laughed openly. He sure was plastering the target and we were wondering whether a man was running with the target or whether it was worked by pulleys. We soon discovered it was worked by human power, as a man climbed aboard and rode to the other end of the trench after the firing ceased.

Like Coney Island in this shooting school, for we were taken from booth to booth, like a bunch of tourists on a personally conducted tour; for there were some seven or eight different booths, with different contraptions in each to make shooting more difficult. Goodness knows, it was difficult enough, as out of forty shots from a machine gun if we got two "blanks," no, that don't mean "blanks," although it may be pronounced somewhat the same; it means "white." We were taken to the rifle booth first and given an army carbine to shoot, which was as heavy as Ruth and had a kick like a mule.

The first kick made one wait for the next one and thus forget all about the sight. However, I got one bullet in the bullseye and two "blanks" out of six shots. The next booth in this personally conducted Cook tour was the manipulation one, where we were taught how to fix different types of machine guns when they jammed, which they had a habit of doing quite regularly there. They sure had those guns fixed so they wouldn't work. From the way they worked, I could see some fellow had assembled them and had some parts left over, for one had two important springs missing. We asked the man in charge and he informed us. That was all that was missing, said he, and that was quite enough, for every other shell missed. Then the old boy would extract a couple shells from the belt when one wasn't looking and pretty soon there would be a dull click—and then it was hunt for more trouble.

This was very instructive, though, as it taught us how to fix every conceivable kind of jam—no, this "jam" isn't eatable; it's cussable—not that I would do the latter, for a German was not after me then. Having learned about the things that were liable to happen and how to load and aim the machine gun, we were taken to another booth and given a chance to test our marksmanship. Judging from the results, we had not acquired much, for out of twenty shots I hit the target once and it was not a bullseye, either.

Working Under Difficulties That may cause Pop to laugh, but wait a minute. This shooting was done from one of those movable devices I spoke of before, being arranged just like a seat in an airplane, and also movable. So just about the time you had the sight on a dead center someone moved the box and you suddenly discovered there were no targets near your wall die seat. Naturally, you tried to aim all over again, and by the time you got another lead were pressing the trigger and wondering why it wouldn't go off he moved the gun again. Just about that time there would be a succession of violent eruptions out in front, and before you realized that you were not aboard Mount Vesuvius and your finger was still holding the trigger firmly, there were ten shots missing, mostly over the target.

The officials showed quite a lot of forethought in laying out the shooting grounds, for the targets are placed in the bottom of a valley. We shoot from the side of the hill and if we shoot too high the bullets plow harmlessly into the hillside on the other side. You should see the deep ditches dug by bullets behind those targets and the trees and shrubbery a little higher up. Everything is clipped off as clean as a whistle. We didn't get a whole lot of shooting the first day, but the lectures and jam instruction kept us interested. However, we got a shot at that moving target and I say it with more surprise than pride that I sure made the bunch sit up and take notice, for out of forty shots at it I made fifteen blanks and four bullseyes.

Some Are Worse That don't seem like a big percentage, does it; but then the average was somewhere around two "blanks" and some never hit it at all. Our marks were all carefully kept, totaled and averaged so that the squad division would know whether we were any good or not. The second day we had rifles.

again, shooting at moving targets this time with both army and Winchester automatics. These Winchester shot the size bullets that Ernest's big deer gun shot, only I could hit something with them, and when you hear that the targets were set at 100 meters distance you'll agree that was something. Surprised myself and the official scorer again the second day by getting six blanks out of six shots at the moving target with rifles, and, going to the machine gun where they moved one around while he was sighting, made six whites and eight bullseyes out of forty shots. Pretty punk, thought I until I discovered some never hit it at all. Sure was great sport, though, and any one wishing noise would sure have had his fill there. They also had another machine with all the controls of a rear airplane in it, the machine gun in front and the controls arranged by springs and air pressure so that they had the same functions as if one was in a real airplane. That was the darndest thing to steer and shoot that I ever sat in.

Speed Up Things The last day we were given the rifles and told to shoot six shots in twelve seconds. Hit the target three times on this stunt. They speeded everything up that day, especially the machine gun shooting, as we were required to shoot forty shots at a moving target while it ran 150 yards. This was supposed to be done regardless of jams and I had ten whites while I was trying it. Even at that, I got six hits. I don't know whether he called that good or not, but when the three days were up, our averages totaled and all the officers in charge said we were all good, but that I was the best in the bunch. I only found this out through a misunderstanding, because I wanted to know if our marks received for shooting made any difference in regards to which part of the front we would be sent to, and what escadrille, whether one with a fighting reputation in an exciting sector, or a new one in a quiet part of the front. Since he spoke a little English, I asked the man in charge of our squad of rubbernecks about it.

He misunderstood me and thought I wanted to know who was the best shot in the bunch. That's how I found out how good I was; at least he thought so, but I didn't and still do not. And it amuses me to think that if I am good, what is bad? Furthermore, if only one shot out of forty hit the mark when I used the dummy plane, it begins to look as if the Germans won't need "Gott mit them." Yes, indeed, my average will have to go higher than that, or your prayers may be given the acid test. Of course, I have not actually shot from a plane yet, but expect to very shortly, and that may be a little different.

Those postals I sent were pictures of a village near the shooting school. If you could buy the land behind those targets he sure would get rich digging up lead, for the way lead is thrown into that hillside is a caution. I must have blazed away some \$20 worth of cartridges myself every day. As a Fourth of July celebration I have yet to see its equal, either in noise or enjoyment. I'll probably see a bigger celebration before Xmas, for I should be at the front by that time. No, I was not hunting a quiet sector of the front, and that was not the idea in asking the shooting instructor about my probable escadrille. Merely curiosity on my part, for they seemed so interested in us and so pleased when we made a good showing that I was curious to discover the reason. Of course, I didn't get any satisfaction, unless it was to my vanity; but one only gets things by asking—or taking. And you know I would not steal unless I happened to be near a pretty girl on a moonlight night. But that's another story and doesn't come under a war head.

Declines With Thanks I could write more of my impression of the shooting school, but my hands are too numb to write more, and this is my stenographer's day—yes, it's Sunday, and the old lady whose house we are staying in now wanted to take me to church this morning. She called it "mess," and thinking of referring to the French army meal, I declined with thanks. Later my roommate explained the word, which was "mass." I don't wonder the old lady was shocked, but then, my religious principles always seem to shock people. In fact, flying does not seem to make me any more religious.

We had "reps" this morning, so stayed in bed late, and now I can smell the savory fumes of boiled rabbit arising from the kitchen, which is "tres bien," because we are invited to dine with the old couple to-day, and they have killed the fatted rabbit in honor of the occasion. They are quite an amusing couple and treat me two Americans like long-lost sons, probably because my roommate talks to them quite a lot, he speaking French quite fluently.

They also have a lot of fun listening to me taking a stagger at it once in a while, too. This morning the madame brought in a great big rabbit, carrying it by the ears. We thought it was dead until she let it on the floor and it began hopping around. Sure was a fat boy! After letting us view it for several minutes, comment on its price and toothsome, she picked it up by the ears and went out the back door. Two minutes later she returned with the rabbit still dangling by the ears, only when she let it down on the floor this time he lay still, for he had "mort pour la France." I guess the idea was to show us we were getting fresh meat. Anyway, I assure you, I begin to understand why the French peasants cling to their wooden shoes. Nothing could be better for this muddy climate. They are big and don't leak, so the mud never reaches over icy tootsies, and as for a puddle, if one gets a good start he can sid across like a skater over thin ice. I thought Avord had no equal for mud, but I seemed to have been mistaken. The one lifted an acre of real estate, at every step. Here you lift your foot out of your shoe, and lucky if you catch the shoe before it goes down with its tongue out.

It's awful writing, I know, Mother, but there's a reason. The censor will surely fire of translating such scribbling, for I can't read some of it myself. Hope you can. Still raining. What's good for a cold—and cold hands? WALTER.

Bowman's

HELL, 1901-2556 UNITED

HARRISBURG, MONDAY, JANUARY 21, 1918.

FOUNDED 1871

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ANNUAL

Pre-Inventory Sale

Commences To-morrow, Tuesday, January 22nd

An announcement awaited by many of our patrons---for well do they know from past experience the real good savings it stands for.

A 5-DAY EVENT

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Five Days of Continual Surprises

This is the greatest house-cleaning period in storekeeping. It's the time when surplus stocks must be absolutely moved at some price. It's the time when laggards must go---when odd lots, ends of lines---must be cleared out regardless of the price-sacrifice.

And so---inventory time must find a house of clean merchandise. Intelligent preparations have been made in sorting the stocks, and repricing to such a generous extent that the next five days will record very spirited selling.

All Through the Store "Pre-Inventory" Sale Tickets Beckon You to Wonderful Value-Giving

Come to-morrow bright and early! rich prizes, in the form of high grade and desirable merchandise at very small prices await you.

We do not intend to put on the Inventory sheets anything that can find other owners before that time, and we believe that the merchandise at reduced prices will soon be picked up. There is no other time in the year when your dollars will get more for you than just before stock-taking.

Advertisement for Skin Comfort For Our Boys Found In Cuticura. The Soap to Cleanse and Purify the Ointment to Soothe and Heal. Includes an illustration of a boy and a woman.

Advertisement for VoCals. Clear the Voice—Quickly relieve Hoarseness, Coughs, Sore Throats, Bronchitis and Laryngitis—pleasantly flavored lozenges—25c the Box. Gorgas Drug Stores.

Advertisement for Winifred Worth Crochet Book. It contains 65 stunning designs. Yes, indeed, all new designs. Handy for a new beginner. Has full and complete instructions HOW TO CROCHET. Includes an illustration of a woman crocheting.

Advertisement for YOUR SICK CHILD IS CONSTIPATED! LOOK AT TONGUE. Includes an illustration of a child's tongue.

Hurry, Mother! Remove poisons from little stomach, liver, bowels. Give "California Syrup of Figs" if cross, bilious or feverish.

Advertisement for California Syrup of Figs. No matter what ails your child, a gentle thorough laxative is always the first treatment given. Includes an illustration of a child.