

1414 Montague St. NW  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Mr and Mrs Chas E Loosa Jr  
907 Shawan Ave  
Lynchburg Virginia



ARMY AIR FORCES BASIC FLYING SCHOOL  
GOODFELLOW FIELD, TEXAS

Sunday noon  
Sept. 20, 1942

Hell, well, - Look who's here - hi!

Do you realize day before yesterday marked one year that Uncle Sam has been taking care of one of his "po" nephews? - Directly, that is, for I suppose he's been taking care of that same nephew practically ever since he was born, indirectly! - If that makes any sense to you - you're nuts, too! Boy, what a long year. - If every thing had gone right, I'd be looking forward to my discharge about now if I hadn't been headstrong and enlisted. - But on the other hand, if everything had gone right - I wouldn't have been in here in the first place, would I? But my I is - and I guess, soon, about to be pumped full of crap again to prevent typhoid fever, lockjaw, and the like! - They used to ~~to~~ give that once during each 3 yr. enlistment, but since the war, they do it every year - I'll guarantee I'll be really immune when I get back to be a civilian! - But they probably won't start anytime soon - that would be too efficient! -

I got a letter from Roy today. - He is still in the hospital, but leaves on Tuesday for a 15 day furlough after which he will return to limited duty. He said his folks were to see him last month, but he'll

go to Washington anyhow - so I guess you'll be seeing him before too long a time.

We started night formation Friday night - It wasn't nearly as hard as I had anticipated - In fact, it's so much calmer at night that it's really easier to fly ~~the~~ and hold the formation than it is in the daytime. - The main objection is the eye strain, of course, but - that's why we must have perfect eyesight. - We take off in the dark in formation, but land one at a time, for safety's sake. - That's fun - flying around waiting to land, and when you get the signal from the leader, peeling off from the formation as they do in the movies - almost. - It gives one quite a feeling of ~~the~~ exultation!

We had fun, the other day too. - There has been an overcast here for several days - so when we fly, we most always have to either find a ~~hole~~ hole in it or go thru it (the overcast, I mean). It's right queer to be used to the cloudiness below and get in the white sunlight above - it's just like driving after a snow with the sun reflecting off of it. - But what I started to say was - when you get on top of the cloud layer - it's very irregular with hills of clouds with deep valleys running down between them - Anyway - we were in formation and went up thru a hole, flew around awhile, and then let down into a ~~to~~ valley and just went scooting along. - There we were - just the three of us - an instructor is always in the lead plane - barreling along the valley, swinging this way and that, with the clouds just off your wing tips - towering up - sometimes - hundreds of feet.

above us. - It was a real thrill. - You have no idea of the immenseness of the clouds till you see them at their level and realize the little spot up there in front of it is another plane, just your size! - Old mother nature sure can make you sit back & wonder! When we got ready to come down, - there were no holes to come thru, so we closed into a tighter formation, pointed our noses down, and gathering speed all the way, - we went right thru them at about 160 miles/hr! - We went thru them fast & so as to get thru them as quick as possible, and we closed our formation so we ~~go~~ could still see each other while in the clouds. - Clouds are like fog - so as long as you're close enough to see the outline of the other plane - you're safe - once you lose him - well, it "aint" so good - and if you can realize 3 planes running around in the cloud not knowing where each other are - well, - you won't lose the other fellows if you can help it. - Don't let me scare you - it's not bad - and we get more and more of a kick out of it all the time! -

Oh, yea - something else I meant to describe to you. - When flying above the clouds you can always see a rainbow on the clouds where the sun hits them. - It's the refraction of light such as you see when spraying the lawn with the hose and you get the sun a certain way on the spray. - Only thing is - In an airplane - it's not an arc you see - but a full circle of the rainbow - and the shadow of the airplane is always smack in the

center of the rainbow circle! - I'll never be a  
fighter pilot - I get too much of a kick seeing stuff  
around me! They can't say I don't look - but maybe  
at the wrong things! -

- Hell, - I hit 8 words a minute in code the other  
day! - It was an accident, and I couldn't do it again. But I  
got credit for it, and that's what counts. - So all we need to  
get to pass our course here - but we have to keep taking it  
both here and in advanced until we can receive 15. Also,  
~~we~~ we have started blinker code - that is, reading  
the code from a flashing light instead of hearing the  
tone. - I think we have to take 6 words of that. Yes, Pop,  
we use the continental code cause we have to receive  
it over the radio and the Morse - while much faster is  
used with telegraph only.

I couldn't imagine who the fellow ~~was~~ who  
rented the apartment at first - but I know now from  
all you said - he's Harold Hoffman. - He is Mr. Hirschman's  
nephew, the same as Lewis. - Mrs Hirschman, ~~is~~ Harold's  
mother, & Mrs. Kirkpatrick are sisters. He quit the Pan  
American after I left and I have taken him for a ride or  
two. - I don't believe I know his wife to be - but maybe  
I would if I saw her. - I'm glad they're whatever you  
wanted. - He is the fellow I bought the radio from I  
had in Bertha - remember?

I guess we will know before long whether we  
get sent to twin engine or pursuit for advanced. We  
got some papers the other day to fill out in reference  
to our commission. - I'll be there yet, maybe! -

Hell, bye for now and be good. - I've got two  
cross countries coming up this week. - One of 250 miles  
and another around 300 that has to be taken at night  
following these light beacons! - Some fun! Love  
Frank



AVON PARK BOMBING RANGE  
AVON PARK, FLORIDA

Monday night

April 5, 1943

Hello Folks,-

With a bit of luck - you should get this tomorrow - morning even! - The reason is, that from Savannah - air mail should be picked right up - and whisked to D.C. in no time!

And now - what am I doing in Savannah? That I can't say - but I was moved here over the week-end - and sometime in the near future - I will be moved elsewhere - maybe days or weeks. I haven't the slightest idea.

Naturally - I looked up Paul - and he looked me up all at one & the same time! - No foolin' - we weren't either of us near our home barracks - and both were searching for each other. He had run into some more of the gang from Avon so knew I was here. - Needless to say - we spent the whole of last night gossiping. - Don't know when I've been so glad to see anyone - you see - I've been with Paul the longest of all - from way back "on the hill" before we went to Chickasha! Well, - by the time we got through hashing things up and getting some "pie a la mode" as a stopper (civilization again!) it was way past bed time. - Right now I'm waiting for him to come by and we are both going into Savannah to eat and see the town. - Believe me, really see

it, too!

Now, folks - here's the deal here. - Supposedly, I shouldn't be writing at all until I have an A.P.O. number - and from then on - I shall only be able to receive my mail via that number. - which means even while in the U.S. - my mail will probably be delayed a week or so. Hell, ~~only~~ while here in Savannah if you wish - write me thru Paul. - just address the mail as tho you are writing to him - and he said if he gets any mail from people he doesn't know - he will bring it to me! His address on the field is:

Lt. Paul J. Hughes

Base Staging Project (Flight Section)

Hunter Field

Savannah, Ga.

It seems real nice to be on a nice post again and to be able to enjoy all the luxuries that goes with one - such as movies, - restaurants - & even ice-cream. Course, I haven't had time to go to the movies yet, but just knowing one is around to go to means a lot!

Don't go worrying about me if my letters fall off - cause the nearer we get to certain conditions - the more restraint is put on us - which of course is for our own good as well as for everyone else! - Just go on the principle that no news is good news and rest in the fact I'll write when I can - telling you what I can!

I just happened to remember today that it is almost time for Henry & Phyllis' first anniversary! - Hope I can remember to send them a card or something when they time comes! Have my pictures come yet, and if so - how horrible are they?

Paul just came in so I'll sign off for now - will write later. - and ~~someday~~ remembers writes to Paul - not me.

Lots of Love. Frank

From San Angelo to Big Spring - M.C. 299° magnetic course

1st Leg

Check pts.	Dist from start	ETA	Act. T.A.	Remarks
Goodfellow	-	-	2:37	Flying at 4500'
Carlsbad - RR. + Hwy.	19 miles	+ 9 min	2:45	Average ground speed
Steering City (end of R.R.)	45	+ 24 min	2:54	
Beacon #25	71	+ 32 min	-	
Big Spring, -	86	+ 40 min	3:10	Ele. Big Spring A.P. 2541 ft

2nd Leg) Big Spring to West Brook - M.C. 65°

Big Spring		3:17	Climbing West Brook
Coahoma - RR junction + Hwy. intersection	14 miles	+ 6 1/2 mi	2:34 ft Flying at 5000'
Westbrook	31	+ 14 min	Average ground speed 142 mph

<u>3rd Leg</u>	Westbrook	to Goodfellow	Highest elev. 2600'
Westbrook	-	3:40	Flying at 5500'
Beals Creek	13 miles	+ 6 min	Average ground speed
Bear away from Colo. R. Valley near public & small road	40	+ 19 min	128 mi/hr.
Crosses intermittent streams	52	+ 24 min	
San Angelo airport	75	33 min. - 4:15	G.I. - elev. - 1870 ft

a triangular course. The different ground speeds shows the effect of the wind on the plane. - I was cruising at 130 mph airspeed but the wind helped part way and hindered some. - All this has to be figured in.

Saturday afternoon  
Sept. 12, 1942

Hello, Folks,-

I'm a real moocher! I'm over at the flight line mooching on my time - I don't fly till the last period and with the time, I borrowed some paper from the sergeant and here I am. - So there! - Usually, time on the flight line is a precious thing - not much of it and when there is, we have a book stuck away somewhere so we can squeeze in a few extra minutes studying. On the schedule we're running on now, we have no actual designated study time. If we get any in at all - it's just what we can manage to do for ourselves. - You just have to listen like everything to all that goes on in class and hope for the best. - Most of it is built upon what we studied at Primary, and with the foundation I got there, I've managed to hold my own without too big a scramble. Code is something else tho. I don't think I shall ever get any speed init. - I can take 6 words per minute, but when it starts faster, I can't seem to identify em and write them down fast enough. I get one or two words and by that time, I'm lost. I have to wait until they start another group. - They aren't really words - just 5 letter groups with any letters. I think words would be easier than "Q V H M L" - at least you could guess some of em. - All it takes is practice I hope - careen at first 6 words seemed awfully fast. - How about pinch hitting for me, P.F.? You fly and you be my "code" man!

Has flying kept us on the jump this week! - We weren't having enough trouble, - we had to start night flying! - I flew Wednesday night, last night and again tonight - and we're supposed to get "open post" tonight! - Yes, yes, - I'll spend nine about 1500 to 2500 ft over town I guess. - I don't really care - it's lots of fun and I enjoy it, now that I've gotten over being scared. You've no idea how nice it is up at night - That's a state we have when I get home again, Ma, - a night ride! - Just at this particular time of the month there's no moon and it's really dark. I recalled the statement I'd heard a Lt. say one time about his first solo night trip. - "It's awfully dark up there and there's no one up in it 'cept you and God, and He isn't helping to fly the plane!" - There's a lot to that statement, but I know I get help everytime I go up! It's funny tho - everything around in the air & on the ground looks so peaceful and quiet - the air smooth, - and you're just a buzzing around making a lot of noise, with a bon-fire on your right wing where the exhaust comes out! - You should see it. - The exhaust pipe is about 8 inches in diameter and the flames shoot out 5 or 6 feet in length! - The first night we were cautioned not to jump, thinking the plane on fire - it's just the exhaust!

The first night I docked for 45 minutes with an instructor and made three landings with him. - Then I was on my own. That night we were seeing flood lights on the field. Last night I practiced landing with no flood lights, only my landing lights on the wing - and tonight - oh - boy! No

lights at all other than skin marker lights marking where the runway is! - I think that will be easier than the others cause the others have a tendency to blind you.

I really put in my time when I flew Wed. night. In that 24 hour period I flew 7 hrs! - I flew for over 2 hrs that night, and Thursday I flew 1 hr in formation, took a cross country trip, and then flew another period under the hood, taking instrument instructions. - What a day. I'm glad they aren't all like that. - And I used to sweat out \$3 so I could fly a cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr every 2 weeks or so! - What a change!

Are you getting tired of my ramblings on flying? I try to think of something else to write about, but after all, - it's gotten to a point when that's all I live and breathe, so what else can I do?

I'm glad Daddy & Mama got to go to Lynchburg and Pop got a ride on the train again! - How was it? - I guess trips will be even more scarce from what I see in the papers. - These Texas people don't go for this universal gas rationing, - and I don't blame them in a way. - After all - gasoline is one of their main industries & sources of revenue. - It will just about wreck their financial setups. If all places are like around here - no one seems to drive more than necessary anyhow.

Oh, yes, - there is something I was going to tell you. - There's a lot of cotton grown around here - amid the mesquite

trees. - and right now its all open and they are picking it, to beat the band. - Quite a sight from the air.

A week or so ago I got a couple of pounds of this popcorn with honey on it. - sent from the caramel shop near 15th and N.Y. Ave. - It was sent direct from the store, with only a hand written address to me. - I've no idea who its from for I didn't recognize the handwriting. If you have someone asking - thank them for me. The whole gang helped me enjoy it. Also tell Sarah I appreciated her letter a lot and sometime maybe I'll get time and surprise her by answering it!

Gotta go fly - now - So bye for now.

Frank

*Later* P.S. - I am enclosing a sheet I had on my cross country last week. - Don't know whether you can make heads or tails of it. - First we have to figure from the map and get it in this form. This is easier to follow, but we use the map along with it. Checking one against the other gives a double check of not getting lost. The third leg of this was made over almost mountainous terrain with no chance of a fixed landing field. - The first leg over oil derricks, but fairly flat. We prepare all but the last 2 columns before we take off. The "Actual Time of Arrival" is of course entered when you are directly over the check points. - Just thought you might like to see the difference in this kind of a trip and an auto one. - All. - On off to night flying now - be good - and I'll be careful!

Still no Hay fever, Ma! - What could have happen?