



BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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Karl Loesch

Correspondence from a 15-Year Old World War I Soldier

Miami, Florida : Maumee, Ohio: 1918

\$2000



Group of 14 Autograph Letters Signed with original postal covers. About 2500 words total. 13 letters in ink holograph, written by the same subject; one other from a different soldier. Original envelopes with some mild wear, toning. One letter with some marginal tearing. The grammar of the author is fair only, handwriting generally legible. Very good overall.

A revealing primary account of domestic World War I aviation and military service experience written by Karl Albert Loesch of the First Marine Aviation Corps, written between July and December 1918, from a temporary wartime Naval Air Field located near Miami, Florida to two of his sisters in Maumee, Ohio. Ancestral records state his birth date as September 18, 1902, making Loesch a remarkably young 15 years of age during most of this correspondence, suggesting he almost certainly lied on enlistment forms. A prolific number of boys under the age of 18 served in European forces during the War and there was some confusion as to the age of eligibility for American soldiers with many aged 16 or 17 allowed to serve with their parents' consent.

The 13 letters contain poor grammar and spelling (likely due to Loesch age and stunted education) with frequent run-on sentences, misspellings, etc., but still the sentiments and scenes are typically well described view of general base life, new soldiers shipping in and out, etc... and are highlighted by accounts of a few harrowing aviation accidents and scenes: "We had a little excitement this morning a machine fell in front of the chow hall he was just making a turn to get into the wind and he struck a little rough spot in the air and not having enough speed he side slipped to the ground stuck upon one wing and turned over sideways onto the other and upside down I was about 200 feet from him when he fell ... no one was hurt but it was surely[sic] wrecked one fellow was knocked unconscious for an hour a wire hit the top of his helmet he fell from about 50 ft." (July 15, 1918). In another letter he reports: "just as he was taking off the motor started to miss he couldn't stop as he would hit the cannal[sic] bank so he set it so the landing gear struck the bank and was torn off the machine went over upon its back into the canal upside down all that could be seen was the tip of each wing and a piece of the tail sticking out the pilot got out and was diving around after the gunner. he was still in the rear cock-pit he was in when we got there he was in for about 6 minutes the pilot dove and was gone for about 1 1/2 minutes and unbuckled and brought him up we could just see his helmet when the other fellows got there and got him out and put him on the tail..." (July 20, 1918). "There is a fellow came in here from the front he was over the trenches 9 months he is a ministers son you ought to see him ... his wings are 10 feet off the ground and banking at 45 degrees they all run when he makes a landing ... he had a cadet in and was showing him stunts he flew up side down over the camp over to the everglades about 3 miles if he keep on with this crazy stuff there won't any body ride with him he has half of the fliers sick and in the hospital he says he turns the machine up side down so the fellows can vomit[sic] without getting the plane all dirty ..." (July 31, 1918).

A captivating written account of fledgling American military aviation of the World War I era and domestic Wartime operations in South Florida, all from the viewpoint of an uncommonly young soldier. [BTC#422510]



"WITH THE COLORS"



Miss Charlotte Loesch

Maurice

Box 700 Ohio

north it is all gone here and
it took 13 men from this station
and not a machine. well I guess
I will close for it is nearly
time for show.

Your Brother
J. J. [unclear]



ARMY AND NAVY
 YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
 "WITH THE COLORS"



Peace was Declaired the day
 we received this letter Miama Florida
 Nov 7. 1918 Nov 2. 1918

Dear Sister

I received your letter
 the other day and also the
 camera that shure is a swell
 hoodack. I have a littel lead
 news for you I fell and ~~was~~
 cracked both bones in my arm
 yesterday morning I triped
 on the radio generator shire
 and fell head first upon the
 concrete leach it isent very
 bad I have only one splint
 upon it. The cranks are ripe
 down here now we have them
 every day for dinner the
 flu is all gone and the door
 is opened up.
 That was to lead about that
 crazy Dix Bruntice.