

Chester Parsons to Adrian A. and Mary M. (Fox) Parsons      September 16, 1917

War Work Council  
Army and Navy  
Young Men's Christian Association  
"With the colors"

Sun Sept 16 1917

Dear Dad & Mother÷

I can not realize the season so far advanced this summer has sure gone in a hurry. At first time went awful slow but now the weeks pass before one knows it. Rec'd. your letter yesterday it seems strange to hear you talk of frost when it is so far from it here. The nights are just cool enough to sleep good. and from sun up to sun down it is sure hot. I sweat all the time. When we come in off of a 10 or 12 mile hike some of us are nearly as wet as if we had been in the creek, the fellows that do not sweat can not stand the heat very good. Most of the fellows are getting pretty tough but you would be surprised to see how little some of them could stand at first.

Enclosed you will find a picture of our squad before I was made corporal the fellow on the right of me is the only one still with me. A fine fellow he is before coming here was a Canadian ranger a horseman from the word go. The man in front of me is the ex. cow puncher I wish you could know him and hear him talk a cool head he has and a world of wit. The fellow on my left is from Chicago or near there has spent his life on a farm a true blue if I know one. The rest are good all round fellows but the three mentioned are above the average. This Camp Kelly has been ~~condemned~~ condemned by the Gov. and every one has to be out of here in two weeks where we go God only know but I am at the point that I do not care. Because I have learned Dad to ask no questions and do as near what you are told as you can. All of us will be mighty glad to leave here It was condemned of account of unsanitary conditions. The part condemned is here where the tents are they are going to seed it to grass. The dust keeps some of the boys in the hospital all the time. The Lodge gave a smoker to all masons of Kelly Field last Thurs. night They showed us a swell time. I am sorry that our squadron has been made a construction sqdn. but they tell us after the construction is done we we will have all the chances in the world to fly. So Long Chet

[envelope:] Mr. A. A. Parsons/Plainfield/Indiana/R.F.D./C. A. Parsons/Santonio  
Texas/Kelly Field./70<sup>th</sup> Aero Sqdn.  
[postmark:] San Antonio, Texas/1917 Sep 16/7 PM.

#### Historical Notes:

Chester "Chet" Adrian Parsons (1887 – 1977) served during WWI in the American Expeditionary Force in France from April 1918 – April 1919. He exchanged letters with his father, Adrian A Parsons (1846 – 1929), a disabled Civil War veteran. These letters provide insight into life on the home front and his political views.

"Camp Kelly condemned" refers to the aviation airfield called Kelley Airfield built at the Sam Houston Fort in November 1916. By May, 1917 4,000 men occupied the tiny field requiring them to live in "tent cities" which sprang up on the field. The San Antonio Chamber of Commerce leased another thousand acres to the Army. Chet's letter references the crowded issues before the base was expanded to accommodate the influx. (<http://www.kellyheritage.org/1916-1941era.asp>)