

A Letter from Walter Thoreson

The following are portions of a letter to his parents from Walter J. Thoreson.

Camp Kearney, Cal., July 20, 1918

This is Saturday afternoon so we do not have to drill. I have been transferred again and am now in the machine gun company. There isn't so much drilling to do, but a great deal more real action. There were only two men from the company I was in who were picked for this work and I happened to be one. They are more particular about the men they pick for this branch as they have to be almost physically perfect and over 150 pounds in weight. There are eight men in a squad that handles one gun. We don't have to pack a rifle but carry an automatic and a bolo knife. It is considered more dangerous but I like it better. We are exempt from all guard duty and have only about half as much drilling.

The temperature is about 115 degrees in the shade this afternoon so you can imagine what it is like sitting around in a tent.

We're still in quarantine, and are not allowed to go outside of the company street. To-morrow the whole division goes into quarantine and will be in quarantine until we leave. They always do just before leaving. I think we leave sometime in the near future as last night the captain gave us instructions as to how to behave on the trip. He also said cards would be issued to us at our port of embarkation which would be sent home to the folks as soon as our ship arrived at her destination. We're not certain where we are to be sent yet as some say Russia or France and others Siberia. I was sure lucky to be one of the bunch to be sent down here so as to get a chance to go over right away.

There are airplanes above us at all times of the day and sometimes nights. There are three flying over us now.

They are using almost all the old soldiers here to pack and ship things. That is soldiers who have been here for some time. We're just rookies.

Walter J. Thoreson