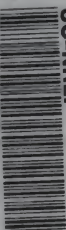
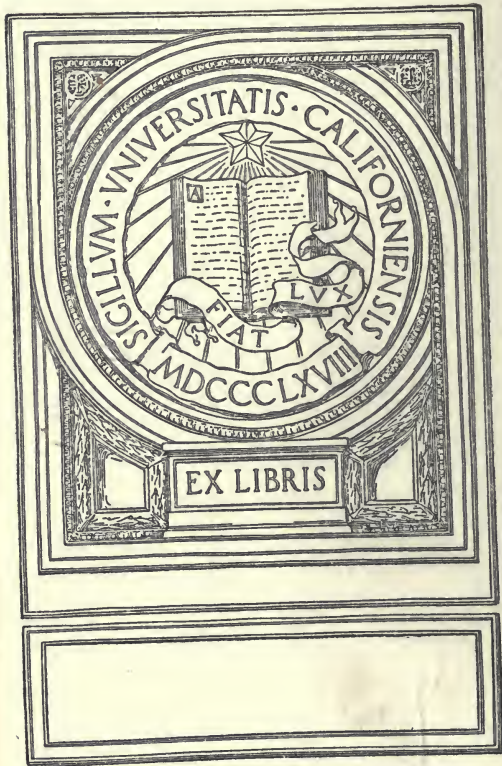


FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC





UNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS  
SIGILLUM

EX LIBRIS

MDCCCLXVIII





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation











*C. G. ...*

# FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

1ST LIEUT.

88TH AERO SQUADRON

A. E. F.

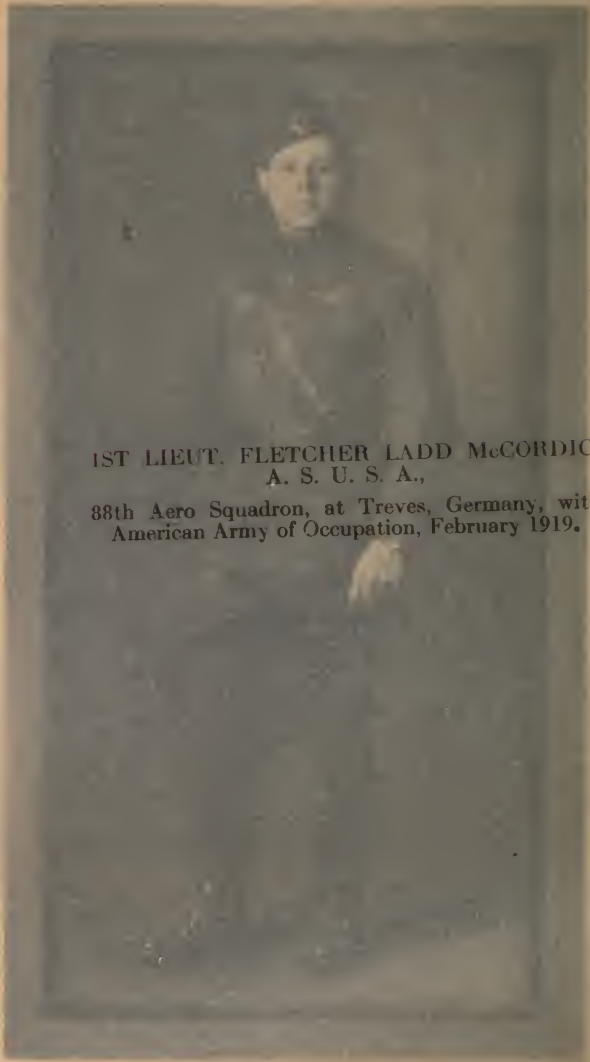
1891—1919

A TRIBUTE  
1ST LIEUT. FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC,  
A. S. U. S. A.,  
88th Aero Squadron, at Trier, Germany, with  
American Army of Occupation, February 1919.

CHICAGO

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1921



1ST LIEUT. FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC,  
A. S. U. S. A.,

38th Aero Squadron, at Treves, Germany, with  
American Army of Occupation, February 1919.

[Crosby, Wilson G.]

# FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

1ST LIEUT.  
88TH AERO SQUADRON  
A. E. F.

1891—1919

A TRIBUTE

LIBRARY OF  
COLUMBIA

CHICAGO  
PRIVATELY PRINTED  
1921

D606

M2C7

*"In the winning, in the losing, in the  
triumph, the despair,  
Be we victors, or the holders of defeat;  
Keep us mindful of the honor of a nation  
that we bear,  
Let our souls, Lord, be above the fate we meet."*

TO WHOM  
ALL BELONG

To  
THE 88TH AERO SQUADRON, A. E. F.

**"They are the Knighthood of this War  
without fear and without reproach."**

*David Lloyd-George—  
of the Aviators in the War.*

M189912

1871

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

540 EAST 57TH STREET

CHICAGO, ILL.

## CONTENTS

Life and Personal Traits . . . . .	9
The Day's Work . . . . .	35
The Squadron's Part in the War . . . . .	47
Letters . . . . .	65
A Parting Word . . . . .	89

# MEMORANDUM

TO : [Illegible]

FROM : [Illegible]

SUBJECT : [Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]

[Illegible]



## FOREWORD

As a friend of the family and one who knew Fletcher Ladd McCordic both in childhood and youth, I have written this memoir. The wish that goes with it is that it may do honor to his memory and may help to keep that memory green in the hearts and lives of those who knew him.

So far as possible, the narrative is in Fletcher's own words and in those of his comrades and friends. It is supplemented by many letters. To some extent also, and appropriately, the book is a tribute to the Squadron whose gallant story was in part his own.

Wilson G. Crosby.

*Duluth, Minnesota, July 1st 1921.*

CHAPTER I

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the subject. It is divided into three sections: the first deals with the history of the subject, the second with the theory, and the third with the practice. The author begins by pointing out the importance of the subject in the history of the world, and then proceeds to discuss the various theories which have been advanced to explain its origin and development. He then turns to the practical application of the subject, and discusses the various methods which have been employed to study it. The author concludes this section by pointing out the need for a more systematic and scientific approach to the study of the subject.

CHAPTER II

The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the subject. It is divided into two sections: the first deals with the theory, and the second with the practice. The author begins by discussing the various theories which have been advanced to explain the origin and development of the subject, and then proceeds to discuss the various methods which have been employed to study it. He then turns to the practical application of the subject, and discusses the various methods which have been employed to study it. The author concludes this section by pointing out the need for a more systematic and scientific approach to the study of the subject.

Digitized by  
California

# FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

## LIFE AND PERSONAL TRAITS

In America's beautiful cemeteries the traveler of the future will often pause before the stones that mark the last resting places of those valiant youths who, in the greatest of all wars, laid down their lives for their country in foreign fields. One such headstone in the old picturesque cemetery of Graceland, Chicago, bears this inscription:

### **Fletcher Ladd McCordic**

**First Lieutenant, 88th Aero Squadron, A. E. F.**

**Born December first, 1891**

**Killed March first, 1919**

**In airplane accident while serving with the American Army  
of Occupation at Treves, Germany**

The date of Fletcher's birth was December 1st, 1891; that of his death March 1st, 1919. His father, Alfred E. McCordic was a native of Canada, a citizen of the United States by early adoption, who came to Duluth, Minnesota, in 1889 to begin the practice of the law soon after graduating from the Law School of Harvard and directly after his marriage to Fletcher's mother, Jane Augusta Ladd of Connecticut. Fletcher's ancestry, then, upon his father's side was Scotch and upon his mother's was Colonial English.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Fletcher was fortunate in his two homes. They had probably much to do with his love of the great out-doors—of trees and gardens, birds and flowers, and the fields of air. He was born in Duluth and remained there until 1896 when the family moved to Winnetka, the beautiful old suburb of Chicago.

Fletcher's early education was obtained in the public schools of Winnetka, the College School of Kenilworth and the Chicago Latin School. He very early developed mechanical tastes which he indulged continuously amid his regular studies. When a very small boy he fitted up a room to himself for these pursuits. Here he reveled at leisure among all sorts of mechanical and electrical contrivances. He had an American boy's healthy love of sport and out-door life, but his joy in it was doubled if there was added the need of mechanical skill or an opportunity to take advantage of manual dexterity. He loved a bob-sled if he could be the "pilot" and if he could have a full load of passengers. These must, however, yield unquestioned obedience in return for which he assumed full responsibility. When the automobile came in he was the member of the family who learned best to run it, but it was clear that his pleasure was two-fold; he loved to exercise his skill in maneuvering the vehicle, but he was beginning also to take pleasure in the companionship of the machine. If there was any symptom of disorder he knew what caused it; if the trouble could be remedied he knew how to go about it.

His strong mechanical aptitude showed itself in a disinclination for mere bookish knowledge and for books themselves except as a means of acquiring definite and



Upper—(left) Fletcher and his sister Christine on front porch Duluth home, 1893; (right) Fletcher in Duluth 1895.

Lower—(left) Fletcher in foreground and his brother Malcolm Winnetka home 1897; (right) Fletcher in Edgartown harbor, Mass., 1903.





## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Fletcher was fortunate in his two homes. They had probably much to do with his love of the great out-doors — of trees and gardens, birds and flowers, and the fields of air. He was born in Duluth and remained there until 1896 when the family moved to Winnetka, the beautiful old suburb of Chicago.

Fletcher's early education was obtained in the public schools of Winnetka, the College School of Kenilworth and the Chicago Latin School. He very early developed mechanical tastes which he indulged continuously amid his regular studies. When a very small boy he fitted up a model airplane for his sister Christine. He revealed at leisure among all sorts of mechanical and electrical contrivances and devices. His healthy love of sport and out-door life doubled if there was added the wind of aeronautical skill or an opportunity to take advantage of manual dexterity. He loved a job which he could be the "pilot" and if he could have a full load of passengers. These must, however, yield unquestioned obedience in return for which he assumed full responsibility. When the automobile came in he was the member of the family who learned best to run it, but it was clear that his pleasure was two-fold; he loved to exercise his skill in maneuvering the vehicle, but he was beginning also to take pleasure in the companionship of the machine. If there was any symptom of disorder he knew what caused it; if the trouble could be remedied he knew how to go about it.

His strong mechanical aptitude showed itself in a disinclination for mere bookish knowledge and for books themselves except as a means of acquiring definite and



LIBRARY OF  
CALIFORNIA





## A TRIBUTE

practical information. Words were words and things were things always with Fletcher. When a very small boy indeed he announced somewhat defiantly, as if he expected his taste to be questioned, that the finest of all poems was "The Village Blacksmith",—that glorification of bodily strength and skill.

One important influence upon Fletcher's youth must not be passed over.

In 1911 the organization known as Community House came into being in Winnetka. A building was provided for it completely equipped for social activities and for physical training. Its purpose was to "provide a community center for wholesome recreation and the development of character." The Board of Governors were extremely fortunate in their choice of a director, who has occupied the position until now. Rev. J. W. F. Davies, D.D. is one of those rare men whose sympathy with youth seems boundless. In connection with the work there grew up a great variety of clubs for young and old serving all sorts of social and educational aims. The boys' clubs were organized not merely for various athletic purposes, for games and sports, but for travel study; for electrical and mechanical experiments; for learning something of the possible occupations of life; for long "hikes" in the country. In the very year of its organization a troop of Boy Scouts was formed and soon after a boys' camp at Lake Hamlin, Michigan, was started. Of the Winnetka Boy Scouts forty-one served in the War.

Fletcher early became a member of Community House and came in contact in various ways with its activities. Its influence upon him is not easily measured. One thinks

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

in this connection of the famous "laws" of the Scouts and can imagine him repeating them, so well did he exemplify them later. But the main advantages from such a source are indirect. Who can estimate the effect upon a growing boy of the democratic spirit attending such activities; or the healthy influence of group action along so many different lines.

Fletcher encountered difficulties in the ordinary school curriculum and spent many hours in hard and patient work trying to overcome them and many other hours in worrying and wondering about his own shortcomings. His troubles and his boyish triumphs he kept to himself, however. If he won a school ribbon or medal it might be found weeks after in his pocket. He got the reputation in camp and club of being the quietest boy of all, yet one who was always cheerful and never complained. When action was required he was ready and helpful; when decision was needed his judgment was sought; he was unusually reserved and silent, but quick of eye and hand. He was physically well made and especially strong in his back and arms. He was fond of rowing, camping and motoring. Beginning when he was a very young he had interested himself in making "gliders" and toy-planes. This became his favorite pastime and was not laid aside as he grew older, for his own development was coincident with that of the airship.

Such was Fletcher on the eve of college, as he supposed and planned. Then an event happened which was at the time a very grave discouragement. He began to have serious trouble with his eyes. It was impossible longer for him to toil over books. He very naturally took refuge

## A TRIBUTE

in mechanical pursuits. He began to construct airplane models and ended in the construction of a full sized airplane, which is still a keepsake of the family. As his eyesight improved he attended the Lewis Institute, Chicago, for a number of terms, spent six months in a freight car manufacturing plant in Urbana, Ohio, several months with the General Electric Company in Lynn, Mass., and several months in an automobile school in Detroit studying motors.

Whenever these studies threatened to lead to aviation as a career his parents endeavored to divert him into some purely mechanical line. Step by step, however, Fletcher was steadily and consciously approaching the point where he could say: "All my work has brought me to this; I have all the theoretical knowledge necessary before I begin to test this knowledge in practice; the business I propose for myself is the building of airplanes and to build them well I must learn how they behave in use. I wish to take up practical aviation." He bore down his parents' opposition and in the fall of 1916 entered the Wright Flying School at Hempstead, L. I., where he was graduated in due course and received a pilot's license from the Aero Club of America. From this time on the air claimed him.

Immediately upon the establishment of the Aviation Officers' Reserve Corps camps in January, 1917, he enlisted in this corps, was given the rank of sergeant and went to the training camp at Memphis, Tennessee. Fletcher remained at Memphis until June. His training during this time consisted of technical ground work and flying. In June, the Government took steps to establish a flying



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

field at Chicago, and Fletcher was assigned to duty there. This attempt was given up soon after and he was transferred early in July, 1917, to Chanute Field, the name given to the two-squadron field recently established by the Government at Rantoul, Illinois. In barely six weeks' time, this field had been cleared of woods, leveled and improved with buildings and roads and brought in mid-July to a condition for use. Fletcher continued his training at this Camp until early in September, when, with twenty-three other pilots, he was sent to Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas. Here he remained but two weeks when he was ordered to Mineola, Long Island, preparatory to going overseas.

He sailed October 27, 1917, on the Manchuria. The trip was short and uneventful and the eleventh day of November saw him safely landed in Liverpool. Journeying via Southampton, Havre and Paris he reached Issoudun November 20th. Issoudun was the first great training field in France for the American air forces. On July 16, 1917, the first equipment destined for this field had been shipped from America; two days later the first detachment of enlisted men followed; by September flying was in progress there. Its location was very central. It was situated seventy-five miles southeast of Tours and about twenty-five miles southwest of Bourges. The field was thirty-six square miles in extent, the size of one of our own Western townships. At the time of Fletcher's arrival everything was still in great confusion with preparations far from complete and the demands daily increasing.

Yet all was not strange even at the start. There were some familiar faces from the training camps. One of



Upper—Fletcher in 1903, his sister Christine and his brother Malcolm (died in 1904).

Lower—Fletcher in camp in Minnesota woods, 1909.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

field at Chicago, and Fletcher was assigned to duty there. This attempt was given up soon after and he was transferred early in July, 1917, to Chanute Field, the name given to the two-squadron field recently established by the Government at Rantoul, Illinois. In barely six weeks' time, this field had been cleared of woods, leveled and improved with buildings and roads and brought in mid-July to a condition for use. Fletcher continued his training at this Camp until early in September, when, with twenty-three other pilots, he was sent to Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas. Here he remained but two weeks when he was ordered to Mineola, Long Island, preparatory to going overseas.

He was sent to Mineola, Long Island, preparatory to going overseas. The trip was short and uneventful. On the 15th day of November he saw him safely landed in Liverpool. Journeying via Southampton, Havre and Paris he reached Issoudun November 20th. Issoudun was the first great training field in France for the American air forces. On July 16, 1917, the first equipment destined for this field had been shipped from America; two days later the first detachment of collected men followed; by September flying was in progress there. Its location was very central. It was situated seventy-five miles southeast of Tours and about twenty-five miles southwest of Bourges. The field was thirty-six square miles in extent, the size of one of our own Western townships. At the time of Fletcher's arrival everything was still in great confusion with preparations far from complete and the demands daily increasing.

Yet all was not strange even at the start. There were some familiar faces from the training camps. One of



UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



40 1000  
1000 1000



## A TRIBUTE

these was Lieut. Eugene Jones of Wilmette, Illinois, a neighbor and old acquaintance with whom Fletcher had been in training at Rantoul, who crossed with him on the Manchuria and who fell in brilliant combat in September following. There was Col. Morrow with whom Fletcher had served at Memphis; Lieut. Rhodes whom he had known both at Memphis and Rantoul, and Capt. Page whose acquaintance he had made at Mineola. Among the enlisted men, too, there were many with whose faces at least he had become familiar in the days spent at Kelly Field. There were others whose acquaintance he made in those first days of confusion at Issoudun with whom the bonds of friendship were to be drawn ever tighter in the strenuous days to come. Some of the names occur later in this story. Among these were two from his home State, Capt. Evans, the C. O. of his Squadron at the time of his death, and Capt. Hastings. Another was Lieut. Babcock who became a fellow flyer in the 88th and who succeeded Capt. Evans as C. O. of the Squadron. These and many other friendships date back to those early days at Issoudun.

There was no time to lose. The aviation training which Fletcher had had in America was very far from fitting him for service at the front. Owing to the fact that the United States as a neutral power had not been in touch with actual operations, the authorities on our entrance into the war had only a general knowledge of the great advance that had been made since 1914 in military aeronautics. In 1917 no model of any one of the various planes then in use on the different fronts in Europe was to be found in the United States.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

On December first, a little over a month after Fletcher's departure from New York, we find that his training has begun, preparatory to a definite assignment. This training was intensive and rigorous. It will be months yet before he has his own machine. The training aimed to make him master of every sort of foreign military plane in use by the Allies. He learned also acrobatics, preparatory to the use of a plane in military service both alone and in "formation", *i. e.* in combination with other planes.

Lieut. Rhodes, speaking of those first days in France says; "Fletcher was the greatest asset we possessed at Issoudun. He persisted in keeping at things until they were made right. He was orderly in his habits, correct in his demeanor, cheerful when things went wrong—an example to all of us."

Life in the open had been Fletcher's delight through boyhood. Nature for him was not a thing apart, a thing to talk about or to study. It was there to live in and to enjoy. It was now his privilege to experience the awakening of spring in the heart of France. On the 8th of May he writes: "The foliage is coming out very fast,—it seems to have come very suddenly." The spring rains which impede his flying hasten the wonderful sight. Only four days later he says: "We are well shut in since the foliage has come out and the paths look very pretty through the woods. The birds are plentiful around here and most of them are fine singers. The cuckoo bird gives a very queer sound and there are many of them about." Little by little the love of France enters his heart. "I like France much better now than when I first arrived . . . . France is beautiful now. Everything is green, and the woods are



Fletcher in 1904.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

On December first, a little over a month after Fletcher's departure from New York, we find that his training has begun, preparatory to a definite assignment. This training was intensive and rigorous. It will be months yet before he has his own machine. The training aimed to make him master of every sort of foreign military plane in use by the Allies. He learned also acrobatics, preparatory to the use of a plane in military service both alone and in "formation", *i. e.* in combination with other planes.

Lieut. Rhodes, speaking of those first days in France says; "Fletcher was the greatest asset we possessed at Issoudun. He persisted in keeping at things until they were made right. He was orderly in his habits, correct in his demeanor, cheerful and confident. His things went wrong—an example to all of us."

Life in the open had been Fletcher's delight through boyhood. Nature for him was not a thing apart, a thing to talk about or to study. It was there to live in and to enjoy. It was now his privilege to experience the awakening of spring in the heart of France. On the 8th of May he writes: "The foliage is coming out very fast,—it seems to have come very suddenly." The spring rains which impede his flying hasten the wonderful sight. Only four days later he says: "We are well shut in since the foliage has come out and the paths look very pretty through the woods. The birds are plentiful around here and most of them are fine singers. The cuckoo bird gives a very queer sound and there are many of them about." Little by little the love of France enters his heart. "I like France much better now than when I first arrived . . . . France is beautiful now. Everything is green, and the woods are







## A TRIBUTE

full of wild flowers. I am writing this letter out on our porch and it is very pleasant here in the shade with trees all around us, birds singing and planes overhead." This last is very characteristic. Fletcher mingles the things he loves. The music of the planes was essential to make the chorus complete.

It was not one aspect of Nature only that delighted him. He loved the stinging hail, the beating rain. For him as for every real nature lover there was no such thing as bad weather. During the weeks of training at Issoudun in the intervals of work he took long walks and drives into the country always with a fellow-officer or group of them. Everything he saw provoked comment. In March 1918, he writes: "I have visited most of the surrounding towns and they are very interesting and quaint old places". The roads arouse his admiration, "circling like the California roads around the hills and valleys." He visits the near-by towns in which French officers have their quarters. He fraternizes with them, is interested in what they have to show him and makes every hour with them count in the way of his own progress.

With all that is happening in the new life about him every letter, every possible reference breathes his love of home, his memory of family and friends, his boyish affection for familiar scenes and places. Does he speak of the cool June days and nights in France, it is only to add "You must be having warm weather. Your garden must be looking fine." Does he mention golf in France, it is only to hark back to the sport the whole family have enjoyed so much together in his beloved Winnetka. The Chicago papers are interesting but the "Winnetka Weekly

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Talks" giving the personal particulars of old school fellows and items of neighborhood doings are more desired, and when received are always gratefully acknowledged. The little gifts which friends send him are valued for the thought that comes with them and for the familiar faces they conjure up. The doings of every school-mate who has entered the service have for him a double measure of interest, and when it is possible to meet one of them in his own camp, as occurred more than once, his pleasure was unbounded.

Yet in other ways Fletcher was not at all the boy. He combined, in fact, a peculiar reserve of manner and reticence of speech with a gravity of countenance that seldom betrayed his thoughts. His willingness to accept responsibility and in turn his resolve to exact obedience recall his bob-sled days. He claimed as pilot entire direction of the machine. He accepted from his observer no suggestions and listened to no complaints. On the other hand, while always willing to assist, Fletcher left the observer's special task entirely to him. It was only as time went on that his comrades discovered the boyish good-nature that went with these deeper traits. While leader of a training squad at Issoudun because of his grave demeanor he was nicknamed "General" (usually abbreviated to "Gen."), which clung to him throughout the war.

After nearly three months of training and service at Issoudun, Fletcher was assigned to the 88th Aero Squadron, Major H. B. Anderson commanding. This squadron in embryo, consisting only of its commanding officer and enlisted men, was originally formed at Kelly Field, Texas. These went overseas about the time that Fletcher sailed,



## A TRIBUTE

but on a different boat. The organization, except for the observers, was finally completed in France but not until February 22, 1918. On that day eighteen pilots, of whom Fletcher was one, were ordered from Issoudun to Amanty to complete the Squadron's quota. A photograph of a rather later date showing the Squadron's officers (pilots and observers) and including its mascot "Wrinkles" is reproduced later in this book. This photograph repays examination. No American can examine the faces without a thrill. They are so thoroughly the product of America at her best. These men look both morally and physically "fit". The famous insignia of the Squadron, the bucking broncho, is shown on the airplane in the photograph of the pilots next following; it is not more American than was the entire make-up of the Squadron. This insignia, the work of Lieut. E. A. Segaitz, engineering officer of the 88th Squadron, would have done credit, in its spirit at least, to Remington at his best. The pin showing the insignia contained in a circle with a wing at each side was worn when on duty by every officer and man. It is reproduced on the cover of this book. The Squadron as finally complete, consisted of eighteen pilots, eighteen observers and one hundred and eighty-five enlisted men. Its officers came from thirty-one States; its enlisted men from every section. Fletcher remained one of the pilots of this Squadron during the continuance of the War and until his death. Writing February 27, 1919, he says: "There are only about six or seven of the old officers left in the Squadron,—that is, pilots and observers who were in it when we first went to the front."

At the time he joined the Squadron Fletcher had had little experience with men. He had had a long and varied

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

technical training, had had intensive work at aviation in different localities, but had spent so short a time at each and had been so occupied with the particular work of each that he had had little time for social intercourse, and no feeling of solidarity with his surroundings. From now on he lived for his Squadron; its triumphs were his triumphs; his personal successes were its successes; its losses were his own. It is interesting to note the references to it from time to time in his letters. In his very first letter home after joining the Squadron he says: "Our Commanding Officer is a fine young fellow . . . Our Major and Captain and we are working hard to get the Squadron equipped, the mess running well and a good place to live in." Writing more than a year later and shortly before his death he says: "I think that our Squadron has the best reputation of any observation squadron on the front." Through his letters from the first to the last runs this note of loyalty, affection and devotion. Late in August he writes: "I was away for a couple of weeks and had to go to Aviation Headquarters before coming back here. Headquarters wanted me to go out in a new squadron, but when I got back the Major requested I stay here, so Headquarters agreed to it, for which I am very glad." It is in the same letter that he says: "After you have been in the Squadron for about six months you get very much attached to it and one does not want to leave it." It was not until the last letter he wrote, dated February 27, 1919, two days before his death, that his parents learned the full meaning of these references, which are thus explained: "I should have been promoted over here if I had taken the 104th Squadron last summer;



Fletcher and his mother in Winnetka home garden.

Fletcher and his mother in Winnetka home garden.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

technical training, had had intensive work at aviation in different localities, but had spent so short a time at each and had been so occupied with the particular work of each that he had had little time for social intercourse, and no feeling of solidarity with his surroundings. From now on he lived for his Squadron; its triumphs were his triumphs; his personal successes were its successes; its losses were his own. It is interesting to note the references to it from time to time in his letters. In his very first letter home after joining the Squadron he says: "Our Commanding Officer is a fine young fellow . . . Our Major and Captain and we are working hard to get the Squadron equipped, the mess running well and a good place to live in." Writing more than a year later and shortly before his death he says: "Our Squadron has the best reputation of any observation squadron on the front." Through his letters from the first to the last runs this note of loyalty, affection and devotion. Late in August he writes: "I was away for a couple of weeks and had to go to Aviation Headquarters before coming back here. Headquarters wanted me to go out in a new squadron, but when I got back the Major requested I stay here, so Headquarters agreed to it, for which I am very glad." It is in the same letter that he says: "After you have been in the Squadron for about six months you get very much attached to it and one does not want to leave it." It was not until the last letter he wrote, dated February 27, 1919, two days before his death, that his parents learned the full meaning of these references, which are thus explained: "I should have been promoted over here if I had taken the 104th Squadron last summer;









## A TRIBUTE

but I would rather be a pilot in this Squadron than Commanding Officer of another." One of his fellow officers gives this version: "He was sick in the hospital last summer and when he came back in passing through Air Service H. Q. he was assigned to the 104th Squadron and Captain Littauer went to a lot of trouble and raised an awful row before he got 'The General' reassigned to the 88th". His love of the Squadron could go no further. It was so great it left no room for personal ambition.

It is interesting to note how quickly Fletcher's qualities developed in this congenial atmosphere. After his death a fellow officer writes: "He was rather shy among strangers but after joining the Squadron and making friends with his brother officers he opened up tremendously." It is this "opening up" which is so interesting. Some who knew Fletcher as a boy feel that he might never have been known even to himself but for this experience. His unflinching good nature, his readiness to help, the absence of all assumption, recommended him to men jointly involved in a great and perilous undertaking. But these alone would have been insufficient. He had also the skill at the craft which commanded respect, and a matter-of-fact courage that won admiration. Fletcher reacted to this respect and admiration by trying always a little harder to deserve them. It is this development on his part, the growing fondness of the officers and men for him, and the mutual devotion between them which astonish and delight us.

The boyish spirit which helps to explain the growing attachment between Fletcher and his Squadron, explains too his attitude toward his calling. He had not learned

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

the art of flying as a duty and so did not practice it merely as a duty. He loved this wonderful art and brought to it all the enthusiasm of his nature. To do anything well one must know it so thoroughly that one can juggle with it. It was so with Fletcher. And as he was still at heart a boy he played with this art of his. One of his fellow officers writes after his death: "He *loved* to fly." Another says: "He was what we call a 'natural flyer'." Captain Babcock, a fellow officer in the Squadron, sums up the matter in a letter to Fletcher's father by saying: "As some people live on the water and think there is no place but the ocean, your son lived in the air".

Fletcher's mastery of the machine and its medium and his absorption in the work not only banished fear but led to the attempt, on every proper occasion, to show what his machine could do, just as a skillful rider takes occasion to put his steed through its paces. This inclination was never opposed by his superior officers if for no other reason than that these displays were in the nature of demonstrations that might have value for others.

Many tales are told of the "stunts" in which Fletcher reveled both on and off duty. One may be narrated here. One of the lieutenants of the Squadron writing to his own mother after Fletcher's death tells the following:

"I will never forget one time a take-off that he made near Longwy, where one of the new pilots had had a forced landing and couldn't get his plane out. 'The General' took it and taxied between a line of telephone poles on the take-off, zoomed up to go over a three-story house, lost flying speed before he was high enough to go over, kicked the ship on one side so that the wheels grazed

## A TRIBUTE

the house, side-slipped down to the ground, flew under the telephone wires and then to keep from crashing into a cliff did a pretty virage with one wing just about touching the ground. I was in the back seat and when we landed I grabbed him with both arms and said, 'General, you are the best pilot that ever handled the stick; how did you ever get out of there?' The 'General' said: 'Huh, worst I was ever in', and then went on about his business, while I was too excited to sit down for over two hours."

Fletcher's letters home are full of remarks which show a real joy in every phase of the work and a spirit that shut out the very thought of danger. The following quotations from his letters have reference to events occurring at all stages of his development as a flyer. They are given together here to show that the enthusiasm with which he began never deserted him. Nothing became routine.

"One evening we saw a Boche machine about 4000 metres up and they turned him around with the anti-aircraft guns, but he tried to come through again and was driven back for good. It is very exciting watching them shoot all around the machine."

"I have been doing some reconnaissance work and this evening I am going several miles back. The anti-aircrafts are pretty bad but so far none of their shots have come very close to me. One day I was over our line and I saw a Boche plane some distance above me; our Archies (anti-aircraft-guns) were shooting at him and he went back. One has to do a lot of zig-zagging and changing of altitude when they open up on you. It is only luck if they ever hit you and it is lots of sport and excitement. If



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

you fly too low machine guns shoot at you, but they rarely bring a plane down, though sometimes there are bullet holes in the machine."

"Yesterday we saw the Archies shooting at some of our planes and the bursts look a lot farther away when one is on the ground than when one is up there. We practice shooting at a target in a lake near here. The pilot has a stationary gun in front and the observer has two guns behind. The pilot sights by pointing the machine at the target and one has to make allowances for the speed of the machine and angle of attack."

"The other day we had a very busy day—about twenty hours for our Squadron. I was over about an hour and a half and there was considerable artillery activity going on. I could see some German batteries in action and as it was a rather dark day I could see the flashes quite plain. Got shot at some but nothing came very close that day. One day I got a burst right behind the tail of the machine and it made a loud bang."

"The other night some Boche planes came over for bombing, but did not do any damage. It is a great sight to watch the shrapnel burst at night and the big searchlights trying to spot the machine."

"One morning I was up rather early and the clouds were low—about 500 metres—so I had to fly low. I could see all the activity on the ground and when the big guns fired we could feel the concussion in the plane. In the evening when it is just getting dark it is a great sight; you can see the flashes of the artillery and smoke hanging over the ground; also fires here and there. I came home one night when it was rather dark and did not know



Upper—Fletcher in 1908.

Lower—Fletcher and aeroplane constructed by himself and set up in back yard, Winnetka home.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

you fly too low machine guns shoot at you, but they rarely bring a plane down, though sometimes there are bullet holes in the machine."

"Yesterday we saw the Archies shooting at some of our planes and the bursts look a lot farther away when one is on the ground than when one is up there. We practice shooting at a target in a lake near here. The pilot has a stationary gun in front and the observer has two guns behind. The pilot sights by pointing the machine at the target and one has to make allowances for the speed of the machine and angle of attack."

"The other day we had <sup>Uppet—Fletcher in 1901</sup> twenty <sup>Lower—Fletcher and aeroplane constructed by himself and set up in back yard</sup> hour and a half of activity going on. I could see some German batteries in action and as it was a rather dark day I could see the flashes quite plain. Got shot at some but nothing came very close that day. One day I got a burst right behind the tail of the machine and it made a loud bang."

"The other night some Boche planes came over for bombing, but did not do any damage. It is a great sight to watch the shrapnel burst at night and the big searchlights trying to spot the machine."

"One morning I was up rather early and the clouds were low—about 500 metres—so I had to fly low. I could see all the activity on the ground and when the big guns fired we could feel the concussion in the plane. In the evening when it is just getting dark it is a great sight; you can see the flashes of the artillery and smoke hanging over the ground; also fires here and there. I came home one night when it was rather dark and did not know





UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



NO. 1001  
APRIL 1960

## A TRIBUTE

whether I would land all right, but luckily I landed safely."

"One day I was over the lines and an Archie burst just behind the machine and made holes in the plane, but no serious damage was done. Most of the holes were in the back part of the plane and in one wing."

"I was up yesterday evening and got the position of our front line. I saw some Boche patrols higher up but some Allied chasse were around also so they didn't bother us any."

"We get anti-aircraft but we pay very little attention to it; they seldom come very close and we are very much accustomed to it."

"A Boche machine was over yesterday very high up. I suppose he was after a few photos. Our Archies were shooting at him but he got by. It is a great sight to watch the Archies shoot and the shells bursting around the plane; it is not so pleasant when the enemy is shooting at us though."

"The other day we had a very interesting flight. We went out to take photos and I went along for protection. We also had five chasse machines with us. Five Boches were coming toward us and the chasse machines were quite a way behind us and in the sun so the Boches never saw them. After the Boches got fairly close to us our chasse planes came after them and the Boches did some very fast maneuvering to get away. It was a great surprise for them. We got the pictures all right."

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

The above quotations show sufficiently Fletcher's way of looking at his calling:

"To set the cause above renown,  
To love the game beyond the prize."

To the boyishness of spirit which he brought with him into the service, Fletcher added great natural cheerfulness, an instant readiness to do and dare, and a mind pure and refined. From the tributes which are given in full later may be cited here a few brief expressions of appreciation from his brother officers.

"He never even thought of an underhanded deed; he didn't have an enemy in the world."

"He was certainly the most lovable, pure-minded man I've ever met."

"He was just one of the select who make the world a decent place to live in by his just being in it."

These tributes reflect honor not merely upon Fletcher but upon those who made them. They show that the 88th, amid the dangers and supposed demoralization of active warfare, clung to the ideals of home.

Together with the qualities we have mentioned, went a willingness to share to the full all discomforts and hardships and an absence of all pettiness. A story is told of the time when fighting was hardest. It was at Château-Thierry at the end of a long day. The officers were given their billet for the night—a ruined farmhouse. They rushed for it. Fletcher came last. The accommodations were meagre enough to start with. When he arrived he found all the rooms preëmpted except one under the roof through which rain was falling. Fletcher, without grumbling, wrapped his blanket around him, lay down

## A TRIBUTE

and was immediately asleep. Two of his brother officers could not sleep for thinking of him. They stole upstairs, laid their waterproof coats over him, while he, unconcerned, slept on.

Another incident may be given for the light it throws on the traits that especially appealed to Fletcher's comrades. We will hear his story first. Under date of October 28, 1918, at the height of the Meuse-Argonne offensive, he writes home:

"Yesterday I had a queer experience. We were doing a réglage and had just got fairly started when the propeller flew off causing the shaft to break and a piece of it went through the top wing. I was up about 1000 metres. I looked for a good field but all I could see were shell holes and ditches. After gliding down to about 400 metres I saw a fairly good place to land and I think it was the only spot where one could have landed in that vicinity. I made a good landing, just missed the shell holes and didn't break the machine. We called up the Squadron Headquarters for transportation and did not get back until late that night."

Lieut. Morse A. Anderson in a letter written after Fletcher's death gives the following account of the same occurrence:

"A rather funny incident occurred while we were at Souilly. 'Gen.' was up on an artillery adjustment and while up about 6000 ft. his pro-



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

PELLER flew off and went through his right upper wing. He managed to bring his machine down and make a perfect landing right in front of a battery. He never mentioned the incident afterwards, except to say that his propeller had flown off and he was forced to land. Some time later I met the Captain of the battery where 'Gen.' had landed, and he told me about a plane landing right up in front of his guns, and the pilot crawled out and looked at his engine and just said 'Ha-Ha'."

Can't you see it all? What a mixture of coolness, grim humor and short speech.

One of Fletcher's most engaging traits and one which particularly endeared him to the Squadron was his ability to withstand teasing. One of the officers tells how Fletcher leaning against the wall of the barracks calmly smoking the long pipe of which he was so fond would become the silent target for the good natured gibes of his comrades who would join in the wildest romancing, endeavoring to give a new twist to some old incident or even fabricating a new one outright by which the "General" might appear to some imaginary disadvantage. Fletcher with Indian stoicism, puffing his pipe, would listen with neither remark nor change of countenance to the fast and furious assault of gibe and counter gibe.

Some of the stories told sound boyish enough. Perhaps because they were such, they became classic in the Squadron. Once a Major from another Squadron landed in the field. His plane was a Caudron training plane.



Fletcher in Pasadena, California, March 1917.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

propeller flew off and went through his right upper wing. He managed to bring his machine down and make a perfect landing right in front of a battery. He never mentioned the incident afterwards, except to say that his propeller had flown off and he was forced to land. Some time later I met the Captain of the battery where 'Gen.' had landed, and he told me about a plane landing right up in front of his guns, and the pilot crawled out and looked at his engine and just said 'Ha-Ha'."

Can't see how it could be a matter of course, grim humor and short speech.

One of Fletcher's most engaging traits and one which particularly endeared him to the Squadron was his ability to withstand teasing. One of the officers tells how Fletcher leaning against the wall of the barracks calmly smoking the long pipe of which he was so fond would become the silent target for the good natured gibes of his comrades who would join in the wildest romancing, endeavoring to give a new twist to some old incident or even fabricating a new one outright by which the "General" might appear to some imaginary disadvantage. Fletcher with Indian stoicism, puffing his pipe, would listen with neither remark nor change of countenance to the fast and furious assault of gibe and counter gibe.

Some of the stories told sound boyish enough. Perhaps because they were such, they became classic in the Squadron. Once a Major from another Squadron landed in the field. His plane was a Caudron training plane.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly a list of names or a short biography.



Faint, illegible text below the photograph, likely a caption or further biographical information.



NO. 211  
APRIL 10

## A TRIBUTE

As such it carried no gun. On the take-off as the Major's plane left the ground, Fletcher swung his arm in front of him, and, snapping his fingers, said "Oh, the old days". A comrade added: "Yes, before they put machine guns on planes and made them dangerous". The story, as repeated, put both remarks together and ascribed them to the "General". On another occasion Fletcher was pilot on one of several planes assigned as "protection" to a photographic plane. It happened that the latter was a very fast climber. It left Fletcher's plane behind and was soon out of sight. It seemed to his observer that they could no longer be of service and should return. Fletcher made no response to the suggestion but turning flew over the town of St. Mihiel and south along the Meuse. This was old familiar country to him which he had not seen, however, for several months; to the observer it was new. Thinking that Fletcher had lost his way, the observer said "'Gen.', I'll bet you fifty francs you don't find your way home." He got no answer but after flying around a while Fletcher headed the plane in a northwesterly direction and came out directly over the Squadron's airdrome. The observer, seeing that the first bet was lost, said "I bet you fifty francs that you go upon your nose in landing." For answer Fletcher stuck the nose of the plane down, came back and over in a loop, then glided softly to the ground. The observer told the story over and over, chaffing Fletcher and giving himself always the credit of guiding his wandering pilot home.

These stories and others without number seem harmless enough but they turned dangers into jests and brought relief from the tension of the day. For after the day was



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

over came the only time when there was relaxation. The officers associating constantly together were like one large family. The stories were family property and had a meaning and a flavor by reason of intimate acquaintance which to us are lost in the telling. A comrade writes: "I've been thinking tonight of the way the 'Gen.' used to pour kerosene on our fires in barracks stoves. The wood we had was generally wet or green and did not burn easily. So about every half hour we poured kerosene on it through the top of the stove. It is a pretty delicate piece of work to get enough kerosene in to do any good and still not have the fire flash up before stopping pouring. The 'Gen.' was very adept at it. Whenever he was in the room no one else was allowed to pour kerosene, and we used to gather around and watch him. Pipe in his mouth, paying no attention to warnings or suggestions he always calmly removed the lid, doused the fire two or three times with kerosene, holding his head back and on one side so that the flash went up past him, put the bucket down, the lid back on and resumed his bridge game. Babcock used to tell him he was going to get his face burned off some day doing that, but the only answer he gave was a grunt between puffs on his pipe."

The meeting place after the day's work was the mess-hall. Where the Squadron stayed long enough to complete such a hall, it was voted by visitors from other camps to be "a wonder". There was a big fireplace with easy chairs all about and on the walls the Squadron's trophies, parts of wrecked planes, machine guns from captured planes, and pictures all over the walls. It was the mess-hall that was the scene of the Squadron's enter-



## A TRIBUTE

tainments and receptions to the guests from other squadrons. Occasionally, indeed, officers from other branches of the Service visited the "88th". With the fire roaring in the chimney and the board laden with good cheer the officers and their guests joined in singing the Squadron's songs whose words written by its members were the Squadron's own as much as the personal jokes and quips that passed around. It all seemed light-hearted enough but those who saw it for the first time noted that, except in jest and song, the flying experiences were never mentioned at the feast. One visitor at least observed a peculiarity in the faces of the aviation officers. It was a look about the eyes that he could not quite describe—a far-away look that seemed, however, wonderfully alert and alive. It was the look of a man ready at all times to face death *alone* yet ready always for instant action; it was in itself a study.

Little by little Fletcher's quiet companionship found its way into the hearts of his comrades. The feeling comes out in the letters which are given later. It is very seldom, it is safe to say, that a man in an organization of men of his own age has been said to be "the center and idol of us all", or "the idol of the Squadron down to the last mechanic", or is said to have had "the most lovable disposition ever known". When speaking of the effect of his death upon the Squadron one of his comrades writes: "From that day on until we received our orders to go home hardly one of us ever went near the Officers' Club, while before the place was always packed." This was not an attempt to pay respect to a comrade's memory; it was the involuntary expression of men's love for a man.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

After Fletcher's death the officers and men of the Squadron considered how they might best honor his memory. They decided that the memorial that was to mark his grave should be the Squadron's own work. So they made a propeller blade of fine-grained mahogany and affixed a silver plate with an appropriate inscription. After all was done, a military rule, issued after the Armistice, was found that prevented its proposed use. So the Squadron sent it to Fletcher's family as one more proof, if any were needed, of its affection for him.

The traits that endeared Fletcher to his comrades determined also the character of his work in the eyes of his superiors. Their opinion may be best judged from the wording of a citation bestowed upon him by the Air Service Commander of the First Army. The citation is dated December 31, 1918, after the cessation of hostilities and covers not a single act or performance but his entire service. It reads as follows:

“France, December 31, 1918.

“The Air Service Commander, First Army, cites for exceptional devotion to duty:

“First Lieutenant Fletcher L. McCordic, A. S. U. S. A., pilot, 88th Aero Squadron served with never failing loyalty and spirit since February, 1918. By his ability and initiative, he contributed greatly to the success of the squadron.

By order of Colonel Milling.”

Of one honor paid him Fletcher was never to learn. It had reference to an incident of the Meuse-Argonne



Two pictures taken same place, front lawn Winnetka home, (right) August 1903; (left) August 1917.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

After Fletcher's death the officers and men of the Squadron considered how they might best honor his memory. They decided that the memorial that was to mark his grave should be the Squadron's own work. So they made a propeller blade of fine-grained mahogany and affixed a silver plate with an appropriate inscription. After all was done, a military rule, issued after the Armistice, was found that prevented its proposed use. So the Squadron sent it to Fletcher's family as one more proof, if any were needed, of its affection for him.

The traits that endeared Fletcher to his comrades determined also the character of his work in the eyes of his superiors. Their opinion may be best judged from the wording of the citation taken from the home of the Air Service Commander of the First Army. The citation is dated December 31, 1918, after the cessation of hostilities and covers not a single act or performance but his entire service. It reads as follows:

"France, December 31, 1918.

"The Air Service Commander, First Army, cites for exceptional devotion to duty:

"First Lieutenant Fletcher L. McCordic, A. S. U. S. A., pilot, 88th Aero Squadron served with never failing loyalty and spirit since February, 1918. By his ability and initiative, he contributed greatly to the success of the squadron.

By order of Colonel Milling."

Of one honor paid him Fletcher was never to learn. It had reference to an incident of the Meuse-Argonne





UNIVERSITY OF  
COLUMBIA





## A TRIBUTE

offensive. On October 23, 1918, Fletcher was serving as "protection", that is, was helping to guard another plane engaged in taking photographs over the lines. In the battle that followed he brought down two of the hostile planes. For this service he received official credit and the citation of the Commander in Chief "for distinguished and exceptional gallantry". The citation seems not to have received General Pershing's signature until March 27, 1919, nearly a month after Fletcher's death. The following is the citation in full:

"UNITED STATES ARMY  
U. S. A.      A. E. F.

First Lieutenant, Fletcher L. McCordic, A.S.  
Pilot, 88th Aero Sqdn. for Distinguished and Ex-  
ceptional Gallantry at Aincreville, France on 23  
Oct. 1918, in the operations of the American  
Expeditionary Forces.

In testimony thereof, and as an expression of  
appreciation of his valor, I award him this

Citation

John J. Pershing

Commander-in-Chief."

Awarded on 27 March 1919.

It has been elsewhere stated that Fletcher was offered the post of Commanding Officer of another squadron and declined it. It has not been stated that in January 1919 he was made Flight Commander of the 88th, and was serving as such when he died.



## THE DAY'S WORK

On June 6, 1918, occurs Fletcher's first mention of his activities at the front. From this time on his letters are full of references to his work. Some of these have been quoted in another connection. Few of the letters give detailed descriptions, though some in describing an incident show the methods employed. In most of them the references are brief and technical.

Even from this slight material it is evident that the duties involved were not only more exacting but also far more various than is generally understood. Possibly the brilliant and spectacular work of the American "ace" has tended to obscure the less brilliant but equally important work of his confrères, the pilot and observer of the observation planes. At all events their work has been little discussed and is little comprehended.

The 88th Squadron was what is known as a "Corps Observation Squadron". It belonged to that part of the Air Service that has given to the Service as a whole the name "Eyes of the Army". Such a Squadron when complete was a very complex unit. Besides its commanding officer (C. O.) and its operations officer it had eighteen "pilots" and eighteen "observers". These were all officers and the only members who took part in flying. The enlisted men, nearly two hundred in number, were the mechanics and the personnel of the supply and transportation. The flying equipment of a squadron con-

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

sisted of eighteen planes, each including its own armament and its own radio and photographic apparatus. In the supply and transportation departments the outfit consisted of some twenty light and heavy trucks, five automobiles and ten motorcycles. The C. O. of a Squadron had no easy task. A visiting Infantry Officer once said that a C. O. who had the gift of getting the most out of his men must work as if he were running a college football or baseball team and not a big fighting machine. Each observation plane was in charge of a "pilot" and an "observer" and was equipped with a speaking tube for their communication with each other, and with a set of wireless for communicating to the ground the information obtained during active operations. Whether the operations were active or inactive and no matter what the particular duty was, it was an indispensable part of the equipment that the plane should be armed. It consequently was furnished with one gun for the use of the pilot and with two for the use of the observer. Without this equipment the plane could neither defend itself when attacked by hostile planes nor repel such planes when they were engaged upon missions over its own lines.

The principal group of the Squadron's duties consisted of two very distinct services. It was its duty, first, to keep the corps or division to which it was attached informed of the enemy's movements, of the disposition of the hostile forces, and the nature of the ground beyond the enemy lines. These duties were embraced in the term, "reconnaissance". In time of active operations it was also the Squadron's task to keep the Division or Corps Headquarters informed of the state of the attack or defense.



## A TRIBUTE

When Fletcher speaks of "reconnaissance" he means by it general observation work or "general reconnaissance". Capt. Babcock, C. O. of the 88th, in a résumé of a pilot's duties has the following to say of this service:

"This is perhaps the greatest field of observation work, which takes the pilot on both sides of the lines at an altitude from 1000 to 2000 meters, depending upon the visibility and enemy activity. There is no protection for this work, so a pilot learns to take care of himself. "Alert" is more constant, if possible, than on the other missions. The plane may have an entire sector to cover or it may have a place to watch particularly. In general reconnaissance the pilot can help with observation. When there is a low misty cloud-bank, the machine can be driven just under the clouds with perfect safety well into enemy territory. If attacked the pilot can quickly climb up out of sight in the clouds and by means of compass return to his own lines."

It often happened that several planes joined on such a mission. In that case a combat with enemy planes was a frequent result. These engagements are the "air-battles" to which Fletcher so often refers. Two typical letters show how such combats were provoked.

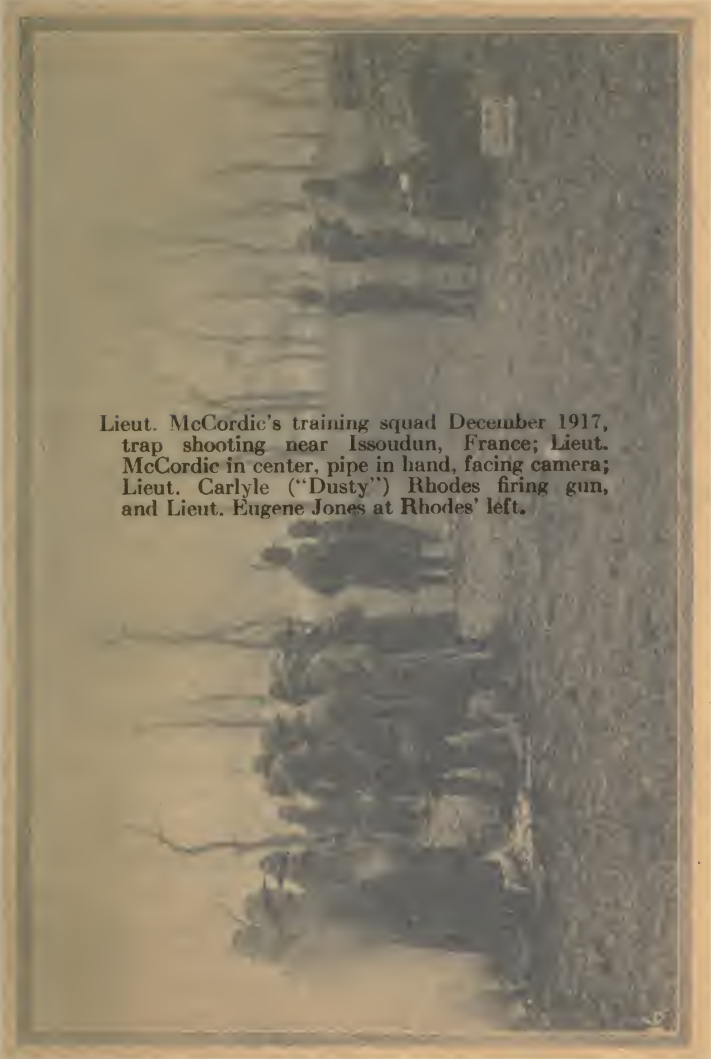
On September 2nd, Fletcher writes: "The Boches are retreating some and they have a lot of chasse planes around here. We seldom go over the lines without seeing them and very often get into a battle. The other day

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

three of our machines went over the lines and eight Boches attacked them; our planes got one Boche and got away safely. It was quite an air-battle and lasted about five minutes. It is seldom that they bring down an observation plane when there are three together as there is no point at which they can come in on you without being shot at. They rarely attack three observation planes except when it is absolutely necessary to keep us out. We have been very fortunate so far."

On September 27th Fletcher writes: "I was over the lines the other day on an important mission. I had just got over on the German side and about eight Boche planes appeared. They were above us. I turned around and went full speed. I saw them start to dive down and one of them got under us. The observer kept shooting but the Boche got in a blind position. He got one shot into the wing of my machine and then turned back. There were too many to fight. The rest of them did not come in very close. I was going about 200 kilometers an hour and diving a little—if you dive too much you give the enemy a little advantage."

A special reconnaissance duty not included in the term "general reconnaissance" was discharged by the aid of aerial photography. This was one of the most astonishing developments of the war. Under the system as perfected, every part of the front was divided into squares, each assigned to its own group of photographers. As the photographs were made they were either enlarged or reduced to a standard scale and took their places upon a general map. Not even the slightest change on either side of the line could escape the eye of the camera. In

A black and white photograph showing a group of soldiers in a field. The soldiers are arranged in a line, some standing and some kneeling. The background is a hazy, open field. The photograph is mounted on a light-colored page. A caption is printed in the center of the photograph.

Lieut. McCordic's training squad December 1917,  
trap shooting near Issoudun, France; Lieut.  
McCordic in center, pipe in hand, facing camera;  
Lieut. Carlyle ("Dusty") Rhodes firing gun,  
and Lieut. Eugene Jones at Rhodes' left.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

three of our machines went over the lines and eight Boches attacked them; our planes got one Boche and got away safely. It was quite an air-battle and lasted about five minutes. It is seldom that they bring down an observation plane when there are three together as there is no point at which they can come in on you without being shot at. They rarely attack three observation planes except when it is absolutely necessary to keep us out. We have been very fortunate so far."

On September 27th Fletcher writes: "I was over the lines the other day on an important mission. I had just got over on the German side and three Boche planes appeared. They were flying in a loose formation and I went full speed ahead firing at them. One of them was hit and the Boche got into a bad position. He got one shot into the wing of my machine and then turned back. There were too many to fight. The rest of them did not come in very close. I was going about 200 kilometers an hour and diving a little—if you dive too much you give the enemy a little advantage."

A special reconnaissance duty not included in the term "general reconnaissance" was discharged by the aid of aerial photography. This was one of the most astonishing developments of the war. Under the system as perfected, every part of the front was divided into squares, each assigned to its own group of photographers. As the photographs were made they were either enlarged or reduced to a standard scale and took their places upon a general map. Not even the slightest change on either side of the line could escape the eye of the camera. In







1000

## A TRIBUTE

taking photographs the observation plane assigned to this service was protected by at least three others. Such "protection" was the more necessary since the photographs to have value must be continuous. Once the observer began to take them, he must go on without interruption or begin afresh.

For the purpose of protection single-seaters known as "chasse" or "pursuit" planes were employed, when available, but frequently for lack of such assistance the Squadron was obliged to assign its own planes for protection. Fletcher often refers to this work. On one occasion he says: "We have been having pretty good weather lately—rather cool—but not very good for photographs. I got some pictures one clear day. When we take pictures we always have chasse protection as both pilot and observer are busy and cannot look around when taking the pictures. We get anti-aircraft but we pay very little attention to it; they seldom come very close and we are very much accustomed to it." On another occasion: "The other day we had a very interesting flight. We went out to take photos and I went along for protection. We also had five chasse machines with us. Five Boches were coming toward us and the chasse machines were quite a way behind us and in the sun so the Boches never saw them. After the Boches got fairly close to us our chasse planes came after them and the Boches did some very fast maneuvering to get away. It was a great surprise for them. We got the pictures all right."

One of his fellow officers describes such an occasion as follows: "One time he (Fletcher) was sent up to protect another plane which was taking the photographs.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Four Boches came in to attack and McCordic, who should have held his place in rear of the photo plane, swung over to the Boche side, making it certain that he would have to be shot down before the photo ship could be touched. He had his guns working and before any other planes (Allied) came the Boches had decided that they didn't care to fight any one so aggressive and turned off. Then the 'Gen.' swung his plane back in rear of the photo ship. I was taking the photographs and my heart certainly went out to him when I saw that he meant to make them get him first, as they certainly would have if they had continued to fight. When we got home I rushed over and bragged on him for it. 'Well, I was protection, wasn't I?' he said and let it go at that. Normally his place should have been behind where he would have an even chance, but the 'Gen.' was willing to fall to let the photographs get home."

A combat occurred later which earned for Fletcher the citation of General Pershing before referred to. An observer in one of the other planes tells the story in the following words:

"Some time after this an incident took place which showed very clearly the stuff of which Fletcher was made. On October 23rd during a slight lull in the continual hammering advance of the Meuse-Argonne operations, the 88th Squadron was called upon for one very important mission. This was to take a series of forty or fifty continuous pictures of the German lines that the staff might estimate the strength of

## A TRIBUTE

their machine gun and battery positions as well as their other strong points. At that time there happened to be some very expert German pursuit squadrons back of Dun-sur-Meuse, and as the photographic mission would have to penetrate the German lines at least ten miles, it was practically certain of being attacked.

"Capt. Babcock piloted the observer who was to take the photographs and Fletcher as a matter of course volunteered, together with Lieut. Sidney Grant, to pilot the two Salmsons which were to fly abreast behind the photographic plane as protection. The formation was accompanied by five Spads, flying high, as further protection.

"Barely had they crossed our lines when they were attacked by a formation of seven 'Fokkers'. Three of the American pursuit planes turned off and engaged them and the rest of the formation continued on into Germany in the face of two more Boche formations. They managed to elude the Germans as far as Dun-sur-Meuse where they turned homeward and started the prescribed series of pictures. For some reason one German formation failed to attack, but the other consisting of seven zebra-striped Pfalz swooped down on the five Americans over Aincreville one by one. In the very mixed air fight which ensued, three of the Boches were shot down in flames and all the American planes were riddled with bullets. They all got home safely, however, the machine



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

of Lieut. Grant crashing just inside our lines with most of his controls shot away. So well did Lieut. McCordic keep his place behind and to the right of the photographic plane that it was completely protected. The observer was enabled to take the required pictures throughout the entire course of the combat and his subsequent map showed a very real history of the fight.

"These photographs were forwarded at once to Army Headquarters and were of immense value in laying plans for our victorious attack two days later. It was probably the first time in the history of American aviation that an American formation had been able to take successful pictures while menaced or attacked by more than twenty enemy planes.

"For this exploit Fletcher was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, but all he said was, 'Huh, lots of Boches in the air that day. Hard to tell who to shoot at first'."

The second service properly grouped as "reconnaissance" consisted in keeping the different units of the corps or division in time of active operations in touch with each other. It is to these duties that Fletcher refers when he speaks of "liaison". He thus abbreviates the term "infantry liaison" for which a fuller description was "infantry contact patrol". The principal liaison service was called "staking the line". A half hour or so before an attack was ordered an observation plane assigned to the work was given a photographic map of the ground to be



## A TRIBUTE

covered in the attack with a barrage chart superimposed, together with a schedule showing the position that the attacking forces were expected to occupy at certain times. It was the duty of the plane from time to time after the attack began to notify the corps and division headquarters and the battery of the position of the attacking troops. This information was obtained by the plane through the use of "panels". These were small pieces of cloth which the front line troops displayed upon the signal from the plane to "display your panels." The observer marked upon his map the position of the line so indicated and flying back dropped the map enclosed in a tube for the information of Headquarters. In the same manner all emergency signals were picked up and transmitted. It was possible for the plane to pick up these signals from a height of three thousand feet, but it was usually compelled to fly at a very low level and was thus exposed to great danger from both sides, its own as well as the enemy's. It has been said of this service: "Infantry liaison is probably the most interesting as well as the most dangerous work for the observation pilot. It is a mission upon which you see the entire operations on the ground from an altitude of fifty to two hundred meters. It is essential to know the country in detail, as the low altitude does not permit location of landmarks except within a small area. During this work the plane is a constant target for Archies, low-flying enemy chasse planes, terrestrial machine gun and rifle fire and always in the trajectory of both your own and the enemy's artillery. The Archies can be avoided by a system of turns and dives, and the machine gun and rifle fire can at least be abated

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

by returning it. It has been proven that nothing is more harassing to infantry than a low-flying plane shooting its machine guns, even if the guns are not directly shooting at them. During this work the pilot makes frequent use of his front gun upon massed troops or convoys below".

Little opportunity had been given our infantry to learn how to distinguish the enemy planes, when in flight, from our own. The danger of shots from our own troops was therefore far from imaginary. A visitor at Headquarters noticed in the hangars a plane covered with little black German crosses and little cocardes in the U. S. Air Service colors. He asked what these were for and the mechanic replied: "Sir, all the black ones are Hun bullet holes and the cocardes are bullet holes from the 'Doughboys' who don't seem to know a friendly plane from a Hun plane. Almost every trip our planes come back with a lot of holes from our own troops."

The service known by the technical term "réglage" hardly falls within the term "reconnaissance." By "réglage" or "regulating artillery fire" is to be understood the adjustment of batteries upon an enemy target. The observer was furnished by the artillery with a photographic map showing the position of the targets and a network of lines passing through the targets and through other visible objects on the ground, together with the distances of these lines from one another. The plane noted the fall of the shells and wirelessly back to the battery such messages as "One hundred, over," "Fifty, right" and so on to indicate how the shells were falling with reference to the objective.

In a paragraph in one of Fletcher's letters he refers to both these services ("liaison" and "réglage") carried out by

## A TRIBUTE

his plane on the same day. The letter is dated the 19th of October 1918, when the Squadron was stationed at Souilly and was in the midst of the Meuse-Argonne offensive:

“Yesterday I got up at 4:30 in the morning and took to the air about 5:30 for an early morning liaison and reconnaissance flight. It was still rather dark when we started off, but by the time we got to the lines it was light. The clouds were low—about 1000 metres at first—and then later they got lower and lower. We were flying at about 100 metres some of the time. Some Boche machine guns were shooting at us, but we shot back at them and they quit. I made another trip in the afternoon for the purpose of regulating some artillery fire.”

These duties by no means exhausted the duties of the Squadron. The “missions” to which Fletcher constantly refers embrace such miscellaneous duties as a flight to ascertain the success or failure of a camouflage within his own lines; or a distant errand made through hail and sleet; or a flight to drop newspapers for the “Doughboys” in remote places; or a trip to take the ordnance officers up to search for an artillery range.

When an officer was “on the alert” during assigned hours of night or day, it was his duty to respond for instant service for any one of this multitude of duties. If the assignment was for the day from daybreak to sunset, the nights also were likely to be disturbed. As Fletcher once humorously phrases it: “The last few nights have been rather broken. The Boches came over and roused us out of bed.”

Amid all this work the pilot must keep his “nerve” not so much “facing” danger as ignoring it. Capt.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Babcock in the sketch referred to, says of this requisite of a good pilot: "The amount and nature of the training a pilot has had does not necessarily determine his efficiency or value at the front; however, he must have enough experience in the air so that the mechanics of driving the plane become sub-conscious movements instead of a constant tax on his mental capacity. Given that qualification to start with, his success will depend upon the normal effect produced by the sudden attacks of enemy planes, the constant roar of anti-aircraft bursts and the uncertainty of lurking terrestrial rifle and machine-gun fire. Some of the very best pilots in flying school will be a complete failure on the front simply because they cannot overcome the psychological effect of being fired at. True enough, they can steel themselves against the fright but they will never be able to fulfill the most dangerous and important missions, simply because much of their thinking capacity is given over to personal safety."

It is necessary to understand these conditions to comprehend the tribute paid by his Commanding Officer when he writes after Fletcher's death: "During the war there was no one more willing and capable to undertake any mission. No matter how hazardous the undertaking a smile would always come to his face when he was detailed on the patrol. He had next to high man in the Squadron in flying time over the lines."



Upper—Lieut. McCordic in flight somewhere on the front, taken by his observer.

Lower—Old shell-riddled house—88th's billet on the Marne.





## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Babcock in the sketch referred to, says of this requisite of a good pilot: "The amount and nature of the training a pilot has had does not necessarily determine his efficiency or value at the front; however, he must have enough experience in the air so that the mechanics of driving the plane become sub-conscious movements instead of a constant tax on his mental capacity. Given that qualification to start with, his success will depend upon the normal effect produced by the sudden attacks of enemy planes, the constant roar of anti-aircraft bursts and the uncertainty of lurking terrestrial rifle and machine-gun fire. Some of the very best pilots in flying school will be a complete failure in the front taken by his observer. True enough, they can not overcome the psychological effect of the front but they will never be able to fulfill the most dangerous and important missions, simply because much of their thinking capacity is given over to personal safety."

It is necessary to understand these conditions to comprehend the tribute paid by his Commanding Officer when he writes after Fletcher's death: "During the war there was no one more willing and capable to undertake any mission. No matter how hazardous the undertaking a smile would always come to his face when he was detailed on the patrol. He had next to high man in the Squadron in flying time over the lines."



UNIV. OF  
COLUMBIA



## THE SQUADRON'S PART IN THE WAR

In the midst of the hardest fighting Fletcher finds time to write home: "I am proud of being in this Squadron which has had such a fine record over the lines."

The story of the 88th Aero Squadron, A. E. F., is as yet untold. If ever written, it will be found a story worth the telling and a real contribution to the history of America's part in the Great War. This is not our task. It is proper, however, to give here some idea of the service rendered by the Squadron in which Fletcher was privileged to play his part; to tell of the honors paid it in which he shared; and to speak briefly of its work during the Armistice, in the course of which he lost his life.

The Squadron was the fifth American aero squadron to go to the front, the first having preceded it by only a short time. It was engaged in each of the great offensives in which the American troops shared; it took part in the capture of the St. Mihiel salient which was virtually the achievement of the Americans alone; and was one of the seventeen squadrons serving at the front when the fighting ceased. It accompanied the American Army of Occupation into Germany.

Except for two weeks' sick leave in August 1918, Fletcher was with the Squadron during the entire period of activity. During this time he suffered no serious mishap and was not interrupted even for a day in the discharge of his duties. Writing shortly after the Armistice,

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Fletcher says: "I was in all the big drives—first at Château-Thierry, then at the Vesle, then when we moved to Souilly for the St. Mihiel drive and then at the Meuse". He remained with the Army of Occupation for several months and until his death.

The Squadron was exceptionally fortunate in its beginnings. Major H. B. Anderson, its first Commanding Officer, was a man of the best training and traditions, well fitted not merely to enforce discipline but to create an *esprit de corps*. He quickly won the respect and love of his Squadron. He was both Squadron Commander and Officer in Charge of the training at the 1st Corps Observation School. This was located at Amanty and consisted of the 88th and three other American aero squadrons. He was assisted from the time the Squadron moved to Amanty by Capt. Kenneth P. Littauer. Capt. Littauer had been for nearly two years a member of the distinguished "Lafayette Corps". Here he was deservedly popular and bore the nickname "Képi"—a French made word derived from his initials. "Képi" came now with laurels freshly gathered at the front and with many hairbreadth escapes to his credit, to serve as pilot in the 88th. He showed the greatest consideration and helpfulness to the beginners and quickly won their respect and admiration. He not only had great knowledge of aeronautics but was able from experience to instruct his fellow officers how to work in unison with the other branches of the service. When Major Anderson was assigned on July 4th 1918, as Group Commander of the Ninth Observation Group, Capt. Littauer became Commanding Officer of the Squadron and remained such until



## A TRIBUTE

September 19th. Capt. Floyd E. Evans succeeded him and was Commanding Officer at the time of Fletcher's death. Capt. Evans was one of Fletcher's close friends and a very capable officer. In March 1919 he was succeeded by Capt. Philip R. Babcock. The latter remained Commanding Officer of the Squadron until its return home in May 1919, when he remained behind with the Army of Occupation and was succeeded by Capt. R. C. M. Page.

Amanty, where the Squadron was first stationed, is situated near Gondrecourt and about fifteen miles south of Toul. Here the Squadron remained over two months and was here whipped into fighting condition. Embryo observers were sent to the Squadron and were trained by being taken up on the various "missions"—photographic, reconnaissance, liaison, etc. Pilots learned how to work with the observers and so to make the plane a fighting unit. The machines first used were the French A. R.'s, old and unsatisfactory. These were succeeded by Sopwiths, obsolescent machines purchased from the French. In the latter half of May observers were assigned to the Squadron and on May 28th it was advanced northward to Ourches—eighteen kilometers southwest of Toul and within operating distance of the front. The Squadron was attached to the 26th Division and on May 30th started operating over the lines on the sector extending from Xivray to Limey. Here it received its first training with large bodies of troops. Its main work was reconnaissance, with photography of American battery positions, and wireless exercises with the Artillery. About the middle of June the Squadron took part in the defense of Xivray still in the Toul sector and here got its first glimpse of

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

actual warfare. In this "affair" the Squadron had a plane in service from daylight until dark without a break. On July 5th occurred the first Squadron combat.

The effect of this preliminary work was to make the Squadron a fighting unit. From now until the end of the War its service was constant and constantly growing in importance. This continuous service began with the removal of the Squadron to a quite different sector some one hundred and fifty miles west. On the seventh of July it took up its station at Francheville on the Château-Thierry front, near Belleau Woods where the American Marines were distinguishing themselves. On the 10th the Squadron received its orders to move on an hour's notice. On the 15th the last German offensive began. It was in repelling this offensive that the Third American Division east of Château-Thierry so distinguished themselves. On the 18th began the counter-offensive of Marshal Foch. From now until the 30th the fighting of the Squadron was constant and severe, every pilot being on duty from daylight until dark. The work consisted of contact patrol and low reconnaissance. The Squadron was considerably handicapped by the Sopwith machines as they were not really fitted for work at the front; the motors were second-hand when received. On July 18th the first French Salmsons were received and until the end of the war the 88th operated as a Salmson Squadron. These airplanes were exceedingly effective and very satisfactory. They were equipped with wireless accessories, three machine guns and ammunition, two Very pistols, assorted star shells, and several dropping tubes.



Upper—Lieut. McCordic's fighting plane, October 1918.

Lower—Lieut. McCordic standing in front of his plane just before a take-off after a forced landing near Wittlich, Germany, January 1919.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

actual warfare. In this "affair" the Squadron had a plane in service from daylight until dark without a break. On July 5th occurred the first Squadron combat.

The effect of this preliminary work was to make the Squadron a fighting unit. From now until the end of the War its service was constant and constantly growing in importance. This continuous service began with the removal of the Squadron to a quite different sector some one hundred and fifty miles west. On the seventh of July it took up its station at Fraucheville on the Château-Thierry front, near Belleau Woods where the American Marines were distinguishing themselves. On the 10th the Squadron reported its first combat in an hour's notice. On the 15th the last German offensive began. It was on the 17th that the Squadron was assigned to the Division of the 1st Army. On the 18th the Squadron distinguished themselves. On the 20th began the counter-offensive of Marshal Foch. From now until the 30th the fighting of the Squadron was constant and severe, every pilot being on duty from daylight until dark. The work consisted of contact patrol and low reconnaissance. The Squadron was considerably handicapped by the Sopwith machines as they were not really fitted for work at the front; the motors were second-hand when received. On July 18th the first French Salmsons were received and until the end of the war the 38th operated as a Salmson Squadron. These airplanes were exceedingly effective and very satisfactory. They were equipped with wireless accessories, three machine guns and ammunition, two Very pistols, assorted star shells, and several dropping tubes.







70 1000  
0000000000

## A TRIBUTE

As the foe retreated the Squadron was advanced northward. The first advance was to Ferme de Grèves southeast of Château-Thierry. This was close to Condé-en-Brie and virtually the farthest point reached by the German advance in that sector. On July 18th the position had passed out of the possession of the Germans in the famous counter-offensive of the American troops. It bore all the marks of conflict. It was covered with shell-holes and strewn with abandoned guns and munitions. These had been left behind both by the retreating enemy and by the advancing Americans.

In these operations the Squadron acted as Corps Squadron to the Third United States Army Corps, and was the only United States squadron in this action. The front was along the Vesle, running between Courlandon and Bazoches. The Squadron started operating on the day of its arrival, August 4, 1918, on that day making a reconnaissance of the corps front, and giving protection to the French photographic planes. As our troops were here constantly on the offensive, the Squadron was much occupied with infantry liaison and artillery réglage. In their retreat to the (river) Vesle, the Germans stubbornly defended every foot. Then, crossing the river, they held their new positions until early in September. When the American forces began their advance across the Vesle, the Squadron was moved forward to Goussaincourt only a few miles from the front and fighting took place within eyeshot of the field. Here, need for careful liaison and réglage work was constant and the Squadron's service was intensive and strenuous. On August 11th, in this offensive the Squadron suffered its first serious losses. Three

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

officers were killed and one wounded in a combat in which their formation was greatly outnumbered.

On September 8th the Squadron, having been relieved by the French, went back to its old station at Ferme de Grèves. It had during the entire Vesle offensive been serving with the Third American Army Corps under the Sixth French Army. During the entire time the Squadron was on the Vesle front the enemy had superiority of the air and the fighting was continuous and fierce. Fletcher writes: "We had the worst trouble with the Boches at the Vesle." The work of the Squadron and of each member of it during this entire offensive was such that Major General Bullard on September 4th cited the whole Squadron for "extraordinary devotion to duty". The following is the citation in full:

"General Orders No. 20.—

I. I wish to record in General Orders of this Corps a tribute to the services and extraordinary devotion to duty of the 88th Aero Squadron, from the period of August 8th to September 3rd 1918.

This Squadron has repeatedly performed missions involving great hazard, has repeatedly, in the accomplishment of its missions, fought largely superior enemy forces and has, under great difficulties, achieved excellent results.

B. L. Bullard

Major General, Commanding.

Official

David O'Keefe

Acting Adj. General."

## A TRIBUTE

Two days later at noon on September 11th came verbal orders to move with all possible speed to Souilly on a quite different part of the front. Not until nearly midnight were the formal orders received. On the following morning in a storm of wind and rain, the Squadron covered the one hundred and fifty kilometers between Ferme de Grèves and Souilly, reported that afternoon for duty and made two reconnaissances before evening. Thus was begun the work of the Squadron in the famous St. Mihiel offensive. It had fourteen planes available for service and its diminished personnel stood sixteen pilots and eleven observers ready for duty. The Squadron in the St. Mihiel attack served under the 5th Observation Group attached to the 26th Division. In the first day's fighting the Division reached its enemy objective and the work of the Squadron from then until the end of the offensive consisted in reconnaissance work for the Division, in watching and reporting upon the enemy's retreat and counter-attacks. Thus the Squadron, coming from the hard and constant fighting on the Vesle was able to turn on a night's notice with undiminished spirit to a new front and to do its part in the work of wiping out the St. Mihiel salient. It was the warranted boast of the American troops that this work in twenty-seven hours had taken the positions held by the enemy for four years.

The Squadron beginning with September 17th entered the work preparatory to the Argonne-Meuse operation, and was stationed during this work at Pretz-en-Argonne. During the operation itself the Squadron acted as Corps Squadron to the Third Army Corps and was stationed successively at Souilly and Bethelainville. Its work in



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

this attack was intensive and evidently very successful as the General in Command sent a field message to the Commanding Officer of the Squadron—"Very much pleased with work of Squadron". The Squadron continued its work in this offensive until November 11th, the date of the Armistice; it was at Bethelainville when the Armistice was signed. The date was just a year to a day, as Fletcher himself notes, from the date of his landing in Liverpool. On the last day of the War he "performed my (his) last mission over the lines. The artillery was shooting very fast. At 11 o'clock everything was quiet and not a gun was fired at the front after that hour. It does seem queer not to hear the guns any more."

For a few days after the Armistice there was general relaxation of war activities and even the flying ceased. "We will probably go to the German border and are saving our ships." There are victory demonstrations and celebrations of all kinds in which Fletcher takes a deep and quiet interest. "Since the Armistice we have been having lots of banquets and parties and everyone is happy. . . . The French people and the towns look so different. Allied flags are flying everywhere. There are constant parades and bands and all the people are smiling."

During November the Squadron was stationed at various places. The end of the month found it at Villers-la Chèvre in northern France three miles or so from Longwy. Early in December it moved with the Army of Occupation into the German town of Trier (Trèves) to which Fletcher was greatly attracted. "Trèves is a very pretty city in the Moselle Valley, a good



## A TRIBUTE

sized place." Here they remained until they were moved across the river to West Trèves. It was here they celebrated Christmas. Fletcher with zest tells of the festivities of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The dinner "was a very homelike Christmas celebration. The room was all trimmed with greens, with little Christmas trees and flowers on each table. We had roast duck and many other good things and pumpkin pie and chocolate cake for dessert".

In the next paragraph of the very same letter in which this American dinner is discussed Fletcher tells of the opportunity he has had to test the captured German planes. It is evident that Headquarters wished this done as the testimony of the flyers themselves was the best witness for their excellencies or defects. It is evident also that he was greatly interested in the mechanics of these planes and eager to test them and their flying qualities. Of this work Fletcher says:

"The other day I flew a Boche plane—a Halberstadt—which is a biplace fighting plane. It flies very much like our ships and is a pretty good plane. I flew the Fokker today. It is a single-seater scout. It was the most dangerous plane to meet at the front. It is a very good plane for maneuvering. You can do all kinds of acrobatics with it and it will not vrille or tail-spin. It is very sensitive and the least movement of the stick will cause the plane to respond instantly. I am the first one in the Squadron to fly the Boche ships. I am glad that I had this

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

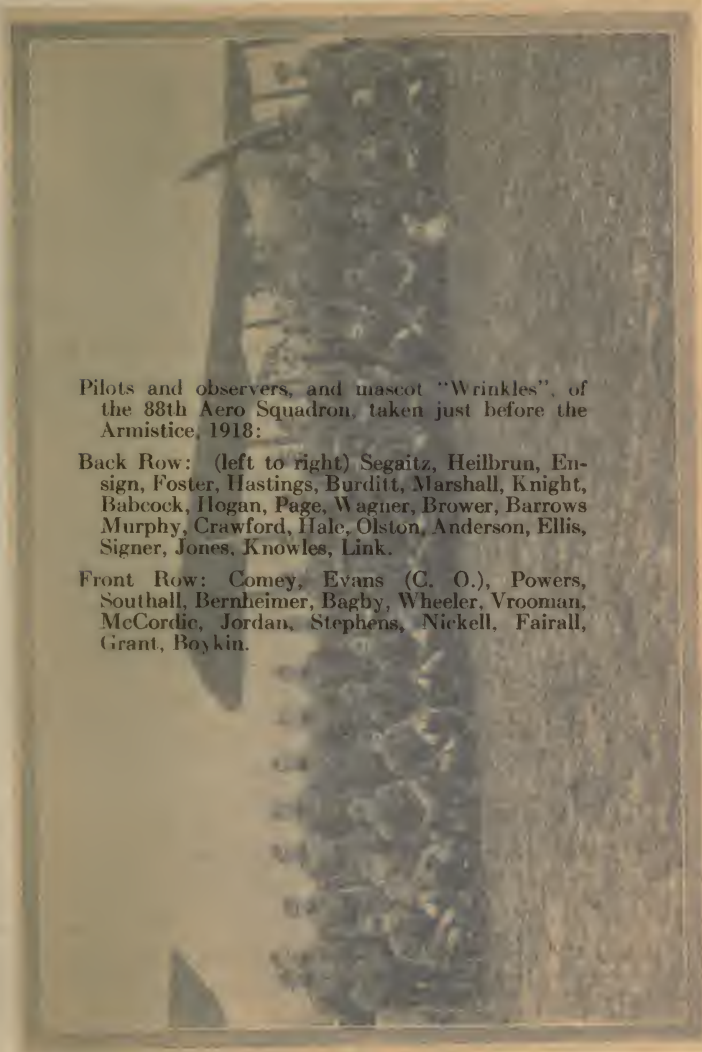
chance before going away. These Boche planes are very strong and have Mercedes motors. The Spad is a little faster, except in climbing."

Early in January Fletcher received a leave of absence, the first except for illness, since he joined the Squadron. He was given a week's stay on the Riviera and was allowed the necessary time for travel. His chum, Lieut. Bagby, "one of our best observers" and Lieut. Ensign went with him. The delays and inconveniences of travel through central France hardly affected their enjoyment. When the Mediterranean was reached and the real vacation began, the change of scene, the relaxation from work, the charm of their surroundings, were almost bewildering. After a two weeks' absence Fletcher returned greatly refreshed and plunged into work with renewed vigor.

The officers of the Squadron were not allowed to rust. On rainy days lectures were given on various military topics. A school was organized "to show the infantry and artillery organizations how aviation works." With this instruction went "a lot of flying—mostly practice réglage" and liaison work.

While Fletcher seems to think the life "not very exciting—though interesting" it is evident that the service involved many risks to which he was accustomed and others that were new, arising from the use of unfamiliar planes and from the nature of the country about Trèves abounding in hills, ravines and very extensive tracts of timber.

Fletcher in his letters always minimized the dangers partly, no doubt, to avoid causing anxiety. Certain

A black and white photograph showing a group of approximately 25 men, pilots and observers, standing in two rows in front of a biplane. The men are dressed in military uniforms. The biplane is partially visible in the background, showing its wings and fuselage. The photograph is mounted on a light-colored page.

Pilots and observers, and mascot "Wrinkles", of the 88th Aero Squadron, taken just before the Armistice, 1918:

Back Row: (left to right) Segaitz, Heilbrun, Ensign, Foster, Hastings, Burditt, Marshall, Knight, Babcock, Hogan, Page, Wagner, Brower, Barrows, Murphy, Crawford, Hale, Olston, Anderson, Ellis, Signer, Jones, Knowles, Link.

Front Row: Comey, Evans (C. O.), Powers, Southall, Bernheimer, Bagby, Wheeler, Vrooman, McCordic, Jordan, Stephens, Nickell, Fairall, Grant, Boykin.







1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100





## A TRIBUTE

incidents occurring at this time may therefore have affected him more than his letters show. One of these incidents was the death of Major Anderson, his first Commanding Officer, killed while using one of the Fokkers in a "crash" such as afterwards happened to Fletcher. He had always been one of Fletcher's favorite officers. Other incidents were several "forced landings" in quick succession resulting from accidents to the engine almost unexplainable and of a sort unknown before. Yet the work in its various aspects went forward without interruption. Fletcher on February 8th writes:

"We are having very bad weather for flying—snow and low clouds, but yesterday and today have been very pleasant, though quite a little colder, with clear sky and good visibility. I have been flying a good deal the last three or four days. I made three trips to a town about ten miles west of Luxemburg City and had very bad weather for the first two trips. One time I ran into a snow storm and I could hardly see the ground. I had to fly about 200 metres up on account of the low clouds. On my way back my motor quit. I think the snow caused the trouble. I didn't have much time to find a place to land in. I picked out a field which looked all right from the air, but when we landed we found the ground was very rough and the landing gear broke, but the plane was not hurt much.

"Yesterday I made another flight to the same place and got back O. K. We were dropping

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

newspapers to the soldiers. Today I took the Ordnance Officers up. We were looking for an aerial target range for shooting practice. We had a very good flight. It is pretty cold for this work, but the heat from the motor keeps the pilot warm.

“Tomorrow I am going to fly at Seventh Corps Headquarters in a memorial celebration for Colonel Roosevelt. I am going to fly low over the procession and will do a few stunts. I did a couple of loops today. These ships loop very well.”

In his last letter home under date of February 27th 1919, Fletcher says: “We are getting another single-seated Fokker in shape, and I expect to take a hop in it soon”. Two days later he met his death during this very flight. The circumstances are given in the following special report made by Major Howard C. Davidson, A. S., U. S. A.:

“Lieut. Fletcher L. McCordic took off from the airdrome at Trèves, Germany, at 13:40 H on March 1, 1919, flying a Fokker D VII with two hours fuel. He stunted over the field for about fifteen minutes, showing perfect control of the plane, and then flew north over Trèves disappearing in the direction of Coblenz. The motor seemed to be turning up regularly. At 14:15 H he was seen flying low over a forest just east of Waldweiler. His motor was turning up

## A TRIBUTE

very irregularly and he was evidently trying to glide to an open space north of the woods. Seeing that he did not have enough altitude for that he banked up to turn to a little clearing of stumps on his left. It is impossible to tell from the account of a German that saw it whether he side-slipped and fell on this turn or went into a spin, at any rate he was just above the woods when he banked. He fell very near to where he made the turn and investigation shows that his fall was almost vertical. The left lower wing was torn off on a tree. As the motor hit the ground the fuselage swung around and hit a large tree, Lieut. McCordic's head being caught between the tree and the machine guns as the cockpit crumpled. His skull was fractured and face very badly bruised. A German got there in a few minutes and Lieut. McCordic was unconscious but still alive. He died in a few minutes. He was buried from Base Hospital No. 19 on March 3rd 1919, in the American section of the Trier cemetery.

“Lieut. McCordic was assigned to the 88th Squadron on February 22, 1918, at Amanty, France, being one of the fifteen original pilots to go with the Squadron. He went to the front on May 28, 1918, Station Ourches (Toul Sector); from there he moved with the Squadron to the Château-Thierry sector, Stations at Francheville, France, Ferme de Grèves, Goussaincourt, from July 6 to Sept. 12. He took part in the St.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

Mihiel and the entire Meuse-Argonne offensives with stations at Souilly and Bethelainville from Sept. 12 to Nov. 11th. On December 5th he moved with the Squadron to the Army of Occupation.

“Lieut. McCordic was, without question, one of our very best and most daring pilots. He has had over a hundred hours over the enemy lines, has been engaged in several air battles and has always shown the greatest skill and liking for the work.

“The above is a very complete record of the accident of Lieut. McCordic. He was one of the best flyers in the Squadron, and no one can tell just what happened to him to make him fall.”

The grief displayed at the funeral service impressed even those who in a year and a half of active fighting had grown used to such scenes. An eyewitness says: “The day of ‘Gen.’s’ funeral there were flyers from almost every squadron in Germany present and there was hardly a man without tears in his eyes.” The burial took place in the municipal cemetery of Trèves.

Thus, all that was mortal of Fletcher was on March 3rd 1919 laid to rest in a beautiful old world cemetery on the banks of the Moselle under the shade of spreading beeches and plane trees by the side of those who with him had fought the good fight.

The United States Government having decided to remove the bodies of American soldiers buried in Germany, Fletcher’s body was sent home, and on November 6th



## A TRIBUTE

1920, was laid in its last resting place in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago. A very large group of friends and the Winnetka Post of the American Legion gathered with Mr. and Mrs. McCordic for this last service. Capt. Hastings of the 88th Aero Squadron was present. The Post had charge of the service under Chaplain Gerhard, assisted by Dr. Davies, who led in prayer after reading the following letter which was sent by Capt. Evans who desired that it might be read since he was unable to be present:

“October 27, 1920.

“Lieutenant Fletcher Ladd McCordic was assigned to the 88th Aero Squadron, February 22nd 1918, after having successfully completed his flying instruction in the United States and France. He was one of the first aviation pilots to complete this training and was among the first detachment of officers to be assigned to duty with an American squadron then preparing for duty on the front.

“From the date of his assignment with the 88th Aero Squadron, Lieutenant McCordic remained continually with this organization until his very sad death, March 1st 1919. During this time, through his personal efforts he contributed greatly in establishing the fine record which this Squadron made for itself while participating in six of America's great offensive battles.

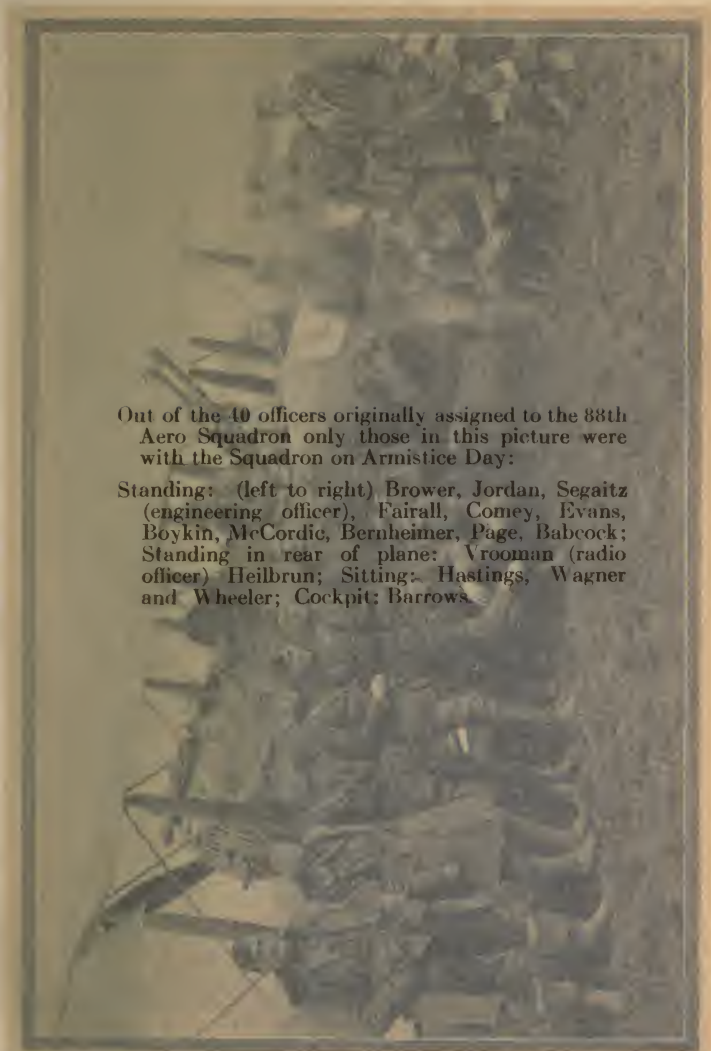
“Fletcher was constantly on the alert, ready to perform any mission which might be called for,

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

regardless of its hazard. He was always among the first to say, 'Let me go, my ship is in fine condition and my flying clothes are all ready to put on'. He spent many hours waiting at headquarters or within calling distance so that he might be the first one called upon when a special mission was to be dispatched. He had to his credit more than 125 hours of flying time over the enemy lines, participating in many aerial combats while performing his regular duty as an observation pilot, and was officially accredited with two enemy planes. He was recommended on several occasions to higher authority for suitable recognition of his conspicuous performance of duty.

"It can be truly said that no pilot possessed greater skill or daring, or used keener judgment in the handling of his plane than did Lieutenant McCordic. No observer ever came back from the front disappointed in not having been able to reach his desired objective when Fletcher was his pilot. Many times he outwitted enemy pilots and returned his observer safely to the home field with valuable information.

"Fletcher was not only conspicuous among his comrades because of his great skill as an aviator, but he was characterized by all who knew him by his very quiet, gentlemanly and modest manner. No one ever heard him tell of thrilling experiences or what he could do or had done, but he was always an enthusiastic listener



Out of the 40 officers originally assigned to the 88th Aero Squadron only those in this picture were with the Squadron on Armistice Day:

Standing: (left to right) Brower, Jordan, Segaitz (engineering officer), Fairall, Comey, Evans, Boykin, McCordic, Bernheimer, Page, Babcock; Standing in rear of plane: Vrooman (radio officer) Heilbrun; Sitting: Hastings, Wagner and Wheeler; Cockpit: Barrows.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIE

regardless of its hazard. He was always among the first to say, 'Let me go, my ship is in fine condition and my flying clothes are all ready to put on'. He spent many hours waiting at headquarters or within calling distance so that he might be the first one called upon when a special mission was to be dispatched. He had to his credit more than 125 hours of flying time over the enemy lines, participating in many aerial combats while performing his regular duty as an observation pilot. He was officially accredited with the Squadron on Armistice Day. Out of the 40 officers originally assigned to the Squadron only those in this picture were on several occasions. Standing: (left to right) Brower, Jordan, Seitz (engineering officer), Fernal, Conroy, Evans, Boykin, McCordie, Bernheimer, Page, Babcock. Standing in rear of plane: Vroman (radio officer), Hillman, Sittig, Hastings, Warner and Wheeler; Corbie, Barrow. In the handling of his plane than did Lieutenant McCordie. No observer ever came back from the front disappointed in not having been able to reach his desired objective when Fletcher was his pilot. Many times he outwitted enemy pilots and returned his observer safely to the home field with valuable information.

"Fletcher was not only conspicuous among his comrades because of his great skill as an aviator, but he was characterized by all who knew him by his very quiet, gentlemanly and modest manner. No one ever heard him tell of thrilling experiences or what he could do or had done, but he was always an enthusiastic listener





1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100





## A TRIBUTE

to others. In his friendly and quiet way he gained the admiration and respect of every officer and soldier in the organization and every member of the Squadron was his friend and pal. This was especially evidenced at the time of his sudden and mysterious death by the gloom which spread over everyone. No one could but wonder why Fate was so cruel as to remove a man of his type from the world after he had so gloriously fought through the entire war and was so soon to be removed from its dangers and return to his home. There was only one consoling thing, that we, who remain, could think of, and that was that he had met death in a way which, had it been of his own choosing, we believe he would have preferred, for he dearly loved flying, and was as much at home in his plane as any sailor could be on the sea. With his death we lost not only a good true soldier but a true and loyal friend, the memory of whom will never be forgotten."

George S. Seymour's lines "To An Aviator Fallen in Battle" may fittingly conclude this story of Fletcher's service in the War and his untimely death:

"But yesterday the things that children prize  
The book and game and toy, he put away  
To shoulder manhood's burden, and today  
Silent and still on glory's field he lies.  
Like a slain bird now fallen from the skies  
His body fell, but left his spirit there

FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

To bide forever starlike in the air,  
And point the way to greater victories.  
He is not gone. His work, but scarce begun  
Lives on. A thousand willing, eager hands  
Shall seize and bear it forward to the sun.  
His victory the world's heart understands;  
For that he fought, our land in peace shall dwell  
And we shall rise the higher, that he fell."

## LETTERS

A number of letters were written after Fletcher's death either to his parents or to friends of the writers of them touching upon his record in the Service, his personal qualities, and the mutual affection and esteem existing between him and the officers and enlisted men of his Squadron. A selection has been made from these letters and several are given below. They are not formal or perfunctory tributes. Their language indeed, breathes such deep sincerity and feeling that no addition or comment could add to their persuasiveness. They come from men of the same profession and were called forth by a long series of common experiences and contacts. They mingle, therefore, pride in Fletcher's record and admiration for his skill with a rare and beautiful affection.

*Letter to Mr. and Mrs. McCordic under date of March 6th 1919, from Capt. Floyd E. Evans, Commanding Officer the 88th Aero Squadron:*

"I regret very much indeed to be writing you in regard to the death of your beloved son 1st Lieut. Fletcher Ladd McCordic who was accidently killed in an aeroplane wreck Saturday last (March 1st). I have written many letters of this nature during the war, but without doubt this is the hardest of them all.

"I was assigned to duty with the 88th Squadron in February 1918 together with Fletcher and the others of the original pilots. There has thus grown up between

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

those of us who are still left with the organization a very close friendship and Fletcher was the center and idol of us all. I hope you will pardon me for using Fletcher's nickname from this time on in the letter, but it is much more natural. Since I have known him back in flying school he has been 'The General'. He is known by men of all ranks as 'The General' and there is hardly anyone of the so-called old time pilots who do not know him by that name. It can be well added that 'The General' was well applied for I have never seen a more capable or daring pilot.

"The details of the accident and burial are as follows: 'The General' 'took off' from the airdrome at 1:45 p. m. in a Fokker (Boche) plane which had been assigned to the squadron by the government under the terms of the armistice. He did not stay over the field as he usually did, but started north along the Moselle river, doing 'stunts' over the city of Trier and soon disappeared from sight. He did not return after several hours and we hoped that he had gone up to the Coblenz airdrome and landed, as he had mentioned several times that he wanted to fly up there and see some friends in another squadron. Nothing was heard from him until about 5:30 p. m. when a call came by phone from a German saying that 'a plane had crashed in the woods near Waldweiler and the passenger killed, and had been taken to Schillingen by some American soldiers'. Together with Captain Babcock, Lieut. Bagby and Lieut. Hastings, I went to the town of Schillingen, which is about 30 kilometers southeast of Trier at once to see the body, hoping against hope that it was not 'The General.'





Two C. O.'s of the 88th who were not with the Squadron when the group pictures were taken; (left) Major Kenneth P. Littauer; (right) Major Harry B. Anderson (killed in aeroplane accident February 22nd 1919, while flying a Fokker plane near Coblenz).



1919 FEB 22  
C. O. ANDERSON

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

those of us who are still left with the organization a very close friendship and Fletcher was the center and idol of us all. I hope you will pardon me for using Fletcher's nickname from this time on in the letter, but it is much more natural. Since I have known him back in flying school he has been 'The General'. He is known by men of all ranks as 'The General' and there is hardly anyone of the so-called old time pilots who do not know him by that name. It can be well added that 'The General' was well applied for I have never seen a more capable or daring pilot.

"The details of the crash are as follows:  
The General was flying a Fokker D.VII on the 28th of the 1918. The plane was taken to the Schillingen airfield by the government and was used by the squadron. He did not stay over the field as a pilot, but started north along the Moselle river, doing 'stunts' over the city of Trier and soon disappeared from sight. He did not return after several hours and we hoped that he had gone up to the Coblenz airdrome and landed, as he had mentioned several times that he wanted to fly up there and see some friends in another squadron. Nothing was heard from him until about 5:30 p. m. when a call came by phone from a German saying that 'a plane had crashed in the woods near Waldweiler and the passenger killed, and had been taken to Schillingen by some American soldiers'. Together with Captain Babcock, Lieut. Bagby and Lieut. Hastings, I went to the town of Schillingen, which is about 30 kilometers southeast of Trier at once to see the body, hoping against hope that it was not 'The General.'



UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



## A TRIBUTE

“At Schillingen we found the Sergeant (Sergeant A. E. Walsh, Co. C 342nd Machine Gun Bn.) who was in charge of the detachment of soldiers in that town. He informed us that the body was that of Lieut. McCordic and gave us the papers and pocketbook taken from his pockets which substantiated this information. Upon examination of his body it was found that his skull had been fractured and one leg had been broken. Arrangements were made for sending the body up to Trier by train the following morning, escorted by two soldiers. Here it was taken to the morgue of Evacuation Hospital No. 19. The body was laid to rest Monday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock with all military honors in the A. E. F. division of the German cemetery at Trier. The pall bearers were Lieutenants Bagby, Page, Barrows, Jordan, Wheeler and Hastings. The exact location of the grave is: Städtischer Friedhof, Avery-Sketch No. 57, C1-11.

“The day after the accident Lieutenant Bagby, Lieutenant Hastings and myself examined the wreck and got testimony from all the Germans in the vicinity. Nick Jost of Waldweiler had heard the plane overhead, flying rather low and stated that the motor seemed to be working very badly. Suddenly it banked up steeply and came down into the woods in a vertical spin. He hurried to where it had crashed and found the pilot dead in the machine. He stated that John Wirtz, also of Waldweiler, had reached the wreck ahead of him, so Wirtz was interviewed.

“Wirtz was working in the woods at the time (2:15 p. m.) and did not hear the plane until it crashed nearby. He hurried to the wreck and found the pilot alive but



## FLECTHER LADD McCORDIC

unconscious. He tried to release him from the plane but he died before it could be accomplished. By that time a crowd had gathered so a boy was dispatched to Schillingen where there was known to be American troops stationed. Sergeant Walsh secured a horse and wagon and with several other soldiers went after the body. It happened that one of the men in Sergeant Walsh's outfit had been an undertaker in civil life so he took charge of the body and washed and bandaged the injuries.

"The conclusion that we were able to draw of the accident is that after stunting for a while in the vicinity of the airdrome, 'The General' got farther away from the field than he had intended. His motor went bad over the large woods and in attempting to clear the woods in order to make a landing in clear ground 'stalled the machine'. As a result it at once went into a tail spin.

"I have given, I think, all the details of the sad happening, but I hope if I have forgotten to mention anything which you would care to know, you will not hesitate to write me. I am enclosing herein a small piece of linen from the wing of the fatal machine, also several photographs of 'The General' and I hope to gather them all together and mail you later. I hope also to be able to see you personally when I return to the States as my home is in Hinckley, Ill. not far from Chicago.

"The loss of our loyal friend 'The General' is especially felt by the entire Squadron as he was considered our ideal pilot. During the war there was no one more willing and more capable to undertake any mission. No matter how hazardous the undertaking a smile would always come to his face when he was detailed on the patrol. He

## A TRIBUTE

had next to high man in the Squadron in flying time over the lines. He was always modest and unassuming and always anxious to hear of others' experiences and hesitating in giving his own.

"The sympathy of the entire Squadron is extended to the friends and relatives of our comrade."

*Letter to Mrs. McCordic under date of March 5, 1919, from Canon Henry Russell Talbot, senior Chaplain of VII Army Corps, A. E. F.:*

"It becomes my duty to write you of the funeral services of your son Fletcher, whose body was laid away under the loving care of his comrades last Monday. It lies buried under a mound of flowers placed there by the devoted friendship of those whose respect his character had won, in the cemetery at Trèves, where many another American lies buried.

"I wish you could have heard the spontaneous tributes to what your boy meant to them as they came to me from the lips of those he had been serving with. It would almost have reconciled you to the separation. After all it isn't given to many of us to do much as we pass through life in view of the great opportunities which lie before us. The highest and best we can do is to influence others to do their best and that was the gift to life which your son's life gave. It is certainly of the impenetrable mystery why he should have been spared through these many months and then taken. But the mystery is certainly touched with a shaft of light not only in the character of your son but the recognition of that character on the part of those he served with. And that belongs to you and

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

God. Death cannot sever that. It is yours and beckons you on into the future where it shall be crowned with its complete realization.

“As a complete stranger to you I hesitate to say more than this. Less I could not say.”

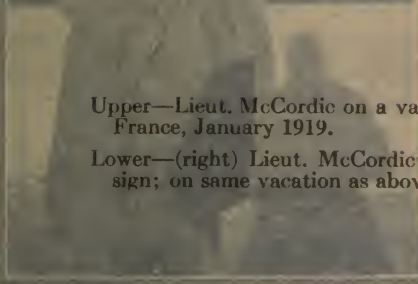
*Excerpt from letter of 1st Lt. R. B. Bagby dated March 2nd 1919, written to his mother, Mrs. R. J. Bagby of New Haven, Missouri:*

“The Squadron is all broken up over Lieut. McCordic being killed yesterday in an accidental crash. He was flying one of the Boche ships—a Fokker D VII, and the motor quit on him while he was flying low over a heavy forest. He tried to glide to an open space and held the plane up until it stalled and took a turn or two into a vrilie before hitting the woods. Death was instantaneous as his head was caught between a tree and the machine guns—not crushed at all but a terrible blow. ‘The General’ probably never thought much about getting killed, but he would have preferred it to have been that way if he ever thought about it.

“He loved to fly and was by far the best pilot in the Squadron when it came to handling a ship. No one has been flying much except on duty since the armistice, but ‘The General’ has been up just flying around for pleasure almost every flying day. He had the most lovable disposition of any person I have ever known. He was very quiet, said very little one way or another, and the result was he was the idol of the Squadron down to the last mechanic. Every one teased him because he took it so good naturedly. When he was flying, though, he was



Upper—Lieut. McCordic on a vacation in southern France, January 1919.



Lower—(right) Lieut. McCordic; (left) Lieut. Ensign; on same vacation as above.





## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

God. Death cannot sever that. It is yours and beckons you on into the future where it shall be crowned with its complete realization.

"As a complete stranger to you I hesitate to say more than this. Less I could not say."

*Excerpt from letter of 1st Lt. R. B. Bagby dated March 2nd 1919, written to his mother, Mrs. R. J. Bagby of New Haven, Missouri:*

"The Squadron is all broken up over Lieut. McCordic being killed yesterday in an accidental crash. He was flying one of our bi-planes up over the forest. The motor quit on him while he was flying over a heavy forest. He tried to shove the plane up until it stalled and took a turn or two into a vrille before hitting the woods. Death was instantaneous as his head was caught between a tree and the machine guns—not crushed at all but a terrible blow. 'The General' probably never thought much about getting killed, but he would have preferred it to have been that way if he ever thought about it.

"He loved to fly and was by far the best pilot in the Squadron when it came to handling a ship. No one has been flying much except on duty since the armistice, but 'The General' has been up just flying around for pleasure almost every flying day. He had the most lovable disposition of any person I have ever known. He was very quiet, said very little one way or another, and the result was he was the idol of the Squadron down to the last mechanic. Every one teased him because he took it so good naturedly. When he was flying, though, he was





Univ. of  
California



## A TRIBUTE

altogether different. He lost all his quiet reserve, his mind worked like a flash, and if there was anything that a ship could be made to do he was the one that could do it. I took six or seven flights with him this month, two of them double control, and he has been much wilder and taken more chances than ever before, but he was so perfect in his piloting that no one ever dreamed of his being hurt in a crash.

"The ship he was flying, though, is nothing like our Salmsons and it was only the second hop he had ever taken in it. The first hop was just before we went on leave together and he flew it around a little and landed. Yesterday he was looping several times in succession, tail spinning right down to the ground and doing every sort of fancy turn and slip that can be done.

"During the war he never said much but was always on hand for any mission. He was the only son and had one sister. His home is in Winnetka, Illinois. He is to be buried here tomorrow and it will certainly be a big change in the Squadron to be without him. Half our conversation was about some funny short reply that he had made or some remarkable feat he had pulled in landing his ship on the side of a ravine.

"Major Anderson, who was a C. O. of the 88th when it first went to the front, was killed the Saturday before in the same kind of a ship. His motor stopped and he caught the top of a tree on landing. The crash was not so bad, but the ship burned up before he could get out.

"I am sending a picture of McCordic and myself taken on the steps of the Carlton Hotel at Cannes. To us he was always 'The General'. He was sick in the hospital

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

last summer and when he came back in passing through Air Service H. Q. he was assigned to the 104th Squadron, and Captain Littauer went to a lot of trouble and raised an awful row before he got 'The General' reassigned to the 88th.

"The 'General' was officially credited with two Boche planes which he brought down on October 23rd. Three attacked him and the 'General' always said he only saw one fall, but two hit the ground."

*Excerpt from letter of Capt. Edmund A. Hastings dated March 3rd 1919, written to his mother, Mrs. P. E. Hastings of Oregon, Illinois:*

"We buried one of our old pilots today—one of the original eighteen assigned last February 1918. He had gone all through our part in the war and was killed flying a Fokker—a Boche plane. We shall miss him more than any other of our officers that might have been taken, for not only was he the best pilot, but the best liked by all officers and men, and was known to all as 'The General'. He was just one of the select who make the world a decent place to live in by his just being in it. His death has got me worse than anybody's and it seems today as if I had been doing nothing else but attending funerals. Last Sunday five of us drove to Coblenz to Major Anderson's funeral. He was our first C. O.—left us last summer when we moved to Château-Thierry. His death occurred in about the same way as the 'General's'—flying a Fokker, bad country, motor bad and landing in woods. There is one consolation of course—that most of them if they have to go would rather go that way."



## A TRIBUTE

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated March 31st 1919, from  
1st Lieut. Ralph B. Bagby:*

"I have been intending to write you every day since Fletcher was killed but have been waiting until some pictures were finished. I know how keenly you and Mrs. McCordic feel his loss and I want you to know that it was an awful blow to all his friends here, which includes the entire Squadron. All the officers felt they knew him intimately and he was certainly the most lovable, pure-minded man I've ever met. Some of the enlisted men, particularly those who had worked on his different planes knew him very well and because they liked him so much took perfect care of his machines. All recognized him as by far the best pilot in the Squadron and this together with his unflinching good nature made him loved and respected everywhere. Everyone called him 'Gen.' being short for 'General', a name he got while he was training at Issoudun, I believe.

"I don't know why he always wanted so much to fly the German planes. Just before we went on leave together in December they got the German ships that were assigned to our squadron ready to fly and he would not leave until he had tried them. He flew the Halberstadt first, a two-seater, but his favorite was the Fokker, a single-seater and he took his first ride in that on December 26th. When he came back from leave in January the Fokker was not in flying condition—the motors were either unreliable or not understood by our mechanics—and he was impatient to fly the Fokker again. During February he flew at least ten times as much as any other pilot on the field. He could handle our Salmsons in the



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

air just as though they were a part of him. He stunted them just as if they were a single-seater and there was nothing that a plane would do that he did not put his Salmson through it. In the latter part of February, Major Anderson, our former C. O. and a good pilot, was killed in a Fokker near Coblenz. That made most everyone afraid of them, but only made 'Gen.' more anxious to fly it. On the morning of March the first our Fokker was pronounced ready to fly and Colonel Benedict made a short flight in it. Fletcher asked the mechanics to have it ready for him in the afternoon. He took off at 1:40 and for about fifteen minutes put it through a series of stunts and acrobatics that showed him to be what he was, the best pilot any of us had ever seen fly. The photo section got some cameras out on the field and took pictures as he looped, spun and barreled over Trier and the field, but generally the ship only showed up as a small spot on them. After flying over the field for fifteen or twenty minutes he disappeared to the east in the direction of Coblenz. As he had told no one that he intended going to Coblenz we were certain that he would land on the field after a short trip up the river. The next news we had was when Sergeant Walsh called up to say that he was at Schillingen.

"I went out there that night and again the next day to see where he had fallen, and we questioned all the Germans who had seen him fall to find out how it happened. The country around there was mostly wooded with deep ravines and very hilly. He had flown around near there for a while, evidently just enjoying himself and intending to go back to the field in a few minutes. While he was



Lieut. McCordic, Treves, Germany, February 1919.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

air just as though they were a part of him. He stunted them just as if they were a single-seater and there was nothing that a plane would do that he did not put his Salmson through it. In the latter part of February, Major Anderson, our former C. O. and a good pilot, was killed in a Fokker near Coblenz. That made most everyone afraid of them, but only made 'Gen.' more anxious to fly it. On the morning of March the first our Fokker was pronounced ready to fly and Colonel Benedict made a short flight in it. Fletcher asked the mechanics to have it ready for him in the afternoon. He took off at 1:40 and for about fifteen minutes put it through a series of stunts and acrobatics that showed him to be what he was, the best pilot any of us had ever seen fly. The photo section got some cameras out on the field and took pictures as he looped, spun and barreled over Trier and the field, but generally the ship only showed up as a small spot on them. After flying over the field for fifteen or twenty minutes he disappeared to the east in the direction of Coblenz. As he had told no one that he intended going to Coblenz we were certain that he would land on the field after a short trip up the river. The next news we had was when Sergeant Walsh called up to say that he was at Schillingen.

"I went out there that night and again the next day to see where he had fallen, and we questioned all the Germans who had seen him fall to find out how it happened. The country around there was mostly wooded with deep ravines and very hilly. He had flown around near there for a while, evidently just enjoying himself and intending to go back to the field in a few minutes. While he was



UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA





## A TRIBUTE

east of Waldweiler and flying low over a large forest his motor suddenly started missing badly and he tried to glide to a valley about a half kilometer to the north. If his motor had given him help he would have made it easily. When he saw that it was impossible he turned to the left to make a landing in some stumps and brush-piles in the center of the woods. Either as he turned or as he came out of it a wing of the plane caught on a tree-top and he fell. A Boche who was working in the woods called some Americans right away and within an hour his body was in the hands of an undertaker at Schillingen. The accident occurred at 2:15. We were all certain that the accident had happened thru no mistake of his and from testimony of the Boches and an examination of the motor and propeller it showed that he was left over the forest with no power and a crash absolutely unavoidable. At that, if the tree which the plane hit on the ground had been a foot farther back he would have escaped with only slight injuries, so you can see that he almost pulled himself out of the accident as it was.

“About a week later a pilot of the 1st Aero Squadron, flying a Fokker from Trèves to Coblenz, was killed in practically the same manner as Fletcher. This pilot did not have as perfect control over a plane as the ‘Gen.’ but he was reputed to be the best in the First.

“He made a take-off down at Longwy in December that was impossible for anyone else. Flying by the side of houses, between telephone poles and under the wires and viraging away from a cliff he brought a ship out of a place that everyone said it would have to be hauled from in a truck. I was in the back seat with him and when we

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

landed on our field I lifted him off the plane and carried him across the field. 'How'd you ever do it, 'Gen.'; weren't you afraid?' 'Huh, worst I was ever in', and that ended it for him. He knew he could do his part if the motor worked and was not excited a bit over it.

"During the war he carried that same idea into all his work. He knew he could outfly any Boche and was willing to take a chance on the Boches doing some lucky shooting. One time he was sent up to protect another plane which was taking photographs. Four Boches came in to attack and McCordic, who should have held his place in rear of the photo plane, swung over to the Boche side, making it certain that he would have to be shot down before the photo ship could be touched. He had his guns working and before any other planes (Allied) came the Boches had decided that they didn't care to fight any one so aggressive and had turned off. Then the 'Gen.' swung his plane back in rear of the photo ship. I was taking the photographs and my heart certainly went out to him when I saw that he meant to make them get him first, as they certainly would have if they had continued the fight. When he got home Bernheimer and I rushed over and bragged on him for it. 'Well, I was protection, wasn't I?' he said and let it go at that. Normally his place should have been behind where he would have an even chance, but the 'Gen.' was willing to fall to let the photographs get home. For this and extraordinary heroism in two fights he got in, one alone against a whole flight of Boches, he was—I think—recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, but I have not heard yet that it was awarded. He, I'm sure, never knew about the

## A TRIBUTE

recommendation. Had he been in a single-seater pursuit squadron, with his perfect flying and cool-headedness, he would have been one of our leading aces. As it is he has two planes and a very long list of successful observation missions to his credit.

"He told me something, but very little, of his family. Late at night over a pipe he would tell a story of a hunting trip on which his father had been or some excursion of his own on the rivers in Illinois. He could never be bothered when reading a letter from home and many times I've heard him chuckle over something in them but never say anything out loud.

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated April 1, 1919, from Capt. R. C. M. Page:*

"As I knew Fletcher for nearly a year and a half I want to try and let you and Mrs. McCordic know just how much his friendship meant to me and the officers and men of the 88th. He was lovingly known as 'The General' by both subordinates and superiors.

"He had the most lovable disposition of any man I have ever met. He never even thought of an underhanded deed; he didn't have an enemy in the world. He was one of the most skillful pilots I have ever known, what we call a 'natural' flyer. I am absolutely convinced that his death was due to faulty construction of the plane or some unforeseen accident.

"I first met the 'General' at Mineola in October 1917 and was at once attracted by his extraordinary disposition and lovable nature. We met again at Issoudun and were assigned later to the 88th in the same order.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

“Rather shy among strangers, after joining the Squadron and making friends with his brother officers he opened up tremendously. He was the most reliable pilot in the Squadron and when working over the lines we felt sure that he would return safely.

“He was idolized by the enlisted men. During eighteen months in the A. E. F. I have necessarily attended many funerals, but the sincerity of the mourners at that of your son surpassed them all.

“This letter by no means expresses my sentiment, but I hope you can read between the lines and realize our love for Fletcher. I shall remember him all my life and hope that when my time comes my friends will feel my loss half as keenly as they do the ‘General’s’.”

[Capt. Page was killed in an accident March 2, 1920, while flying a sea-plane near his home, Fort Myers, Florida.]

*Letter to Mr. McCordic under date of April 3, 1919 from Capt. Philip R. Babcock:*

“I was very glad to receive your kind letter a few days ago and learn that my cable had reached you safely. The letter I referred to has probably reached you by now from Capt. Evans, who was commanding the squadron at the time of Fletcher’s death. I sent the wire unofficial in hopes it would get thru without censorship as I knew you would want to know before a letter could reach you. Capt. Evans left the Squadron to attend a French University a few days after he wrote you and I have fallen heir to the command.

“I have been with the Squadron since Fletcher joined and like everyone else considered him a loyal comrade,



Upper—Before Squadron mess hall, Treves, Germany, February 22, 1919. Officers, right to left, Palmer, McCordic, Hale, Olston.

Lower—On the steps of the Carlton Hotel, Cannes, France, January 1919; (right) Lieut. McCordic; (left) Lieut. Bagby.





## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

"Rather shy among strangers, after joining the Squadron and making friends with his brother officers he opened up tremendously. He was the most reliable pilot in the Squadron and when working over the lines we felt sure that he would return safely.

"He was idolized by the enlisted men. During eighteen months in the A. E. F. I have necessarily attended many funerals, but the sincerity of the mourners at that of your son surpassed them all.

"This letter by no means expresses my sentiment, but I hope you can read between the lines and realize our love for Fletcher. I shall remember his life and hope that he is in a better place than we are. I have lost half as keenly as you do the loss of your son. On the steps of the Carlton Hotel, Cannes, France, I met you in an aircraft March 2, 1920, while flying a sea-plane near his home, Fort Myers, Florida.]

*Letter to Mr. McCordic under date of April 3, 1919 from Capt. Philip R. Babcock:*

"I was very glad to receive your kind letter a few days ago and learn that my cable had reached you safely. The letter I referred to has probably reached you by now from Capt. Evans, who was commanding the squadron at the time of Fletcher's death. I sent the wire unofficial in hopes it would get thru without censorship as I knew you would want to know before a letter could reach you. Capt. Evans left the Squadron to attend a French University a few days after he wrote you and I have fallen heir to the command.

"I have been with the Squadron since Fletcher joined and like everyone else considered him a loyal comrade,





## A TRIBUTE

always likable and interesting. You probably little realize how much everyone here, officers and enlisted men, were wrapped up in Fletcher's actions and words. There was hardly a conversation throughout the day that didn't have some mention of the 'Gen.' in it. He was certainly a good companion and friend of all, one whose memory will last in the minds of everyone who ever knew him. As you mentioned 'the 88th Squadron was everything to him'—he was everything to the 88th Squadron.

"He was an excellent pilot, skillful and yet what he did he did with intelligence. We could always depend on him at any time for any mission. Just like some people live on the water and think there is no place but the ocean, your son lived in the air. He never became tired or 'fed up' as we say of flying. During the war he would successfully complete a mission in the morning and be ready for another in the afternoon. I am sure Capt. Evans told you of his gallantry during active operations. With over a hundred hours flying time on the front lines he carried out mission after mission successfully. I have been in the same formation with him when we would be taking aerial pictures eight to ten kilometers behind enemy lines, he as protection, and I taking pictures, and I always felt confident and each time I would look back I would always see him in his proper position in the formation, ever alert. I have been thru fierce air battles with him when we would be outnumbered three to one, and he always was game to the last.

"I don't believe I ever have met a more likable and good natured boy, one who could be teased and retain his good humor, one so interested in his duties,



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

one so willing and ready for whatever the day brought forth.

"I enclose two pictures that perhaps you have not yet seen. I will send more as soon as they can be assembled. The greater part of Fletcher's personnel pictures have been included with his effects which have been turned in to the U. S. Quartermaster for shipment to you.

"I trust you will ask freely for any information we could possibly give you, as I assure you your loss is truly ours, and we are all deeply concerned."

*Letter to Mr. McCordic from Lt. Col. Casey Hayes, Asst. Chief of Staff, G. H. Q., A. E. F., Trèves, Germany, under date of April 4, 1919:*

"I enclose herewith, in response to request of my uncle Doctor Casey Wood, the complete details of the accident which resulted in the death of your son.

"There are also enclosed herewith photographs of the grave which I myself took on April 1st.

"I have talked very personally to Major Davidson about your son and he was able to tell me with the utmost sincerity that Lieut. McCordic was one of his best officers considered from all points of view. He added that Lieut. McCordic was one of the best liked men in the Squadron.

"The pictures of the grave are the best I could do with materials of German origin. The grave itself, as the picture shows, is number 11 in a row of 15 graves of Americans who were killed in action or who died in the vicinity of Trèves from other causes. This plot is situated in the city cemetery of Trèves and is one of the most beautiful places in the district. The cemetery itself is quite large



## A TRIBUTE

with a stone chapel in the center. The various pathways radiate out from this church at the center. There are many magnificent trees and much green shrubbery of various kinds growing around the cemetery and it is altogether a very fitting place for burial. One is impressed by the stately dignity of the chapel, the cemetery as a whole and its surroundings. It lies in the valley of the Moselle River which at that point is about 100 yards wide. From the river's edge the ground slopes at first gently, and then rises rapidly to high crests along both banks. It is on this gently rising slope that the cemetery is situated. I am sorry that I have not better powers of description in order to give you an idea of the beauty of the place."

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated February 3, 1920, from Capt. Howard T. Douglas:*

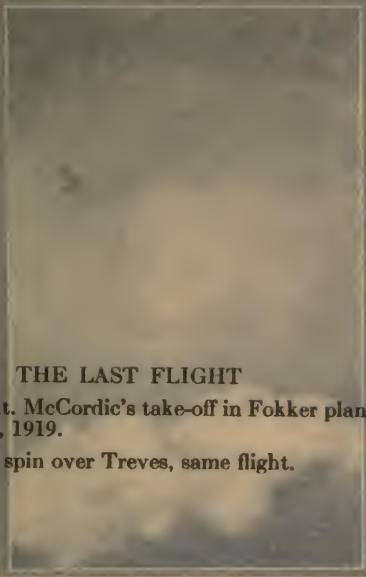
"I spent last Saturday night in Chicago and tried to reach you at your office by telephone, but was unsuccessful. I wanted very much to meet you and tell you what I could about your son whom I knew so well in the 88th Squadron. No doubt you have seen several of the members and I can well believe that all the boys you have talked to have told you that Fletcher was held in the highest regard by each and every member of the Squadron. It was a real affection that we all felt for him. To officers and men alike, he was known as the 'General'. It was only the former that familiarly called him by this name, but you can appreciate that in an organization like an Aero Squadron nick names are given because of popularity.

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

"I was Operations Officer of the Squadron after the Château-Thierry offensive and Operations Officer of the Group in which the 88th Squadron operated during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. It was my duty to assign missions to pilots and observers and to interrogate them as to the information and intelligence they collected during their hours over the German lines. In this position I had a rare opportunity to study the character and to judge the ability of the men. I have flown with Fletcher myself oftentimes and on many other occasions I have sent him on missions which I knew required cool courage and calm judgment. Courage and judgment are two words that epitomized the salient characteristics in Fletcher's character.

"If you had a new observer whom you must break in to the big game of flying over the lines, there was no better pilot to take the new man in hand and give him his baptism of fire than the 'General'. There was nothing sensational about Fletcher's work; even if there were, his account of the matter would not make it appear so. He was the type of flyer that made the 88th Squadron uniformly successful in their long service on the front.


"I was not with the Squadron when Fletcher met with his death; being at that time in command of the 3rd Corps Air Service at Neuwied. Captain Page called me by long distance telephone to tell me of the fatal accident. To myself and other officers in the 3d Corps Headquarters who knew Fletcher both personally and by reputation, it was a day of sorrow. It was impossible for me to travel the 140 kilometers to the funeral. On the next visit to the Squadron there was, indeed, something lacking. I



THE LAST FLIGHT

Lower—Lieut. McCordic's take-off in Fokker plane,  
March 1st, 1919.

Upper—Tail spin over Treves, same flight.



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

"I was Operations Officer of the Squadron after the Château-Thierry offensive and Operations Officer of the Group in which the 88th Squadron operated during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. It was my duty to assign missions to pilots and observers and to interrogate them as to the information and intelligence they collected during their hours over the German lines. In this position I had a rare opportunity to study the character and to judge the ability of the men. I have flown with Fletcher myself oftentimes and on many other occasions I have sent him on missions which I knew required good courage and calm judgment. COURAGE AND TALENT are two words that epitomize the character of Fletcher's character.

"If you had a new observer when you met him in to the big game of flying over the lines, there was no better pilot to take the new man in hand and give him his baptism of fire than the 'General'. There was nothing sensational about Fletcher's work; even if there were, his account of the matter would not make it appear so. He was the type of flyer that made the 88th Squadron uniformly successful in their long service on the front.

"I was not with the Squadron when Fletcher met with his death; being at that time in command of the 3rd Corps Air Service at Neuwied. Captain Page called me by long distance telephone to tell me of the fatal accident. To myself and other officers in the 3d Corps Headquarters who knew Fletcher both personally and by reputation, it was a day of sorrow. It was impossible for me to travel the 140 kilometers to the funeral. On the next visit to the Squadron there was, indeed, something lacking. I





UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA





## A TRIBUTE

am sure there was not a single one of the old members of the Squadron who did not recall Fletcher to memory and remarked his death as one of the deepest sorrows experienced by the Squadron."

[Capt. Douglas was killed in an airplane accident while engaged in aviation maneuvers off the Virginia Coast, June 22, 1921.]

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated March 18th 1920, from Lt. Morse A. Anderson:*

"Ever since a year ago I wanted to write you but somehow or other I could not bring myself to it. I realized how terrible the blow must have been to you on receiving news of Fletcher's death as it was to all the 88th Aero Squadron. I thought that a letter would upset you rather than comfort you.

"I first met 'Gen.' at Souilly where I joined the 88th, and he being from so close to home we became rather intimate friends from the first. He was unusually quiet but when he did speak he said something. He bunked right in the next room to me and used to bring me all the Chicago Tribunes he received and together we would go over all the news from home.

"A rather funny incident occurred while we were at Souilly. 'Gen.' was up on an artillery adjustment and while up about 6000 ft. his propeller flew off and went through his right upper wing. He managed to bring his machine down and make a perfect landing right in front of a battery. He never said a word except that his propeller had flown off and he was forced to land. Sometime later I met the Captain of the battery where the 'Gen.'

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

had landed, and he told me about a plane landing right up in front of his guns and the pilot crawled out and looked at his engine and just said 'Ha-Ha.' The captain said he did not understand how he ever landed on that rough ground full of shell holes without smashing all to pieces. This was only one of the incidents and why we considered him the most competent pilot in the 38th. I have flown with the 'Gen'. through fog so thick we could not see the ground and hills all around us, yet somehow he always managed to do the right thing at the right time and we always came though O. K. Everyone always felt safe when riding with 'Gen.'

"It was up in Germany that we started to go together most all the time, going to the movie shows and entertainments and it was just a few weeks before his accident that we went to a German photographer and had our pictures taken.

"The day of 'Gen.'s' funeral there were flyers from almost every squadron in Germany present and there was hardly a man without tears in his eyes. In fact from that day on until we received our orders to go home no one hardly ever went near the Officers Club where before the place was always packed. We all missed him and we always will remember him."

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated April 19, 1920, from Lt. Curtis Wheeler:*

"I do not believe I have ever written you about the 'General' before, though I intended to do so many times, both while we were in Germany and after we left. I feel

## A TRIBUTE

very much ashamed of myself for not having done so, and I hope you will forgive me.

“At this late date, it is not much use my saying what you already know about Fletcher’s death. You know that it hit the Squadron as nothing else had ever done all the way through Château-Thierry, St. Mihiel and the rest. If we didn’t know it before, we realized then that the ‘General’ was the hub of the whole organization both among the enlisted men as well as with the officers.

“For me and for Bagby and several others, I think there is one consolation about the General’s death. That is the fact that he died flying, which is something I think we all of us would prefer, as long as we all have to die some time. He went down like a gentleman, with his head up, and if it was a Fokker plane that killed him, at least he was driving a captured German machine. No Boches ever got him, and few ever could have.

“The same things occurred to some of us in connection with Seney Page’s death the other day in a seaplane in Florida. Next to Fletcher, I do not believe there ever was a man who enjoyed flying more than Seney, and after all, why shouldn’t a man die when he is happiest. It isn’t very much consolation to the depleted roster of old timers, but it is some.

“What you say about the personnel of the Squadron is very true, and strikes a responsive chord in my heart. I did not think that any organization could take the place with me of my own outfit—the 5th Field Artillery—but from the day I joined the Squadron I never wanted to be anywhere else, and I think most of the men felt the same



## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

way. It was an aggregation of some very unusual and some remarkable characters. Above all, I want you to know that a very large part of the *esprit* of the Squadron centered in your son, Fletcher McCordic."

*Excerpt from letter to Mr. Wilson G. Crosby dated February 18, 1921, from Major W. G. Schaufler, Jr., Group Commander, Third Army Corps Air Service:*

"I am more interested than I can tell you in this book you are getting out in memory of 'The General'. The 'General' to me, during the time I commanded the Third Corps Group, was just one of some 150 officers that I had under me, until he was brought to my attention by the following:

"A sudden call for an urgent mission came in late one afternoon. It was a mission that called for the best man available. I called up the 88th and told the Operations Officer I wanted the best pilot possible for the job and to call me when he'd started.

"In about eight minutes I heard a plane take off and a minute later the phone rang. I answered it.

" 'The mission has started, Sir, the General's flying.'

" 'The General?' I shouted back, 'What General? What do you mean?'

" 'Lieut. McCordic, Sir. He's the best pilot available, —one of the best in the squadron. He's the chap who says nothing. We call him the 'General'.

" 'The mission was successful. You may be sure I noticed the 'little chap who had nothing much to say' the next time I saw him, and several times afterwards I *especially* asked that he be given important missions."



## A TRIBUTE

*Letter to Mr. McCordic dated February 12, 1921, from Major Kenneth Proctor Littauer, Commanding Officer of the 88th Aero Squadron from July 4, 1918, to September 19, 1918, afterwards Commanding Officer Third Army Corps, Air Service:*

"I lunched today with Mr. Crosby. He told me of the memorial volume he is preparing as a tribute to your son and showed me the letters from members of the 88th which bear witness to the extraordinary measure of affection and esteem in which Lieutenant McCordic was held by every officer and enlisted man in the Squadron. I want to add my own tribute to the memory of the best-beloved officer of the 88th.

"In my three years of service with the French and American flying corps I never met a man who was at once so gallant and so modest as your son. The grand-stand meant no more to him, apparently, than his exploits did which—when they were heard from other lips—excited its applause. I believe it never crossed his mind that anything in his consistent record for skill, devotion and gallantry, was worth mentioning. He seemed as oblivious of recognition as he was of danger. Had he, single-handed, put the entire German Army to rout I am perfectly certain that he would have returned to the airdrome and written in the squadron log, 'Nothing to report'.

"I think none of us can look back on 'The General' without a feeling of reverence and awe. Brave to the point of fearlessness, loyal, devoted, unselfish, cheerful, efficient, and modest to the utmost limit, he was the Bayard of the 88th, 'sans peur et sans reproche'."









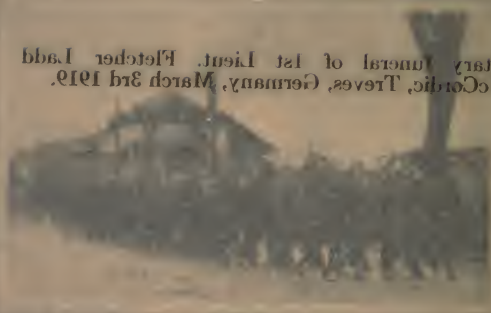
Military funeral of 1st Lieut. Fletcher Ladd  
McCordic, Treves, Germany, March 3rd 1919.







McCordic, Treves, Germany, March 3rd 1919.  
Military Band of 1st Lieut. Fletcher Ladd





UNIV. OF  
California



## A PARTING WORD

As we look back upon the brief career of Fletcher Ladd McCordic we are struck with the way in which all his natural aptitudes, his youthful difficulties and disappointments, his mechanical training, his education as a flyer prior to the entry of his country into the struggle, all seemed to fit him for that one year of active service. That one year called for the results of all his preparation; that one year brought to fruition those results and developed the man in him. He gave himself, but in the giving he found himself. "In a little while he fulfilled long years".

With one other reflection we close this sketch. When a mere boy Fletcher saw as in a vision the possibility of the control of the air and the great uses to which this control might be put,

"And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended."

He saw the vision in the workshop and the camp; he followed it upon the field of battle; it dominated all his thoughts. He loved it with a boyish love, pure, single and serene. He never had the pain as a man of seeing this vision "fade into the light of common day". But on the contrary he saw it prevail in a great cause and gave his meed of effort that it might prevail. He died in its

## FLETCHER LADD McCORDIC

hour of triumph realizing that his belief in it had been justified. This was his reward. To him as to others who have seen visions and dreamed dreams, came the approving word: "Not as the World giveth give I unto you."



















**M̄189912**

D606  
M2C7

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY**

