

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH AIR FORCE
Office of the Special Service Officer
San Francisco, California

August 28, 1942

Dr. F. C. Allen
Director of Physical Education
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Doc,

For a long time I have intended to answer your two very fine letters of some (I'm ashamed to say) months ago. My personal correspondence has been practically nil all summer.

The physical training program is actually beginning to function in our combat units of the Fourth Air Force now--after being on the job over a year! That would indicate that I haven't been doing a very good job, but Doc, you have no idea how slowly things move in the Army. Measures that I wanted to put through last summer are just being accomplished this summer. And there are still plenty of problems to solve before I will feel satisfied that we are actually putting and maintaining this air force in the physical condition in which it should be. About all I can report is that we are actually on the way--at last!

The one fundamental fact that assails me constantly in the work, however, is that the job of basic physical development must be accomplished in the early years of childhood and adolescence. A sound and thorough physical foundation must be laid in the elementary and high school years. It is too late to attempt to develop youths and men to be physically strong and rugged soldiers after they reach maturity. Either the schools themselves or the Federal government must assure adequate physical development of all youth in this country. And it must start in elementary schools. Hitler has shown what can be done in the way of physical development and condition, if the job is done thoroughly and started early enough.

I also firmly believe that everyone should be taught to swim as part of their school course. We are losing hundreds, and will lose thousands, of men in this war simply because they were never taught elementary swimming. Enclosed is some material which I picked up from the Navy, and some of which your swimming teacher might use in his advanced classes this year.

With the approach of the opening of another school year, I feel that old desire to get back in there and start teaching again! Right now it appears that such a day is far off. I can't see less than four to six years more of this war--altho we're all hoping for less, of course. Here's hoping there will still be a spot open at K. U. for me when this is all over. Ruth and I talk so often about Lawrence and K. U. and the enjoyable years we had there. Seems to me, I heard from ~~some~~ one that Hargiss was out--which opens a job that has long needed to be done at K. U.!