

138th AERO SQUADRON

pursuit

LINEAGE

138th Aero Squadron organized, Sep 1917
Demobilized, Aug 1919

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX,
Post Field, OK, Oct 1917
Garden City, NY, Feb 1918
Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Mar 1918
AEF, Mar 1918
Mitchel Field, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Type: Service (Pursuit)
Service Period: March 26 to August 14, 1918
Locations: Montrose

Never divided into flights. Moved to France on August 19 for service as the 138 Pursuit Squadron.

One Hundred Thirty-eighth: A charging goat under full speed about to pass through the numeral V is the insignia of the One Hundred Thirty-eighth Squadron. The One Hundred Thirty-eighth Aero Squadron was a pursuit squadron. It was assigned to the Fifth Pursuit Group, Second Army, on October 28, 1918, but due to the signing of the Armistice, a few days later, it did not function on the Front.

In Texas' sunny climate, at that well known "Pilot Factory" Kelly Field, the 138 Aero Squadron held its first roll call September 28th, 1917. At this station such trivial things as 110° heat, sand and dust storms (known in the vernacular as "northers") and mosquitoes that rivaled the eagle for size and ferocity, served to endear the "Lone Star State" to the hearts of the boys.

Having learned the rudiments of army life, the Squadron took its first step up the social ladder when it moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, about the middle of October. Here the boys enjoyed such luxuries as steam heat, electric lights, showers and more sand storms. For recreation, K. P., fatigue, guard duty and squads east and round about were introduced. Early in December three mammoth wrecks "called Curtiss R-4s were inflicted on the Squadron as a pledge; that it would eventually become a real aero squadron. Along in January some of the men had the thrilling sensation of a "test flight" and from then on all ships were noticeably in need of tests.

The middle of February found the Squadron snowbound in a warehouse at Garden City, L. I., a bitter contrast to the steam-heated barracks at Fort Sill. The situation was considerably bettered when quarters were assigned us beneath the grand stand at Mineola.

On the afternoon of March 5th the Squadron bade farewell to the Statue of Liberty, and, two weeks later, fetched up at Liverpool where they were soon getting a touch of old England's rainy season.

It was not long before Montrose, Scotland, was chosen to entertain the 138th. As regards Montrose, it may well be said that every man in the outfit has a wee warm place in his heart for Bonnie Scotland. While at this station the Squadron worked in conjunction with Fifth Wing, Royal Air Force. It was with regret that Montrose was left behind on August 14th; especially hard was it for those eight members who had chosen life partners from among the Scotch lassies.

Arriving at Cherbourg, France, on August 19th, the trip to St. Maixent was made in the usual French manner. Here additional personnel and full equipment were received and the Squadron again entrained, this time for the "steel mills" of Romorantin. Here fatigue details became annoyingly frequent and a goodly number of the personnel became unusually proficient at juggling huge I beams.

Colombey-les-Belles, that Mecca of Aviation, was reached on September 18th. The welcome extended was rather discouraging, there being much rain, chilly weather and mud about the barn-and-hay-loft billets.

The nearness to the front, the sound of the big guns and the actual nearness of the great fight helped create some excitement which approached the real thing when Hun planes made night raids over the field. Aided by their big flares, they dropped bombs large enough to blow whole barracks off the map but, fortunately, large dents in the field were the only result.

On November 5th some Sopwith Camels were issued to the Squadron. Then came the Armistice and put an end to any chance of operating against the Hun.

On November 14th the 138th moved to the peaceful village of Lay St. Remy, twelve kilometres west of Toul. A great change took place in the Squadron when the big transfer of ships was put across, the 138th trading their Camels for Spad VIIIs. After due consideration it was agreed that the Spad was a warmer and far more pleasant jitney bus than the Camel.

We have had our difficulties in piling up flying time. First it was the rainy season when even the mud-guards could not save all the "props". Then came the crispy cold season when the hard ground caused many tail-skids and tires to go by the board. With the balmy spring days approaching, both officers and men expect to pad their pilot books.

Air Force Order of Battle
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Sources