

180 AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

182 Aero Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

ENTERING military life at Kelly Field together on December 14, 1917. in one tent line of the Old First Training Brigade, we were given the incorporate title of the 180th Aero Squadron. And when the first reveille was sounded by the squadron bugler, and the first roll was called, there were very few of us

who were not still having rather pleasant and not too distant recollections of the time when we were wearing clothing other than O. D. G. I., and when we held jobs that we could quit when we wished. We were an organization of rookies, just as all soldiers are at the beginning of their career. We were not only rookies, but green ones, for a soldier is a green rookie as long as he sings at odd moments, either to himself or to his companions, that little ditty that some four million of us have sung, at some time or other during the past two years: "You are in the army now. And not behind the plow, etc."

The Kelly Field Personnel machine was at that time turning out Aero Squadrons at a rate that might well have alarmed our imperial enemy. As a rule these squadrons were hastily, though efficiently organized, and prepared for immediate transportation overseas, the units receiving even their preliminary training there. Of course it was the ambition of each of us to get over at once, and for a while, it looked as if our ambitions might be realized. Lieutenant Art V. Wortman was our Squadron Commander. He was as eager as any of us to leave old Kelly Field, and get across, and surely did his best to have our name inscribed on the priority list.

Our spirits were as high as could be expected, when it was considered that the straw for our beds was as yet only a promise, and our cooks had trade tested as clerks, blacksmiths and all else but cooks. , to tell how we happened to have such a conglomerate culinary department would hardly be betraying any military secrets, especially if told at this late date. Last December, we were really just getting our sleeves rolled up to fight, and General Crowder had not as yet completed for publication his later famous "Work or Fight" order. As a result some of the aero squadrons organized at Kelly Field, and prob-ably at other fields, were for a while without those mo necessary members, cooks, and as a consequence, at me; time were S. O. L. (Sure out of luck). (Inserted for tl information of the censor).

Our morale, as the "Y" man would say, was weathering all this just fine, though, and we would have com through entirely unscathed, had not orders then com thru for us to move to Kelly 2, as it was then called Moving to Kelly 2, when the departure station was a Kelly 1. was a pill that no erstwhile denizen of the Firs Training Brigade could swallow without a grimace, a the transfer undoubtedly meant, or we at least though it did, for the duration of the war.

That was our Christmas present. We completed ou removal to the Flying Department on December 24th. I was rare luck that we got a Christmas dinner at all th next day, as we had not yet been issued provisions, am for the time we were sponging on our neighbors. Mes: Sergeant Walker was equal to it. , and made ; night expedition to our former habitat, obtaining the neces sary ration of "bird." After that we settled down. William Lever and Lester M. Strong were appointed Sergeant Major and 1st Serg respectively. Sergeant Roland O. Toevs was in the supply department, and saw to it most diligently, as all good supply sergeants are supposed to do that we got our extra blankets and woolen clothes just before Easter. This is not a reproach to Toevs at all, because he was following what has since been discovered the traditional duty of supply sergeants.

It was February 28th, 1918, that Lieutenant Wortman left us to take charge of trade test work at Kelly No. 1. Lieutenant W. S. Crow, from "some wheah in Mississippi" succeeding him,. Sergeant E. A.

Johnson was appointed Sergeant Major, and remained as such in the organization until the latter part of April, when he left with Lieut. Crow and the 239th Aero Squadron.

Whether morale had anything to do with it or not, it is a fact on record that it was about this time that at one of our very frequent inspections, it was discovered that all present were not accounted for on our rosters. Rumors had been going about the field that the Germans were doing this and doing that and that they were right here in our midst, and so on. One of the favorite rumors was that they were putting ground glass and crushed oyster shells and such in our grub. Most of the time we were so hungry that we didn't care and ate anyway, but we weren't any the worse for it. But then the rumor changed a bit one day. From ground glass in our grub it became skin disease germs in our clothes. At first not much attention was paid to this latest rumor, but when several of the fellows were seen making sundry passes over their backs with their hands, we sat up, looked and listened.

The parties concerned were ordered to the hospital for a physical inspection extraordinaire, and the alleged skin disease was found to be "cooties." Yes. to our great confusion, we learned that our sacred and immaculate barracks which had passed every inspection by both medical and military experts, had been invaded by a wandering band of "cooties." Nothing but a three day quarantine and lots of coal oil could persuade them to leave. All sorts of theories to explain their presence in so unnatural a place were advanced, and the one most generally accepted was that the medical inspector had brought them in on his last visit.

It was July 22nd that we received orders that we were no longer the 180th Aero Squadron, but were henceforth to be known as the Kelly Field Squadron "E," which name we have tried to bear with honor to the present date, and will until the demobilization comes.

Squadron "E" has been well represented in both the social and athletic activities of the Post. The squadron hop, given at Turner Hall, on April 15th, will never be forgotten by such as attended. The cozy and homelike recreation room, which was fitted and furnished by the members of the squadron, has seen many a jolly party.

In the Flying Department Base Ball League our name graced the head of the list. Many a game worthy of better grounds and larger attendance was played on the old diamond in the rear of the field. Sarenac, the Private who speaks nine languages and was formerly an officer of the Serbian army during the Balkan war, showed that he had brawn as well as brains by winning laurels for the squadron as the best shot-put in the Southern Department.

But our reminiscences over athletic and other feats must accommodate themselves to our allotted space in this volume. Our existence as a unit in the Army Air Service will soon be a thing of the past. The knowledge that our squadron and the efforts of its members have been small but necessary parts in the military machine that has so successfully decided the war, is our greatest reward, and we could ask for none better.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941. Steven E. Clay. Combat Studies Institute Press. US Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, KS. Nd.