

641 AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

122 Aero Squadron organized, Sep 1917

Redesignated 641 Aero Squadron (Supply), Feb 1918

Demobilized, May 1919

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX

Garden City, NY, Jan 1918

Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Jan 1918

AEF, Jan 1918

Mitchel Field, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On September 2nd, 1917 130 men from Columbus Barracks and Fort Thomas, Ky., arrived at Kelly Field Texas and were assigned to the 122nd Aero Squadron.

The first night was spent under cover of the blue sky and one blanket, where the men were building air castles of air supremacy, baffling the Hun, etc. little realizing that Uncle Sam had car loads of picks and shovels in store for them to wield during their stay in the Lone Star State. 12h. The cool Air night soon had its effects on the recruits, they were only to be molested by the musical notes of First Call, which was still a novelty to them.

During the second day, Cadet Lloyd S. Roberts, who was appointed commanding officer appointed a First Sergeant and a few Non-Coms to take charge of the men.

For a month the men were given intensive training in Infantry Drills drilling from eight to nine hours daily, in which time the fat ones become lean and the lean ones fat. On September with Cadet Roberts was relieved of command and was succeeded by Captain Henry L. Lyster.

The Squadron moved to Kelly Field #2 on October 2nd, where two more months of training was devoted to drilling; also, here the men received a fair amount of fatigue duty. At this field Captain Lyster was relieved of the Command and was made supply Officer. Major Jack W. Heard was put in command. During the following few weeks Captain Lyster equipped the men for Foreign Service.

During its stay at Kelly Field #2 the squadron won itself consideration distinction. First; it stood second in the purchase of Second Liberty Loan Bonds purchasing \$17,550.00 worth; Second it had the champion football team of the entire post; on the goal line was never crossed.

November the 14th, Major Heard was relieved of the command, and Captain Lyster put in his stead. Several men were now transferred into the Squadron so that it would be filled to strength; then the organization was again moved to Kelly Field #1, where it received its final training before going overseas; this training consisted of infantry Drill and the Manual of Arms. Here several of the men were transferred from the squadron as they had passed the examination for flying.

On December 28th, 1917, at 2:00 P.M., the organization entrained, leaving for Garden City, Long island. On December 31st, the men stood muster at Chattanooga, Tenn., and arrived at the U.S. Aviation Concentration Camp Hempstead, L.I. N.Y., January 3rd, 1918, at 11:00 P.M.

On January 10th, all property was packed and shipped to the Transport at Hoboken. For three days the men were held in readiness, and on the 13th, at 0500, under full peak, marched to the Garden City Depot, under Command of Major C.C. Benedict, entraining here for Long Island City. They arrived at Long Island City at 0830, and boarded a ferry boat for Hoboken, arriving at the Transport Dock and embarked before 1300. The men were assigned to Compartments B and E, third deck, on the U.S.S. Agamemnon.

The transport left post at 4:30 P.M. The second day out, 22 of the men were detailed as lock out guards; these men, however never had an opportunity to perform their specified duties as the trip was entirely uneventful. Health on the ship was good, only a few cases of sickness, each day the men had their throats sprayed so as to ward off any epidemic that might be on board. The trip as a whole is always to be remembered by the men of the 122nd Aero Squadron. Accommodations were the best to be had; the food was good, both in quality and variety as well as quantity.

On January 24th, 1918, at 9:00 A.M. the boat anchored in the harbor at Brest, France. Here the men were held in quarantine for three days, and on the 28th of Jan they were ashore, and boarded box cars for St. Maxient. This ride will also be remembered; the first night was quite cold, and the cars were so well ventilated that real comfort was unknown.

There were forty to fifty men in each car, thus leaving very little room for moving about; if one man desired to move, the success of his desire depended entirely on the congeniality of the rest. However, the novelty of the trip afforded great sport for the men.

The Squadron arrived at St. Maxient, January 29th, at 7:30 P.M., and were quartered in Conclaux Barracks which formerly was an old Monastery. During the 22 days stay here, the men were given daily hikes; several inspections were held. Many cases of mumps developed, also a few cases of Pneumonia. It was while at St Maxient that the squadron number was changed from the 122nd to the 641st.

February 20th, the men were entrained at 2:00 P.M. for the Third Aviation Instruction Centre, Issoudun, France, arriving the following day. Here the squadron was quartered in American Barracks, where they lived since that date. Following the arrival here, Captain Lyster was relieved from command by First Lt. Hebert M. Ogg, who had been with the Squadron since it left Kelly Field. For a short time the Squadron did general fatigue duty to the fact that it was the first Supply Squadron on the front but in a short time the men were assigned to the various departments.

On October 14th, Lt. Ogg, was relieved of command and succeeded by Captain Boyd F. Briggs.

The majority of the men were detailed to the Headquarters Detachment as clerks in the various departments. This Detachment handles all the student officers of the post, including all the outlying fields.

Several of the men work at the Plane News, the Soldier's Paper. This paper grew from two leaflets to an eight page paper. It is not only circulated in the A.E.F. but throughout the entire United States, and has been highly complimented by the leading American news papers.

The Aero Supply furnished employment for quite a few of the men, who in their work have shown their business abilities and won recommendatory compliments from their department heads.

Practically every department on the field has a representative from this squadron who has shown individual distinction in his week.

The squadron spirit and discipline has been such that it is almost above reproach; this is due to a great extent to the fact that about ninety per cent of the original members were fresh from leading American Colleges and universities where they were in preparation of their several lines of work and when entering the Army were intent on achieving the utmost. Ten of these men have been commissioned as fliers and one as an Aerial Gunner.

In athletics the Squadron has always maintained a fine reputation in football their goal line has never been crossed. In track, several first place medals have been won; and in baseball a good percentage was maintained.

Through its individual personnel and the personnel of the squadron have purchased approximately \$50,000.00 worth of Liberty hands and six (6) Orphans [sic].

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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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.