

1 AAF GLIDER TRAINING DETACHMENT

MISSION

LINEAGE

1 AAF Glider Training Detachment

STATIONS

Fort Morgan, CO

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

AT-17

L-2

L-3

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The Fort Morgan Municipal Airport was dedicated in 1933 as Young Municipal Field. Agriculture was the mainstay of the community, and the crop spraying and dusting business became the

focus of the airport. In April 1940, the airport was leased by the United States Army Air Corps as part of the military buildup prior to World War II. It was used by the Air Corps as a glider pilot training school.

The glider school was operated under contract by Plains Airways, Inc., under the general supervision of the 1st Glider Training Detachment, 36th Flying Training Wing, Western Flying Training Command. Training was conducted using Taylorcraft TG-6A and Aeronca TG-5 combat training gliders, towed by C-47 Skytrain aircraft. An all-way turf airfield with a 5,200' x 5,200' landing/takeoff area was used for flight operations.

The flight cadets consisted of both experienced sailplane pilots and others who had washed out of conventional pilot training and were given a second chance to fly. The possibility of officer's pay and the chance to fly attracted a particular breed of risk-tolerant trainees. Trainees were given instruction on how to follow a tow plane and fly the unpowered aircraft to the designated landing zone.

Unlike powered pilots, combat training was also provided, as once a pilot committed to a landing and discovered, as he got closer, frequently the landing zone was under fire, mined, or otherwise obstructed, he had little room to maneuver to make a safe landing. Once the landing was made, the glider pilot then became another infantryman.

Once the glider pilot cadet successfully completed primary training, he moved on to advanced training, taught by AAF instructors at several military glider schools.

The school was closed in November 1943 as part of the drawdown of the Army Air Forces pilot training program. It was declared surplus and turned over to the Army Corps of Engineers, and eventually discharged to the War Assets Administration (WAA) after the end of World War II.

USAF UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 9 Dec 2013

Updated: 30 May 2022

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.