

100th AERO SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

100th Aero Squadron (Bombardment) organized 20 Aug 1917
Redesignated 100th Aero Squadron (Pursuit), Aug 1918
Redesignated 100th Aero Squadron (Day Bombardment), Aug 1918
Demobilized, 30 Jun 1919

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 20 Aug 1917
Aviation Concentration Center, Garden City, NY, 14 Aug 1917
Port of Entry, Hoboken, NJ, 20 Jan 1918
Winchester, England, Feb 1918
Divided into flights, assigned to various Royal Flying Corps stations in England, February–May 1918
RFC Feltwell, England, 5 May 1919
St. Maixent Replacement Barracks, France, 16 Aug 1918
Delouze Aerodrome, France, 26 Aug 1918
Ourches Aerodrome, France, 26 Oct 1918
Colombey-les-Belles Airdrome, France, 15 Apr 1919
France, April–May 1919
Mitchel Field, NY, Jun 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

Post Headquarters, Kelly Field, 20 Aug 1917
Aviation Concentration Center, 14 Oct 1917
Air Service Headquarters, AEF, British Isles

Air Service Replacement Concentration Center, 16 Aug 1918

1st Day Bombardment Group, 26 Aug 1918

Headquarters Air Service, Zone of Advance, 7 Sep 1918

2nd Day Bombardment Group, 30 Oct 1918

1st Air Depot, 15 Apr 1919

Commanding General, Services of Supply, Apr 1919

Post Headquarters, Mitchel Field, Jun 1919

COMMANDERS

HONORS

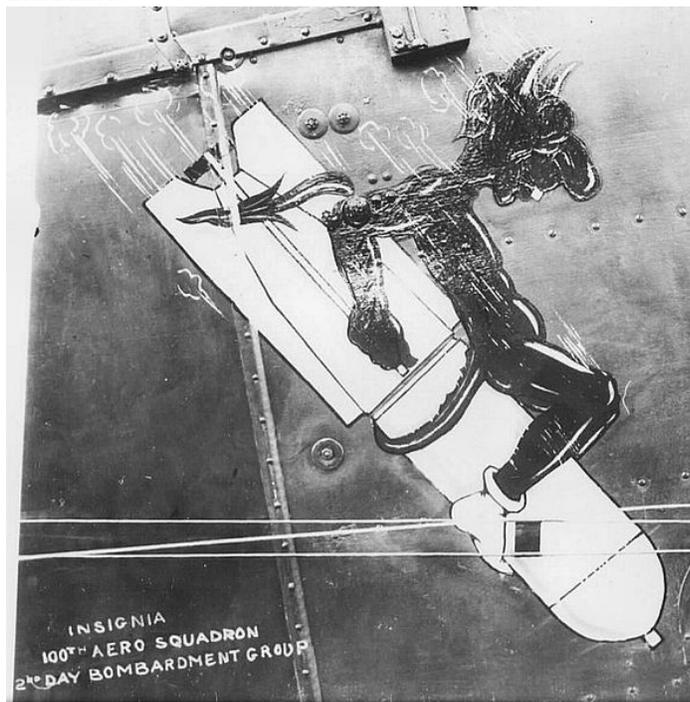
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



The One Hundredth Squadron emblem shows the devil riding on an aerial bomb in flight.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The One Hundredth Aero Squadron was a day bombardment squadron. It was assigned to the Second Day Bombardment Group, Second Army, on October 26, 1918, having been on the Front since July 20, 1918, with the Royal Air Force. It was engaged in British operations. This squadron accomplished many raids into Germany without suffering any losses. It is not given official credit for any enemy planes brought down. It ceased operations on April 8, 1919."

Thus might have been chronicled the history of the 100h Aero Squadron. But it wasn't. While the thermometer had a fever of 104, and the sands of Texas were multiplying corn-cure customers, the Squadron happened. Even with conditions so favorable for rapid incubation, the 100th was nurtured with difficulty, for it was without a commander for an entire month. However, the new members, who were then unaware of the meaning of AWOL were kept within the boundaries of the state of Texas, and out of the hospital for AWOLs at Leavenworth.

On September 20th, 1917, the Squadron was introduced to Lieutenant R. E. Brady who explained to its members that he had been elected to father them and sign their passes. It was then that an organization began to appear out of chaos. The trip to Mineola, Long Island, was made about the middle of October, and it was there that the men discovered they were destined to work on airplanes. First, as a side line, the men who could be spared from fatigue details were trained on Curtiss machines and soon became so proficient at finding missing spark plugs that they were required to give all their spare time to it.

In the early morning of January 20th, 1918, under cover of a heavy fog, which ideally obscured their movements from the observation of enemy aircraft, the 100th moved to Garden City and on January 23rd went aboard the "Tuscania"

Probably no other Air Service unit has lived a more diversified life, nor has been plunged more thoroughly into the vicissitudes of war than the 100th. Its history includes everything from being torpedoed by an enemy submarine to being guests of English Royalty. The boys of the 100th were on the ill-fated "Tuscania" when she was sunk in the Irish Channel February 5th, 1918. It was not until that date that the Squadron got a real taste of war. Space does not permit a full recount here of the disaster in which sixteen members of the 100th lost their lives, and in which the survivors distinguished themselves as true Americans, worthy to represent thier flag. The boys had been amusing themselves on the afternoon of February 5th with boxing contests on deck, and were making ready for supper when, at 5:54 P. M., the ship was shaken to its very keel by a resounding explosion.

The boat seemed to be hurled entirely out of the water and trembled from one end to the other. The force of the explosion sent a column of water into the air that reached the top rigging. Several of us were directly in the path of this, receiving a thorough drenching. It was no time at all before the vessel listed sharply to starboard. This rendered the lowering of the lifeboats extremely difficult. All men immediately went to their assigned lifeboats, and, despite a natural state of excitement, perfect order prevailed. I was on the port side of "A" Deck and five other members of the Squadron, who with a number of men from the 158th Squadron were supposed to have been lowered in one of the

first boats. There ensued some difficulty, however, in launching the boat so we could do nothing but look overboard at the unfortunate ones fighting for their lives in the icy water. The cries were enough to make one stand aghast.

About 19:45 a torpedo boat came alongside and threw ropes to us. The sea was now becoming rougher, causing the rescue ship to roll considerably and making the work of getting the men to safety on her decks very hazardous and difficult. One big wave caused the two vessels to rub sides, and the poor unfortunates on the ropes were crushed to death between the sides. Other men dropped into the water and were drowned. Some of the boys of our Squadron who perished lost their lives in this manner. In the glare of one of the huge searchlights, I saw one lad struggling in the water, without a life preserver, attempting to catch a line which a British sailor was throwing to him. He finally succeeded in catching hold of the rope, but his hands were evidently frozen and he slipped limply back into the water. After several more unsuccessful attempts, he was fortunate enough to effect a half-hitch around his numbed body and he was hoisted to the deck of the destroyer as it pulled away. After this, the destroyer left there followed some very anxious moments for us, and, while we waited and shivered it appeared that our doom was sealed. It was at this time that someone began singing the "Star Spangled Banner". It met with a resounding response, and soon the whole ship echoed the national anthem.

At 20:30, the destroyer HMS Pigeon steamed alongside of the port bow, and we were soon removed safely on her decks. During the progress of the rescue, two torpedoes were fired by the submarine, one grazing the stern of the British Destroyer, and the second missing only a few yards to the bow of the Tuscania. The detachment of which I was a member was landed at Buncranne, Ireland, about 02:00 on 6 February, cold, desolate, but with an unbroken spirit and increasing hatred for the Kaiser.

After the sinking, the 100th Aero Squadron was re-formed at Winchester, England. At Winchester, the men of the squadron were taken into the quarters of the 6th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, who furnished the men with clothing, food, and merriment. At Winchester, the squadron was assigned to the Royal Flying Corps, who divided the men into three detachments. Flight "A" was sent to RFC London Colney; Flight "B" to RFC Stamford, and Flight "C" to RFC Feltwell. At those stations, the men were instructed in the intricacies of French SPADs, Sopwith Camels, Sopwith Pups and Avros. On 5 May, the squadron was re-assembled at RFC Feltwell, fully trained on the mechanics of the airplanes.

A mound and wooden cross in Scotland mark the grave of the identified members of the Squadron, who paid with their lives. Memorial services were held at Winchester, England, February 10th, 1918, at which Ambassador Thomas Nelson Page and General Tasker H. Bliss were speakers. In their addresses, these men paid a high tribute to the men of the 100th Squadron. At Winchester, a division into three detachments was made, one being sent to London Colney, one to Stamford, and one to Feltwell. At these places the boys learned the intricacies of Spads, Sopwith Camels, Sopwith Pups and Avros. When they were reassembled on May 5th at Feltwell, they had also learned to say "thra p'nce ha'penny", as easily as they had enunciated "two bits" five months previously.

But they were all bearing a dangerous grudge against the Kaiser, and were itching with impatience to get to France. After three more months of training as a pursuit squadron, the organization left on

August 16th for "Sunny" France. Here, it was transformed into a Day Bombing Squadron, and soon had a permanent home established at Delouze (Meuse), France. It was at Delouze, with no airplanes, no pilots, and nothing to fight but mud, that the Squadron commenced its activities on the front.

November 1st saw the arrival of a veteran officer-pilot, Captain Belmont F. Beverly, to take command of the outfit,, and prepare it for action. A number of pilots and observers were soon afterwards attached, and the organization of the Squadron into a fighting unit was moving with clockwork precision and lightning rapidity, when the enemy called for "time". Two days previous to Captain Beverly's arrival, the 100th "dug in", as a member of the 2nd Day Bombardment Group at Ourches, a community on the Meuse river consisting of fifteen houses, a church, and forty-five cow-stables. It was here that the 100th was waiting with thousands of pounds of choice bombs, a score of impatient pilots and observers, and 186 well-trained and ready-to-the-last men, anxious to bomb the Boche when the armistice was signed on the morning of November 11th, 1918.

Since then the squadron has been thriving on mud and rumors —darned poor nourishment. Each month the rumor comes put that it is to break up and start for the port of embarkation, as the French are to take over the field on the 15th of that particular month. These stories apparently originate with the merchants of Ourches, to stimulate the last-minute purchases of "Souvenirs de France".

Meanwhile the newly made C. O. of the squadron insists on staying away from all razors, and has grown a poilu facial decoration that is the envy of the French Army. Possibly this growth is considered so appropriate to the French landscape that headquarters refuses to tear him and his squadron away. At any rate, the squadron isn't moving very much.

After the end of hostilities, the history of the 100th Aero Squadron is scant. It remained at Ourches until 15 April 1919 when the Second Army was demobilized. Orders were received for the squadron to report to the 1st Air Depot, Colombey-les-Belles Airdrome to turn in all of its supplies and equipment and was relieved from duty with the AEF. The squadron's DH-4 aircraft were delivered to the Air Service Production Center No. 2. at Romorantin Aerodrome, and there, practically all of the pilots and observers were detached from the Squadron.

Personnel at Colombey were subsequently assigned to the Commanding General, Services of Supply and ordered to report to a staging camp in France for the return crossing of the Atlantic back to the United States.

The 100th Aero Squadron was shipped home on 31 May 1919 on the SS St. Louis. It was then demobilized at Mitchel Field, New York in June, where the men returned to civilian life.

Air Force Order of Battle
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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.