

191 AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

191 Aero Squadron
Organized, Dec 1917
Demobilized, Feb 1919

STATIONS

Ellington Field, TX
Park Place, Houston, TX, Jul 1918

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

THE 191st Aero Squadron was organized December 3, 1917, at Ellington Field, with 38 men from Self ridge Field, Mt. Clemens, Mich., as its nucleus. Two days later the "Long Horns" from nearby cities began pouring in, among them W. I. Dedman and E. B. Laireabee of Houston and M. O. Johnston of La Porte. And within a week the squadron had its full quota of 150 enlisted

men. Lieutenant W. R. Drexel was the commanding officer, and a good one. He seldom visited us, and there always were "crap games" in our barracks, No. 93. Lieutenant Archibald Little came to us as a new commanding officer December 15, and it was not long afterward that we heard confidentially that the 191st was the pride of Ellington Field. We then had been assigned three hangars and twenty-four ships, and after a few weeks of hard work it was reported that we were slated for overseas service.

All went nicely until about June 19, when we were really fit for overseas service. Then we were informed we were to help organize the new Second Provisional Wing, to be formed at Park Place for extensive and final training that would last two or three months.

Lieutenant, later Captain, E. W. Bagnell became commanding officer about June 25, and our "top" sergeant grabbed a 15-day furlough to see Marion at Oak Grove. When Sergeant Bennett returned he discovered that Sergeant A. A. Olson had been assigned "top" sergeant. E. A. Rochel was made sergeant major and F. Gr. Yates company clerk, while W. I. Dedman became supply sergeant. Corporal W. J. King was handed sergeant's chevrons and assigned as Dedman's assistant.

We left for Park Place July 12 and soon after our arrival new rumors were afloat about leaving for overseas. But these, it was found, only emanated from Numbers 1, 5 and 7 at the back of the field. However, aviators and observers began coming in from all directions. We thought sure enough this meant business, and it did, for in a few days there was more flying at Park Place than at any field its size this side of the Pond.

Hard work and fun were about equal in the ensuing two months. The maneuvers camp was established at Kingsville. The Wing camp was quarantined when Spanish influenza broke out. But we were fortunate. None of this squadron fell victims to the disease although at one time 19 were in the hospital. The monotony of quarantine was broken by the Wing Circus. And finally, on November 8, came the overseas orders and, on the 13th, the cancellation.

After that camp life was hard work, and all to our sorrow, on November 20 the wind blew, the rains became torrents and our squadron streets were lakes of mud. Then it became known that M. S. E. Buel W. Pope was web-footed as well as cork-armed. He took to the water like a duck. But the remainder of us were not built that way and the entire outfit was moved to the City Auditorium at Houston. There life was a continual round of misery, because the Bevos undertook to drill us with all the laundry queens looking on.

Several of the boys who had never shown much spirit came to the front as society birds, among them Sergeants C. E. Hesser, W. H. Lea, G. L. Woodbury and P. A. Rundell. Sergeant Felix Bongio made friends with all the Wop banana peddlers, and Corporal F. H. (Magneto Mike) Conrad and Private Robert (Paddy) Schultz were caught drinking Bevo and eating limberger with a fat gentleman who had a German accent.

Upon our return to camp a week later some of the Northern boys formed a clan to defeat all

plans of the top sergeant. Sergeant Olson named them the "Bolsheviki" and soothed them with extra K. P. A few of the revolutionists made out lists of the men whom they were going to "bump on the bean" when released from the army. But after sizing up the "top" sergeant most of them wiped their slates clean, and their lists had included most all the officers and all the non-coms on the field.

A word should be said of our officers but time and space will not permit. We can only wish them as easy a time in civil life as they had while members of the Second Provisional Wing.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 12 Mar 2021
Updated:

Sources

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