

235th AERO SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

FRANKLY, the history of a squadron at Kelly Field during the course of the World War must become a record of dates and changes, for the transfers of officers and men are continuous. However, in every organization there is a tie of human interest running through its entire life which must come to mean something in the life and experience of these who pass through ;i and those who pause again to read its record.

It was a hot Texas day that first brought into being the present organization "Squadron F." The morning of April 15, 1918, witnessed orders to the various Trade Lines of Kelly Field, 1st Training

Brigade for men to comprise a service squadron. Hour after hour men gathered in under the big canvas in front of the organization office and here we caught the first glimpse and first impressions of those who were to be our comrades in the great part we were to play in "getting the Kaiser." There was at once apparent that kindred spirit which comes to all groups united for common and high purposes. Speculation was running high as to just when we would leave Kelly Field, just when we would sail—some even prophesied the particular sector in France we would operate on. Withal it was a joyous assembly and the long-hours of waiting were not noticed, for at last, after months of K. P. and pick and shovel, we were assigned to a squadron, and would soon be at our special work in making a record that could not be beaten. Just before noon we were given our designation by the organization sergeant as follows: "This is the 235th Aero Service Squadron to be ordered out immediately; stick around close!" And at the retreat formation, the Commanding Officer first appeared, 1st Lieut. Alva W. Beckett.

Line 17 was our home for eighteen days—days filled with many formations and much "signing up." Clothing and all other overseas equipment were supplied. The organization was rapidly rounded into shape and we were living in tense anticipation for orders which would tell the next move. On May 1st the orders came, but contrary to hope and speculation they were not for immediate shipment across seas, but rather across the fence to the Flying Department. This brought dismay. However, the move was reasoned out to mean that we were to receive the first part of our training here, which would insure a preferred place on the front when we did get "over there." With renewed hopes the men cheerfully went at the task of moving, and pitched tents in Kelly No. 2 on the straight road from the guard line and nearly opposite Hangar No. 3. This is the present location of the squadron. Most of the men were assigned at once to the Field and Hangar Division, and the new work directly with the ships and flying was interesting and important.

On June 6th the order came for the transfer of 235th Aero Squadron back to the 2nd Training Brigade, Kelly No. 1, for purpose of reconstruction. Surely our chance had come at last! About 40 men were transferred out. In most cases to be attached to the overseas detachment there about to sail. Lieut. G. B. Wallace had now joined us as Supply Officer and Lieut. Little-John was assigned as Adjutant. Sergeant Harold W. Hackett, formerly of the 243rd Aero Squadron was assigned as Supply Sergeant and with the assistance of Sergeant Charles A. Aaron brought the squadron supply department up to its present standard of efficiency. After ten days of waiting instructions with our depleted ranks we were ordered back to Kelly No. 2 and into the same line formerly occupied, which had been torn up and storm wrecked during the time we had been away. This seemed surely the irony of fate.

July 1st brought some important changes. Forty new men were transferred into the organization and under the new system of operation the 235th Aero Squadron was charged with the work on Primary Solo Stages A and B. There were twenty ships on these stages and they were cared for in Hangars 13, 14 and 15. A Plying Officer. Lieut. H. S. Kenyon was now assigned as Commanding Officer. Lieut. Beckett became Adjutant and Lieut. Littlejohn was relieved. Lieut. H. L. Kindred being assigned as Engineer Officer at this time. The new men assigned were some of the oldest and best men in the field. After all this seemed an advance in training for we now had a definite task as a Squadron.

After three months as 235th Aero Squadron our designation was changed to Kelly Field Squadron "F." This was the day of lowering spirits, both for the loss of our old name and for what the prosaic letter "F" seemed to portend. Rumor would have it that we were permanent on the field. True it is that men united in common purposes cling to common possessions, and so we regretted to see the old 235th Aero Squadron "go." It took some time to acquaint and reconcile ourselves to the new name, but "what's in a name?" and soon with records changed and adjustments made, things were normal again. Succeeding Lieut. Maupin. Lieut F. O. Carroll became Commanding Officer and it has been under his leadership and through his kindly unfailing interest in his men that Squadron- "F" has enjoyed its height of fellowship and pride as an organization. A school for candidates for Officers Training Camps and others was formed. Meetings of the non-commissioned officers for instruction and discussion of squadron problems has been a stimulus to right spirit.

In athletics the squadron was represented by a good baseball team and the volley ball court and basket ball court at the end of the squadron street have only waited competition from, other squadrons. A big feast on Thanksgiving Day which was the triumph of Sergeant Tuveson made the men quite forget that they were not at home in

point of good things to eat. The outside mess hall was fittingly decorated and the meals served in courses. The Christmas banquet at Mess Hall 54 was a happy occasion for those remaining in camp.

The music and activities of the "colored band" on that occasion contributed much to a Merry Christmas. Gifts were presented to all the men and visitors. The New Year Dinner-Dance at the Gunter Hotel. San Antonio, showed the squadron at its best. It will ever be a memorable occasion. With the transfer of all lettered squadrons on the field into the Flying School Detachment, November 18th, 1918. we lost the primacy of independence and the title words "Kelly Field" became a subdivision with Major Jacobs as Commanding Officer of the detachment, Lieut. Carroll still commanding the squadron. At this time the squadron's strength was increased by transfers from the 322nd and 212th Aero Squadrons from 150 to 172 men. Lieut. Cogan received his honorable discharge December 28th and Lieut. T. F. Otis became the Adjutant. At all times we have had men engaged in nearly all the departments of the Flying Department, the greater number being in the Field and Hangar Division. After the adoption of the Gosport System the men of Squadron "F" were employed on Flight No. 3. M.S.E. Em-met Wood being the Flight Sergeant. Seven of our men are taking Flying instructions and doing solo work. Ten of the noncommissioned officers have the rating of Aviation Mechanician. Many of the men have served as mechanics in cross-country flights. Through the efforts of the Commanding Officer and Sergeants in charge, nearly all the men in Squadron "F" have experienced a trip in the air. The squadron has been repeatedly complimented on the quality of its workmanship and its ability to get out the work and keep the ships in the air.

Such is a brief record of the work and play of Squadron "F" during the ten months of its life. It is not a spectacular or thrilling story. Rather is it a record of the service of young Americans who have learned the lesson that whether here or "over there" the paramount duty of a soldier is to obey. They were given a task, and did it well!

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Sources