

400th AERO SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

This organization began its existence at Camp Kelly, South San Antonio, Texas, on the afternoon of May 23rd, 1917.

Camp Kelly, which had then been established only a few weeksoll-reaey numbered approximately four thousand and five hundred men, who had recently arrived from the various recruiting barracks, throughout the United States, and were awaiting assignment.

All were quartered in tents, their life being very much, that of troops in the field,ae there were few convienoes of any kind at Camp Kelly in those days.

On thstafternoon in May memorable to every man of the original squadron the post sergeant major came in haste to each provisional company on the field in search of carpenters and machinists. The general instructions were to form a new organization consisting of one hundred carpenters and one hundred machinists, and in the main, thisplan was carried out. In a few hours,

he picked out two hundred and twelve men, which number was later reduced to two hundred, considerable care being exercised in making the final selections.

The new unit was immediately isolated from the other companies, and simultaneously, a subtle rumor sprang up that these men had been chosen to go to Prelim. Great was the rejoicing that evening when this report was confirmed by the post sergeant-major, in a short address to the assembled organization.

We have received a telegram from the War Department at Washington, said he, directing us to organize a mechanics company which is to be sent to Governor's Island as soon as possible. I feel safe in promising you men, that if you go to Governor's Island you are going to Eranoe. The mighty cheer that greeted this statement voiced the unanimous approval of the men, who had been fortunate enough to be one of the two hundred picked.

Nearly a month was to sleep however before this detachment as to begin the long journey, that was finally to land them in France

Many things had to be accomplished, among the most important of which was the gathering of a complete equipment for the squadron. It was doubly thought at that time, that considerable difficulties would be experienced in keeping supplies in the field for the men of the A.E. Peafter they had reached France, and rather than take chances of their running short of clothing, each man was equipped to the limit. To each was issued three O.D. woolen uniforms, two khaki uniforms, three pair of russet shoes, one pair of field shoes, three service hats, three O.B. shirts, and at least a dozen wool emu cotton underwear and socks. In addition each member of the detachment was equipped with a United States Army rifle and a col. automatic pistol.

Then followed days of intensive drill, that were crowded as full as possible with the instructions necessary to every soldier.

As a part of their preliminary education, a practice hike was taken one day early in June, which event will not soon be forgotten, by all who participated therein for it turned out to be an ordeal equalled test of stamina, and staying qualities of seasoned veterans. It was at first decided that the men with regulation packs should be marched out one of the roads, about five miles and return to camp, but when the first five miles had been covered, two or three men whose zeal outran their judgment, persuaded the acting sergeant in charge to march the detachment as far as a small river, which they thought was only about a mile further, but developed however that the river was about three miles distant, and with the additional time consumed, in

u short swim, it was high noon when the detachment began its homeward march, Under the Texas sun, with the temperature between one hundred and ten and one hundred and fifteen degrees.

It was a thoroughly tired out detachment that marched into camp about three o'clock that afternoon, but they went in to the company's streets with heads up and singing. It was generally remarked by the old timers in camp, that the new outfit would do.

They had marched nearly eighteen miles under varied adverse conditions, and only six men had fallen out exhausted, one of these having a sprained ankle, and the others being partially overcome by the heat. As an endurance test, it was a success.

Many lessons were learned on that hike, that were to prove valuable in the future, not the least being the knowledge that it is not well to drink freely from one's water bottle on a long march.

At the time of its formation, the organization was semi-officially named the First Provisional Mechanics Company, but a few days later it was named the Foreign School Squadron. It bore that name for several weeks, or until July 8th, 1917, the date on which it embarked for France, when the name was again changed to that of the 29th Provisional Aerial Squadron. The organization was not given its present title (400th Aero Squadron) until February 1st, 1918 on which date all aerial squadrons were re-numbered in accordance with a new classification made out by the War Department.

The squadron's first commanding officer was Lieutenant Lawrence S. Churchill, an Infantry Officer had received flying training and who prior to assuming command had been on duty with the 1st Aerial Squadron.

During the next few weeks, his advancement was rapidly as he was promoted to Captain, receiving his active orders at Fort Wood, New York on July 4th, 1917, and following the arrival of the squadron in France, he received notification of his promotion to the rank of major in the Aviation Section, Signal Corps, on August 1st, 1917.

In the formative period of the squadron, the non-commissioned personnel consisted of acting sergeants and corporals, with the exception of M.S.E. Robert Robertson, then serving in his sixth enlistment period. He had seen a large amount of service in various quarters of the world, he was transferred in from the 1st Aero Squadron. His knowledge of the various forms of military procedure made him a valuable asset to the squadron.

On June 1st, 1917, six sergeants were appointed by telegraphic order from the Chief Signal Officer. They left for detached service at Fort Wood, New York on June 12th, their duties being to check the cargo aboard three ships which were to carry the building material and supplies for an American Aviation camp in France, the construction of which the squadron was to play the pioneer part. These vessels were the Bohemia, City of Savannah, and the Willehead, the last named had been an interned German ship, and has said to have acted as a mother ship to the German submarine freighter the "Deutschland."

The long waited order for the squadron to move arrived June 16th, 1917 at eight thirty P.M. on the following evening the organization took the train for Fort Wood, New York, which was reached on the evening of June 25th.

Record time was made on establishing a new camp. The Squadron was landed on the Island at about six o'clock in the evening, later, the tents had been pitched on the lawn at the base of the Statue of Liberty. All the squadron stores and supplies were unloaded and under shelter. Field ranges were set up, and the cooks were serving out hot food and coffee.

Then there followed nearly another month before the squadron embarked for France. Into that interval was crowded a great deal of rifle drill on considerable guard duty, and much instruction on military matters in general. At the end of the period, the men were able to handle themselves with confidence and precision. They had lost the appearance of the recruit and had taken on the bearing of the seasoned soldier.

In touching upon the personnel of the squadron, it might be well to mention at this point that nearly every state in the Union was represented in its membership. All were serving a voluntary enlistment and were in the prime of youthful vigor.

The days spent at Fort Wood will always be remembered as pleasant ones. Every day brought hundreds of visitors to the Island, who desired to see a soldier at closer range and learn more of his mode of living.

Two additional officers were assigned to duty with the Squadron on July 6th, both of whom distinguished themselves later in the American Air Service in France

They were 1st Lt. Seth Low, and 2nd Lt. Cord Avers. Both belong to prominent New York families, the former being the son of Seth I. Low, former Mayor of New York City.

An incident that had its amusing side occurred on July 4th, The stevedores, who were loading barges at Buell terminal with freight for the three ships mentioned, early in this narrative went on strike, It was highly important that this work should not be halted. The difficulty was solved by detailing fifty men from the squadron to take the place of the strikers, They worked all day, handling the freight in record time, and on the following day, the strikers returned to work.

On July 18th, 1917, came the cheering news that the squadron was to embark on the steamer St. Paul (American Line) for service overseas. The steamer coasted off from pier 62 at seven o'clock that evening and the long voyage began.

For the most part, the trip was uneventful. No submarines were sighted. Their absence undoubtedly due to the vigilant watch of the American and British navy, Contact with the undersea enemy was also avoided by the ships putting in at Allford Haven, Wales on the night of July 26th. On the following morning, two fast American destroyers appeared, apparently from the north, and conveyed the steamer to her destination at Liverpool, England, which was reached early on the morning of July 28th.

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool welcomed the squadron on English soil in a brief but cordial address. He said, in effect, that the arrival of this small unit the advance guard of the American Air Service was of great significance, for it foreshadowed the coming of thousands upon thousands of their fellows, and that the coming of the sturdy American soldiers would put new heart in their British

Allies, lending them strength and courage to press on until Prussian militarism should be crushed forever.

The unit, immediately after the brief greeting, took the train, journey across England to Southampton, arriving there, late in the afternoon, The troops were marched out to the English rest camp, some three miles distant, for temporary quarters while awaiting transportation across the channel to France. There they had their first opportunity to fraternize with the English Tommies, several hundred of whom were recovering from wounds received at the front. The most cordial relations were soon established. Tommy Atkins extended a hearty welcome to his American cousins, and the latter voiced their admiration for the staying qualities of the British soldiers, who

had withstood three years of the fiercest war in history.

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The following evening at 7.00 P.M., the squadron embarked on the steamer, Uarguerite, for France. The entire night was taken up in making the short passage across the English Channel, great care being taken to avoid mines and submarines.

To the 400th Aero Squadron belongs the distinction of being the first American Air Service unit to arrive in France, after Germany's entrance into the war. The squadron landed on French soil at about 7.00 A.M. July 29th, 1917.

The short stay in Havre was spent at English Rest Camp No. E. where acquaintance was made with members of several Canadian units who were enjoying a brief rest, after a strenuous ordeal at the front. The Americans were surprised at the large number of their own countrymen, who were serving with the Canadians. They were told that

Americans comprised ninety per cent of one Canadian company. Soldiers in Canadian uniform would greet the new arrivals about as followed: "Any of you ohaps from Pennsylvania ". Or perhaps they would ask

for men from hew York,Ohio,KansastArisona or Oulifornia. All were eager for she latest news from the states.

Shortly after daybreak the next morning, July 31st,the squadron left by train for Issoudun,in the interior of Franve,where was to be constructed on of the largest aviation camps in the wor111.On arrival at Issoudun,the following in)rning,the squadron was temporarily quartered in the .French j3arracks,remaining there for the ensuing five days until new temporary quarters were established at the College Communal in Ieeoudun.

On August 1st.at 7.00 A.M,1st.lt.Seth Low with a detachment of fifty men from the squadron, left for detached service at.St.hazaireahey were to return with forty seven Packard truoke,loaded with supplies for the organizattons,the trucks and supplies being a part of the three ships referred to, early in this narrative.

Coincidentally with the events just related, Sergeant Morris Ijalker, with detail of four men were left behind at Liverpool, to convoy over the large amount of squadron supplied and equipment. £he numerous difileulties that they met and overcame on that trip would form an interesting story in themselves.

Sergeant Walker and his detail of men had supposed that the freight which they were guarding at Liverpool, would be shipped to Southampton on the same train that carried the aquadron.To their surprise they found that their organization had lifts and they,strangers,in

a strange land, without Atlas or travel orders,eomehow must get that freight across ZUslahiDielSouthhampton,and then across the channel to Havre, and finally rejoin their unit "somewhere in France ",just where, they did not know. They managed to get the freight loaded into three cars, which they oommandered,and as their activities in this direction consumed the greater part of two days. they had to solve the problem of securing rations during that time. They were provided for through the kindness of the sailors of the St.Paul,who snared their moss with them.

Enroute for Southampton, they learned that they would pass through London, stopping there for the greater part of one day. Sergeant conceived the idea of calling upon the American consul in London, and endeavoring through him to get a temporary loan, and possibly travel orders for them to proceed to rejoin the squadron. He saw the consul but did not succeed in either of his efforts. #e was promised- ed a loan of three pounds, but was compelled to make train connections before the loan had been consumated,and again they proceeded on their way, without funds.

They arrived in Southampton on the morning of July 31st,1917,three days after their landing on British soil. Learning that the squadron had been quartered at the English Aeet Oamp,they assigned themselves to quarters, and rations at the mama station. Meanwhile they lost no time in getting the freight transferred from the oars to a vessel bound for Havre.

Sergeant Walker learned that their was a Dritisia Army Order that forbade the transportation of troops during the period of the ftll moon,whioh it then was. Tile indications were that they would not be allowed to prets the channel on the boat that was loaded with their supplies, but might be compelled to wait fifteen days, for the change of the moon. He was determined not to be separated from that freight, but how to cuty his way through the red tape that bound himself and his companions was not apparent. At length heddltised a clever stratagem. When about half of the squadron freight had been loaded on the boat, he haltedeperattons,and allowed this portion to

be covered with tons and tons of British freight. Then he went to the British Embarkation Officer, and demanded that his freight be unloaded forthwith, on the grounds that he and his companions would not be allowed to accompany it. After much discussion, the Embarkation Officer agreed to permit the loading of the remainder of the freight and also that Sergeant Walker and his detail should accompany it.

On the afternoon of their third day in Southampton, they were ordered by the Adjutant at the rest camp to leave the premises forthwith, as there was no authority for quartering them, since they had no travel orders. By this time, however, they were ready to go aboard the boat, and the Adjutant's orders were easily complied with.

They left for Havre on the interned German Transport Hunsley, on the evening of August 1st, 1917. Before the vessel cleared the nets on the outskirts of the harbor, word was received that two German submarines had penetrated the nets. The boat was ordered back until the harbor could be cleaned of the submarines. They lay at anchor until 6.00 P.M. on the 4th of August, when a successful attempt was made at crossing the channel. They arrived at Havre the following morning, and proceeded to English Rest Camp No. 2, again following the footsteps of the squadron. There Sergeant Walker was able to secure a detail of English soldiers to handle the freight. With no written authority or other orders of any kind, he succeeded in getting the freight transferred to three motor cars. He was told that the squadron had left for Orleans, and he hurried to Orleans in the three cars and climbed aboard. On arriving at Orleans, they were informed that their unit had gone to Vierzon, so they re-labelled their cars. At Vierzon they obtained definite information that the Squadron was located at Issoudun a few miles distant. They rejoined their organization on August 9th, 1917, having been separated there from for eleven days. The last three days of their journey from Havre to Issoudun, they had subsisted on about one day's rations per man which they had obtained from Nest Camp No. 2.

It was a week of impressions spent in the French barracks, also one succeeding while quartered in the College Communal. Perhaps three or four men in the entire squadron were well enough versed in the French tongue to be able to make themselves understood. On every corner and in every square were to be seen a little group of soldiers, talking to the French population. These people were as strange and amusing to the boys as were the boys to them.

Everywhere the soldiers were received with open hospitality. None seemed to mind the fact that conversation was impossible. Homes were opened to welcome this new ally to their hearthstones and friendship were formed which were to last long after the end of the war.

It was while the Squadron was still quartered at the College Communal that the memorable tobacco famine was re-acted. Happy was the man who had been wise enough to foresee this privation and put by an extra store of cigarettes to tide over the period which elapsed before supplies were shipped across. One cigarette was prized above rubies and fine gold and often served to give six men a few puffs of enjoyment. A few fortunate who were in possession of the required funds, invested them in the strong French weed, much to their disgust when they attempted to smoke it.

About August 10th, when everybody was desperate for a smoke of real tobacco, Lieutenant Oord Meyer brought a bountiful supply of high class cigarettes which he had secured through the American Red Cross at Paris---bountiful since it supplied each man with two whole cigarettes. The first work to be done by the squadron was railroad construction. Two companies of Engineers were already on the job, and laid several kilometers of track to the new Aviation field,

he men were a little disappointed at this menial labor, but worked with a will on the promise of something better.

The Squadron had not been paid since June 30th at Fort Flood, New York, and most of the boys were without funds. One evening upon their return to quarters, it was announced that the Squadron was to be paid. No man would forget this first experience with a new and strange money. Very few knew the real value of tin, French coin, not could

they think in terms of francs and (at times). When a purchase was made at one of the little shops, the most satisfactory manner of paying

was to hold out a handful of coin to the proprietor and let him feel as much as he wished, relying on his honesty to receive the proper change.

The men who had gone out on detached service with Lieutenant Low were returning by one or in groups, some few drove back touring cars, but

most brought back small Packard trucks, which had seen service on the Mexican border and were to do splendid work in the mud of the camp.

Because of the shortage of railroad cars, the French Government was making demands that the cars loaded with Squadron supplies and building materials at St. Nazaire, be unloaded immediately upon arrival at their destination. The railroad having not yet been completed to the chosen site of the new Aviation Field, it was necessary to establish a temporary camp on the railroad spur that these cars might be emptied.

On August 12th the Squadron vacated their temporary quarters at the Collee Communal and pitched their tents in the open field

about half the distance to the proposed camp and along the route of iron. The tents were only partially staked down when the first

train load of cars, loaded with building materials and railroad ties, wrenched into view along the extremely crooked track. The men were immediately called to the task of unloading and everyone worked with a will. The cars were only about half emptied when it began

to rain and within ten minutes, a deluge of water was falling

worthy of comparison with a cloudburst. It being impossible to work the men took themselves to their respective tents, many just in time to see them blow over or to catch them before they fell.

As mentioned above, the tents were only partially staked, and the abundant rain had washed away the soft dirt from the remaining ones, and re-listed them from their strain. In about fifteen minutes the storm had abated, leaving in its wake a disgusted and unhappy Squadron of men.

They were cold, with no material available from which to kindle fires, hungry and the fires extinguished in the field ranges, personal belongings and clothing wet, mud analogous to Lieutenant Page's glue ankle-deep and a long train of cars to be unloaded.--- Such was the first real hardship to be felt by the Squadron, forerunner of many others to follow. The trains in this spur was operated by men selected

from the Squadron. The track was different from any other that had ever been laid. There were more curves in five kilometers than in fifty miles of the average roadbed in the area. If a hill obstructed the direct route, instead of making a cut, the track was laid around the base. Generally the natural contour of the land was followed and the track laid in the soft dirt. Too little can be said of the hard work and faithfulness of the railroad crews to keep the trains on their tracks, oftentimes working all night long to get a train neck on the track and necessary repairs made, so that the morrow's trains could run undelayed. There was nothing of value for use to ballast the tracks and the continued autumn rains kept them in a wretched condition to bear the heavy loads that must be carried over them. It was almost miraculous that there were so few cases

ulties in the many accidents which occurred the first six months of the history of the road. Amusing was the incident of the naming of the railroad. One evening the squadron was entertaining itself in

a mock trial, when one of the witnesses, was asked where the defendant was last seen. He replied*" On the H.H. & S.R."

Upon being questioned further as to his exact meaning, he continued, "On the Roola Houle and Snake 'Route*". From that time hence, the road has been known in squadron circles by that name.

August 19th, Lt. Quentin Roosevelt, fifth son of ex-president Theodore Roosevelt was assigned to the squadron. For a time he was squadron supply officer and later transportation officer. Lieut. Roosevelt was with the organization during the completion of his flying training at Issoudun. He distinguished himself by his daring and adaptability in air, and was made Flight Commander

of acrobatic training at Field Seven. His desire to "fly the front" was finally fulfilled when he received orders to report to the Air Service, operating with the American Army at Chateau Thierry. On July 3rd he brought down his first and only "Socha" plane, and but a few days later. July 14th, 1918 was killed by an enemy pilot. He was buried with military honors where he fell near Chambry, by German airmen. In answer to a letter of condolence from the 400th Squadron to Lieut. Roosevelt's parents, Colonel Roosevelt, replied, "Of course his death is a very sad thing to his mother and myself; but it

would have been a much worse thing, if he had been afraid to face death, or if he had failed to do his whole duty and a little more than his duty, as a soldier of the American Army in this great war for liberty and for justice".

On the day that Lieut. Roosevelt joined the squadron, a detachment of twenty-six men with trucks returned from St. Nazaire. With these trucks, and the few that had previously arrived, began the department of transportation of the 3rd Aviation Instruction Center. Sgt Morris L. Walker was placed in charge of motor transportation, and

it was with a tenacious and obstinate spirit that kept those trucks rolling with no spare parts, no shop nor practically any tools with which to do the necessary work of repair.

Many thousands of feet of lumber and railroad ties were unloaded the first camp, all of which was later moved by truck to the new field. In the meanwhile, the railroad was completed in a crude way to the limits of the immense Aviation Camp, later to be known as the 3rd Aviation Instruction Center. The organization moved to this new site on August 26th, and encamped in a little gulch crossing the northern section of the camp to be.

How well can be remembered the desolate bareness of the ground when they arrived. Only one small tent stood on the field. This was a telephone station operated by the French. It could scarcely be conceived that in so short a while, that there would be a veritable city covering this vast blank area.

Sergeant George Kirk, an experienced construction man and one of the first to be made sergeant in the squadron, was appointed first sergeant about the middle of August. He organized the men into working units, corresponding to their various experience. He exercised a control over his men and supervised the work more like a building superintendent of some great enterprise than a first sergeant.

His duty was employed on vile work. In a few weeks, the first three storehouses were completed and filled with the various materials coming in from the ships at St. Nazaire. The larger articles were piled up along the tracks until it seemed impossible to deposit more. Never before was such

a collection of materials gathered together for a like enterprise. In those cars could be found anything from a lead pencil to a steam tractor; an actual city and its furnishings in raw.

But a few days after arrival at the new camp, which will be known by its later title, 3rd Aviation Instruction center henceforth number of *wrench soldiers were to be seen busily pitching some dozen large white tents in the back ground of the field. There was

a great deal of speculation as to the probable use of these. However suspense was not long during, for early in September there appeared in camp under French guard, about 500 German prisoners. They were to be given over by the French for use by the Americans.

The " P.G. s " for so they were called from the French appellation "Prisonier de Guerre" was at first sullen and morbid. All of the Imperial government was quite well represented; Prussians from the famous Prussian guards, huge, obstinate, dull and silent giants, Bavarians of not much smaller stature nor less heavy mood; Hessians, descendants of those sluggish soldiers outwitted by Washington on the banks of the Delaware men of all ages from sixteen to fifty years. They could not be made to believe that the men in the strange uniform were Americans at first for their Kaiser had told them that America would not enter the war. The morning following there was a call for men, who could speak German, four or five men volunteered and were given the task of supervising the prisoners at work. They were set to work unloading cars and piling lumber at first. They were not inclined to work until they received assurance of good treatment at the hands of the Americans. Of course they were sullen at first, as could reasonably be supposed, but when they found that it did them no good, they apparently decided to make the best of their situation, and worked as well as might be expected. They were utilized to good advantage in all sorts of labor such as carpentering, ditching, piling lumber and the harder work in the storehouses.

The work went on in much the same manner as begun with the construction and unloading of acre, but in the meantime, Lieut. Frank and Capt. Huntington came on the scene of operations with order and plane to

begin the construction of the real and stationary barracks and hangars of the field. At once labor was centered on this work. And may it be said here that of all the squadrons gathered together there could not have been a more versatile one than the 29th. This stood them in good stead during those first weeks of activities when they were entirely independent. No matter what sort of skilled labor or profession was required, someone was always competent to take charge of the venture. Given a railroad, a locomotive and a train of cars; required a crew capable to operate with certain results this given equipment. The question is put to the men, and a number are at once secured, who have had considerable experience with railroads. The same was true of carpenters when called for and gas motor men; and at length the call for civil engineers to survey the camp; No less success was had in looking for men with electrical ability to install and operate the light and power plant and with the mining experience to properly mine and case wells for water supply.

Perhaps the most trying part of the pioneer days in Issoudun was the lack of sufficient supply of water. All water for cooking and washing purposes must be hauled from Issoudun in wine oaks, a distance of some twelve kilometers. Oftentimes the men would work all day long without the privilege of washing and sometimes even drinking water. One of the first things of vital interest and import to the health and comfort of the organization to be considered was the source of water. Some time later began the sinking of two huge shafts which were later to supply a camp of approximately three thousand men.

On August 26th, Lieut. 3rd Low received orders transferring him to the 2nd Aviation "Instruction Center," situated at Tours, to take up duties as its commanding officer.

The first two barracks were finished and the third, fourth, and fifth were well under way, when the squadron moved into the first, Sept. 10th. Certainly was an improvement over the old and leaky tents without floor or efficient room.

The first squadron to enter the field after the 29th, got in camp on the evening of September 19th. They called themselves the "First Reserves", which being interpreted means "First Reserve", inasmuch as the 29th had been working very hard and had begun to feel its independence, they resented the attitude of this organization, which held itself aloof as though it considered itself of better timbre. But then, rivalry and feuds are common among the units in army life. The First Reserves was later made the 26th, relieved the 29th of a great deal of labor, such as piling lumber and construction.

Not long after the arrival of the 26th Squadron, another, the old and honored First Aero Squadron landed in camp, coming by transportation furnished and operated by themselves. They had a number of dilapidated and scarred Quads, which had seen service on the Mexican border. This squadron did no work at camp, for they were enroute for the front and only stopped for a brief rest. Since then they have distinguished themselves in the Zone Of Advance.

A short while before the advent of these squadrons, appeared a grey-haired old man of short stocky nature. He informed the boys that he intended establishing a Y.M.C.A. but for their use. Good as his word, he soon had a canteen and rest rooms opened in a building erected for the Red Cross. Not long after the beginning of the canteen a motion picture machine was installed and once a week, movies were shown. This was a great boon to the soldiers since reading materials were scarce and evenings long. Out of this little hut, developed one of the best Y.M.C.A.'s in all France and credit must be given to Mr. Maxwell, the pioneer secretary of the field.

From the middle of September the squadrons began coming into camp at a rapid rate. Among these were the parts of the 30th to 37th inclusive, which entered as one squadron and was known as the "Allied Squadron". Later the remainder of these squadrons either arrived in camp from England where they had been delayed or were joined by their respective detachments from the old Allied Squadron. These men wholly relieved the 29th from construction work and were aided by some splendid squadrons from the 48th to 57th inclusive, who came in a little later.

Early in October, the Post was visited for the first time by General Pershing. He commended Major Churchill for his success which the squadron felt as also the compliment to them, and it served to spur them on to greater efforts. Not long after General Pershing's visit to the 3rd Aviation Instruction Center, Major Churchill took his leave of the 29th to take up duties in the Zone Of Advance.

He was succeeded in command of the Post by Major Spats, a man of stern and soldierly qualities, and who long after distinguished himself as a pilot at the front.

Lieut. Cord Meyer, who had been attached to the squadron since its encampment at Fort Wood, New York, now became its commanding officer. However he was not long with the organization, for pilots in those days were not plentiful and he was needed at the front. He took leave of the squadron November 22nd, and proceeded to the front line, where he distinguished himself, receiving a citation for good work in bombing and setting fire to an enemy aerodrome.

Later after a fierce battle with the Boche, he was driven to earth fortunately within the American line, happily with no greater injuries than two broken legs.

October 4th, Sergeant Earl D. Forsythe, acting sergeant-major, left the squadron to take up flying training. He was sent to Italy, where he trained for almost one year, before being commissioned 2nd lieutenant.

The first real casualty to break into the family of the organization, was the death of Private Raymond R. Runner at the hospital at Chateauroux on November 5th. This was the result of injuries received

in falling from a moving truck. The death of Private Runner was mourned by the organization deeply, since he had formed many friendships while with it. In honor of Private Runner and in sympathy, with the mother far away from his last bedside, the men erected a large white marble tombstone over his grave in the French cemetery at the old village of Chateauroux. A photograph was taken of it, and sent back to the bereaved parents.

Time passed quickly with the squadron working hard and ere they re-aligned it, Thanksgiving Day was at hand. Thanksgiving was a day long to be remembered. Of all days in the year, when an American's heart turns homeward, it is this one. There were to have been turkeys but because of some delay through the Quartermaster Corps, they did not arrive in time. However the mess sergeant was on his job, and with the squadron mess fund, bought enough turkey in the vicinity to supply the needs of two hundred men. So on the 29th day of November, the 29th Aero Squadron was served with 29 turkeys. It has long been remarked as "some feed" only to be rivaled by Christmas dinners and banquets to follow.

It would be deception to pass over the period of sickness and re-milting quarantine. heretofore the squadron had been very fortunate in escaping diseases, however, this was to come to an end early in December, the squadron had its first case of mumps, which necessarily placed it in quarantine. No sooner would one victim return from the hospital, than another would be ready to take his place, and so it was thus that the squadron was kept in quarantine for over a month, without a single break, and sporadically for many weeks to follow. This was such a detriment to transportation, which was almost wholly carried by the 29th then, that the hopmen and drivers who were absolutely needed, were moved to another separate quarters and kept on duty, while the remainder of the men were held strictly to their barracks and routine duty.

It was this long and tedious restriction and sickness that began the breaking of the squadron. many drivers who were sick were replaced by men from other organizations, until the transportation was filled up with a lot of new blood. Another reason for the division of the squadron which played a big role, was the continuous change of commanding officers. In November Lieut. Cord Meyer left and was succeeded by Lieut. Roy Ployd-Jones. His stay with the squadron ended November 20th, to be followed by Lieut. George Perkins. Lieut. Perkins's command lasted only five days, when he received orders to leave and his place with the squadron was filled by Lieut. S.E. McKeown. Lt. McKeown's reign lasted a little longer than his predecessors, however he took his leave within a few weeks. It. William H. Stovall discharged the duties of Commanding Officer, for a short while after Lieut. McKeown's departure.

It was almost becoming a joke, this continuous changing of commanding officers. The first thing to be remarked on entering the orderly room in the morning would be "Well, who is C.O. for today?"

December 4th, 1917, Earle E. Walton and Lawrence J. Smith, while on

a trip to Nevein for bread,distingoished themselves by extinguishing a fire in a French hangar and saving six large Caudron planes, valued at,norhaps, 4 60,000. This happened at a French Flying Field Each received a citation for initiative and coolness in emergency from the French Commandant and commendation from the Post Commander.

Dame Rumor has always played a star role in the army game, nor was the 29th neglected by this Janus of all time. Bge took great delight in whispering in advance items of news to some member of the equadron,who at the same time was one of her little circle od admirers. She always had the right dope on just the day that the company was due for a move, thus giving those that wore not well

acquitted with her,muoh cause for anxiety. Never would she propagate the same story for two days in euocession,and so she had even her closest followers guessing. nwe to her reputation, she began to forward little hints of the squadron being broken up, early in the New Year, but contrary to form, her reports, had more truth in them than at first they were given credit.

Early in the month of January,1918,Captain P.L,Boal too command of the squadron and with his coming came the re-organization.Capt.n Boal had conceived the idea of making a communication squadron out of the 29th with a few changes,and at the same time,Lieut.Sullivan than Transportation Officer,coveted the squadron for Transportation ',exposes alone. Captain foal and Lieut.Sgllivan got together on

this subject and decided to make a combination of the two, and therewith began the wholesale and sometimes radical transfer of men from the squadron, originally organized in Kelly Field, Texas. Eighty-tpar men of experience miscellaneous were transferred into about one dozen different organizations. These men were not out from the roster list for the reason of inefficiency on their part, but on the contrary to. make room for strictly communication and transportation men. Many of the men transferred were good construction men, and they have made good in other organizations as such.

The organization now consisted of 216 men and 6 offioers,as contrasted with 153 men and 2 officers before the change and took on definitely the character of a Communication Squadron. The company organization remained largely that of the old 29th,and the various branches of the work went on much as before, but there was how the big difference that the departments were better united, the men took more pride and interest in the work and also that a better co-operation was possible between the squadron organization and the work of the various departments.

The very day of the arder,the squadron moved into new quarters taking over the old officer's barracks number one, the finest quarters in the poet for enlisted men and right on the corner of the two main camp roads. The men were in luxury compared to just a few months baok,with electric light,plumoing in the barracks and ample heat. To increase the comfort of the men still furtherweaptain Boa' ordered

the men to make themselves oheste for their belongings, which chests they wereable to keep until they left Yrance,and which proved one of the greatest conveniences.

after a few days necessary for adjustment to the new conditions, the changed organization ran along like a clock. There was ample work to be done, it was work the men were fitted for and interested

in, and the steady growth of the camp provided the necessary changes. The period immediately following was marked by the greatest development of the post itself, and consequently of the squadron work,

so that it is perhaps worthwhile to give a summary by departments. As mentioned before, the work could be roughly divided into four departments namely : Motor transportation, railroad transportation, electric light and power plants and telegraph and telephone.

MOTOR TRANSPORTATION.

The up building of the Motor Transportation Department was largely under Lt. August L. Sullivan, for it was he who made out lists by the dozens of the men wanted and placed most of them in the positions they were to hold as long as the squadron operated the post transportation. The transportation men transferred were mostly picked while he was in office and when in charge was made the conditions were right for the most efficient operation. Soon after the change was made and the organization under him began to show the results of the interest and co-operation of the selected personnel, Lt. Sullivan was transferred from the organization and sent to Cazeaux, there to repeat the organization of another transportation department in a new camp being started there.

Lt. Reilly replaced Lt. Sullivan as Transportation Officer, and it was under him that the Transportation Department attained its greatest size and accomplished its biggest work. The garage force, after finishing a winter's work under the most die-heartening conditions in an ordinary hanger, without proper heat or light, finally moved into a fine garage, which had been built by French contractors. It would be a serious omission to fail to make a special mention of the work done by the garage force throughout the winter of 1917-1918. They were continually handicapped by a shortage of literally everything, they were working in the wet and cold hangar, under the most trying conditions. Yet it was on them alone, that the upkeep of every motor vehicle on the field depended (varying from 175 to 248) exclusive of trailers, and never once did the work accumulate to any extent. Indeed, in addition to the repair of the motor vehicles, the various departments continually came to them for small jobs to be done, saying that there was absolutely no other place in the camp or surrounding country where the work could be handled.

Throughout this first winter in France, there was also other difficulties besides that of maintenance. The demand for touring cars, trucks, and motor cycles at all times, exceeded the supply making the most economical handling and closest co-operation necessary. The driving was done under every difficulty on all kinds of roads and open fields, up and down steep hills, on roads of glass, without halts, in the coldest weather without the later supplied with to members of the American Expeditionary Force, and on long trips without commutation of rations. On the cold morning it was quite a sight to see the men struggling to start their trucks, having first to break thick coats of ice from the water tank, before they could even obtain water for their radiators, for all of the trucks were parked out on the road where it was a short easy slide to the ditch, and a long hard trip to get back on the road. But the trucks had to be running by seven o'clock, and often beforehand they were. The motor vehicles after completing a trip across muddy fields, and slush, would require no little work to put them into condition again and the drivers also had to undergo considerable of an overhauling. The men in this department have always been proud of the commendation received for the determined surmounting of every difficulty that the first winter in "the worst mud hole in France" presented.

RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION DEPT

The railroad operation was under the supervision of Lt. E. J. Morrow, another of the officers gained by the squadron in the big transfer, and the personnel consisted largely of men who were temporary

out of the organization. They were later transferred back to the 400th however the organization has always considered them as having been identified with it. At this period, there was considerable repair work to be done, for which outside aid was obtained, but the work of operation and supervision never left the hands of the men who first started it. In fact, after the organization left Issoudun, the services of these men was considered so indispensable that they were ordered back there in spite of every effort to hold them. So

it has been that this railroad, one of the first to be constructed by the Americans in France was from the time of its construction and continuing throughout the war, largely built, repaired and operated by men in or from this Organization.

TRIC LIGHT and POWER PLANT

The electric light and power plants at Issoudun were at this time in the process of completion, finally becoming the most elaborate electrical system of any camp in the American Expeditionary Forces.

400th men directed the installation and operation of all the equipment while they were there, including six plants in all, two for the main field, one for field One, Two and Three, and one each for Fields Five, Seven and Eight.

The first generator sets ranging from three to twenty kilowatts were installed at the most suitable location, and in this installation the

men were called upon to use their utmost ingenuity. Serious shortages in both tools and equipment did not prevent accomplishing this work, though it was necessary to use homemade switch boards, banks of lamps in place of missing rheostats, and even to hook up motors to serve as generators and vice versa. In one instance there was considerable discussion as to the time required for a complete installation of a gas engine generator plant and switchboard. A certain Lieutenant, who risked many of his francs on the ability of the men to show speed, was seen adding many francs to his fold when the whole job was finished in ten hours.

The completion of the two main plants, each containing one 50 kilowatt and two 75 kilowatt steam engines generator, and

three 200 horse power horizontal tubular boilers was delayed for some time by lack of essential material. It was early in the new year, 1918, when these plants were finally put into operation, the smaller units then being used as auxiliaries, making the entire system flexible enough to allow one plant to carry the load of another in case of breakdown. This was

a matter of great importance because of the delicate operations, being performed at night in the hospital, and also the night work in various departments. The gas engine and electric driven pump installations also came under the same department, the main camp having two units and the outlying camps one piece. Water was forced by centrifugal pumps with heads as high as eighty feet into large tanks and from there was distributed to the various buildings.

TELEPHONE TELEGRAPH DEPT

The Telephone and Telegraph Department, under Lieut. Leonard Work, found themselves at all times well occupied in increasing the service to fill the needs of the growing camp. So thoroughly was this work done by that visitors came from many miles, in fact even from Paris, to see what they call the "best telephone system in France". Both the equipment (some of which had been brought over, and represented the best the United States could make) and the operation were repeatedly given this high compliment, a compliment the more remarkable considering the small personnel that created this service in so short a time.

The handling of this work was rightly felt to be of first importance and at the same time not without its compensations. In the absence of service at the front, it was the employment most desired by the greater part of the men, and they felt the pride in their work necessary to a proper accomplishment. The time passed along very quickly until one day in March, the rumor circulated around that two companies of motor mechanics were coming to Issoudun to replace the 400th in releasing the latter for other service. It was

quite the most startling rumor of the new year, and everybody asked if it meant the long wanted chance for service at the front, perhaps as a transportation outfit. In the early part of May, 1918 the motor mechanics arrived, and it was soon plain that they were to take over all of the work after being properly broken in. This process of "breaking in" was not fully completed for about two months, having been interrupted, once by an untimely quarantine, affecting one of the motor mechanic companies. Finally however the last of the men were released from their old duties, and returned to the old work of construction begun so many months ago, while awaiting further orders. Shortly before the last of the men were re-assigned to construction work the squadron had another experience - a very annoying one - and yet that later on (mused some of them over-enthusiastic to boast that was but another proof that the squadron was truly first in many different fields. It was along in May that some one hundred and fifty of the men contracted influenza, over one hundred or more men being in the hospital at the same time. The doctors were very much puzzled to know what was the trouble at first, but they finally were convinced it was the then little known "flu". So expert was the treatment that not a man died nor spent more than two weeks in the hospital. The following fall, when the terrifying epidemic swept throughout the world, the 400th did not have a single case - they had paid their tax long ago.

During this same period that the squadron was relieved from duty they lost three of the officers who had done so much to perfect the re-organization and gained another who was later to take command and in turn exert a large influence. The officers lost were Captain Boal, the Commanding Officer, who had first conceived and organized the Communication Squadron and had been responsible for the success of the idea, Lieut. Joseph R. Neilly, who had taken over the operation of the transportation Department, when it was in the period of greatest growth and successfully steered it through, and Lieut. Work, who had been the one guiding genius in the telephone and telegraph system, that was one of the first services to distinguish Issoudun. Lt. Work was carried as being on detached service, but as a matter of fact, he was never again to be with the squadron,

Captain Kasson, who had received his promotion on April 22nd, after a delay of some months, in the mail, took over the command of the organization and Lieut. O'Quater was assigned. Lt. Morrow remained, making the total complement of officers three instead of five.

About this time, the formidable German offensives were causing anxiety to all the allied forces, and the men used to hang around the bulletin boards at the Plane News Office and wonder if they would ever see combatant service. The work at this time, was much less effective and purely temporary in character and the men all itched for a chance to get up further and see moreover they were beginning to feel like old soldiers who were due at the front many months ago. To offset this restlessness and make the most

of a convenient quarantine Capt. Kaseon organized various rifle drills and extended order formations and enabled the men to qualify themselves better for any possible service at the front, and also stimulated more athletic activity. The character of the work before this time had rendered athletics very difficult on account of the irregular working hours. Soon a baseball team was organized, a tug of war team started and also a tennis and volley

ball court put up. The organization left Issoudun because the drills and athletics had accomplished great results but for the time spent everybody felt well repaid.

While awaiting further orders, the greatest hopes were aroused one day by a slight hint from Capt. Kasson at a meeting of non-commissioned officers, when he stated that there was hope for service at the front. That was tonic enough to excite all concerned, but when about four days later, June 14th, he announced at retreat that all chauffeurs should be ready to leave in thirty minutes for service at the front, and that the rest of the squadron would follow later, the crowd let out the biggest cheer ever heard at Issoudun. There was a scramble by everyone to put his name down as a driver, and get his stuff ready. In just about thirty minutes time, 129 men with Capt. Kasson and Lieut. Shuster crowded into Fiat Trucks, with the greater part of their belongings, and the bunch went off exuberantly happy and confident of "doing their bit" on the front at last. At this time the German menace was at its greatest, and it was generally accepted that the transportation facilities were being taxed to the utmost to stem the advance. In everybody's mind was the picture of the 400th arriving at Romorantin that night,

hopping into trucks, and speeding up to the line of battle. Incidentally, some of the chauffeurs, who had "qualified" as drivers since the announcement of the move were wondering what would happen if the truck stalled under fire.

Romorantin was reached about 10 P.M., and from afar off one could see a large convoy being lit up for preparatory to the start. There's our convoy, everybody thought. But it wasn't. The men were

all piled off the truck into barracks, in the pine woods on the edge of the river Cher, about four kilometers from Romorantin, to dream

on that night of the fighting they hoped to see. The next morning, all expectant, they were lined up and marched for a couple of miles to the Transportation Division Heservue Park, there to fight the Germans by overhauling and repairing the several hundred vehicles, of all makes and types that were needed for service all over France. But they still believed that when this equipment was put in the proper shape, they would see the actions long waited. Some of the men did. Occasionally vehicles would be sent up far into the Zone Of Advance, and the men who took them would stay as chauffeurs, thereby seeing real service, but the organization as a unit never made the trip.

There are several points that stood out in the record the organization made at Romorantin, officially called the Transportation Division Reserve Park, Air Service Production Center k 2. 6.P.0,713

The first is that the entire organization was moved from Issoudun to Romorantin and three subsequent moves were made into different barracks, without the loss of an hour's work. Another is that within a short time of the squadron's arrival on the field every vehicle not hopelessly wrecked was in running condition, and the larger number of them were not only repaired but driven to their destination by 400th men. As the work neared its completion, the men began to have new food for thought. What would they do next? While this thought was prominent in everybody's mind came the news that Capt. Kasson was relinquishing command of the organization to take up new responsibilities in Paris.

For the next week or so, the situation at Romorantin was rather unusual, practically every vehicle on the field, except a large number of trailers had been sent to the Motor Transport Corps at Dijon, leaving the greater part of the 400th without anything to do. So it was necessary to learn the game of camouflaging sand for several days, you could not walk up the line of trailers, without

noticing men bunked away on all sides. It was with great relief that the uncertainty finally ended by orders to report to Orly, American Aviation Acceptance Park fl, to take over the maintenance and operation of all motor transportation. This was the best of news, for in the service at Orly, the men saw some chance of seeing the front, and the certainty of seeing Paris, only ten kilometers away. Then, too, it assured definitely that the organization would be on transportation work.

Shortly before the orders to report for Orly were received, the commissioned personnel was again changed. Lt. Shuster had assumed command when Capt. Kaseon left, and now Lt. Morrow left the organization on August 5th. On July 12th, 2nd Lt. John E. Hornbaker was assigned.

On August 9th, the squadron entrained for Orly, arriving the next afternoon. The following morning, the serious work began. It was an old familiar game to the men, so that it was but little trouble to take up the work, and to place the men where best fitted. 2nd Lt. Charles P. McCann, shortly afterward assigned to the squadron was at that time Transportation Officer, with 2nd Lt. Hornbaker as assistant. Shortly afterward Captain Kearney assumed command. Lt. Shuster was made Transportation Officer, with Lt. McCann and Hornbaker as his assistants, and still later Lt. McCann was ordered to another post.

As had been said, the taking over of the transportation work was an old story to the men. But not driving in Paris. The little tax & bugs that infest the town were distinctly a novelty to most of them, both as to appearance, and the way they were driven. They know no rule or reason, and their erratic dartings in and out of blind corners troubled the men at first. The first impulse was usually to plaster them against the nearest wall, but the men did use self-restraint enough to win the commendation of the Post Commander and many of the Post Officers, for their driving about all round operation of the department.

On September 28th, Sgt. H. F. Bennett was commissioned second Lieutenant and Sgt. 1st Cl. Oliver O. Morton was detailed for flying training. The squadron were happy to see Sgt. Bennett receive what had been promised him so long ago on the completion of his flying training at Chateauroux. The way he managed to receive this training is interesting in that it shows the efforts made by the men to obtain flying training and the means necessary. A detachment of cadets were sent from Issoudun, to Chateauroux to take the initial training with the French on Caudron planes. Sgt. Bennett, then a chauffeur, was assigned to duty driving the touring car of the Commanding Officer of this detachment, and he managed to complete the training with that detachment and receive his French Brevet, without interfering with his other duties and unbeknown to any but a few. When Headquarters received telegraphic information of the completion of his training, along with the data, it was decided to enter his name on the flying list. but only after months, did he receive his commission.

It is rather hard to say much of the period that followed except in relation to the war news. Every day, greater victories were being realized and the prevailing feeling was that the final victory was near. There was lots of work to be done, ten hours a day, every week day, and often Sunday and night work added on. But all the work was done with a thought of the battles being won and the end that was soon to be.

Of the period immediately following the armistice, nothing much can be said, unless one speaks again of the rumors floating around. Every trip that the Commanding Officer made to Headquarters was considered of some startling significance, and Generals, Colonels, etc., were soon making the most pleasing and discouraging remarks. The work soon slackened perceptibly and the men drilled for one hour a day to prepare them for their arrival home. The restlessness was unavoidable and natural, but it did not interfere with either the work or the discipline of the organization,

NORMAN T AER

On about November 4th, 1916, Sgt. 1st. Cl., and M.N.E. Morris L. Walksr were commissioned second lieutenants. Both of these men, like Sgt. Bennett had been waiting for a long time, 3rd. Tyler having passed all his examinations nearly a year ago. It was a great satisfaction to everybody that the promotions went through, before it was too late, and the event was very happily celebrated.

By this time the football season was nearing its end, the 400th having won the championship of "B" League, having played the five games necessary without being scored against. The 6th Co., 2nd. k.M., winners in "A" League were the opponents in the last game of unusual importance to all because each team wanted to win the cup and take

it home, as evidence of their last accomplishment in France. A number of officials from the Hero Club of America were on hand to present the cup they had offered.

The 6th Co. were great users of the "Minnesota shift", a formation the 400th had never played against, and at first, the difference in

the style of play of the two teams added interest and uncertainty. The ball zigzagged up and down the field most spectacularly for the first three quarters, the 6th Co. finally soaring their first touchdown at the beginning of the fourth* quarter. The last thirty

feet of progress was largely made by penalties, not wholly understood by the 400th team, added to their determination for victory. When the 6th Co. started singing "The Old 400th Lint What It Used To Be" to the tune of "The Old Gray Mare". The men of the 400th said little their whole heart and being centered on the necessity of quiet powerful action. In the remaining few minutes, the rush of the 400th was completely irresistible; they plunged straight down the line time after time. The touchdown was scored with only twenty-five seconds left to play, leaving the team confident that the next time, the issue would /lover be in doubt. Nor was it. The next game was won by a

score of 13-0, their defensive proving stronger, and their offence a pretty thing to watch.

On December 9th, the squadron gave another banquet, this time in honor of the football team, and in celebration of the victory they had won. This banquet was a departure from the ordinary, in that American telephone girls from Paris accepted the invitation to join the party, just enough for the football players. The rest of the men felt that the players were thoroughly deserving of this particular privilege, and the girls on their part added much to the success of the evening. A good entertainment was furnished by the 400th men and their friends, a number of assurances of friendship were made by old friends of the organization, and every once in a while, some word of the possible return trip to the States would be mentioned. For this was the thought, in everybody's mind at this time to clean up and get out.

December 20th, 1918, Lieut. William Shuster was relieved as squadron commander, and Captain John W. Corcoran assigned as squadron commander the same date.

January 3rd, 1918, Lieut. William Shuster relieved from squadron and assigned to the 1st. Ord. Casual Company, A.A.A.P. # 1.

January 7th, 1919, Lieut. J.W. Bailey, reported to squadron for duty, and was appointed adjutant and supply officer for squadron order.

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Sources