

# 662 REPAIR SQUADRON

## MISSION

### LINEAGE

236 Aero Squadron (Supply) organized Dec 1917

Redesignated 662 Aero Squadron (Supply), Feb 1918

Demobilized, Apr 1919

662 Repair Squadron constituted in the Organized Reserve, 1 Oct 1933

31 Oct 1936

662 Aero Squadron (Supply) reconstituted and consolidated with 662 Repair Squadron, 4 Dec 1936. Consolidated organization designated 662 Repair Squadron.

### STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX

Aviation Gen. Sup. Dep. San Antonio, TX, May 1918

Not initiated 1933-1935

Eighth Corps Area 1935-1936

Inactive 1936-1941

### ASSIGNMENTS

806th Air Depot

### COMMANDERS

### HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

662nd Repair Squadron Constituted in the Organized Reserve 1 October 1933, assigned to the 806th Air Depot, and allotted to the Eighth Corps Area. Initiated 20 June 1935 in the Eighth Corps Area. Withdrawn from the Eighth Corps Area 5 June 1936 and allotted to the Second Corps Area. Buffalo, NY, designated as headquarters on organization, but the unit was never organized at that location. Inactivated 31 October 1936 in the Eighth Corps Area by relief of personnel. Consolidated on 4 December 1936 with the 662nd Aero Squadron (Supply) (a WWI unit organized in December 1917 as the 236th Aero Squadron (Supply) at Kelly Field, TX; redesignated as the 662nd Aero Squadron (Supply) February 1918; demobilized in April 1919 at San Antonio, TX; reconstituted on 4 December 1936). Disbanded 31 May 42.

the first ambition of a "rookie" is to become a member of a definite organization, where he can give vent to his pride and enthusiasm on being in the Army and by working for the interest of some definite organization. The 21st day of December, 1917, brought with its dawn such a blessing to 150 men gathered from all parts of the country. That night—line 27, in the old First Training Brigade—was the happy reception hall for the 150 joyous chaps. Deep down in their hearts these men were filled with pride and determination to make their organization one of credit, and one on the early out-going list of Squadrons.

The elements seemed to have conspired with the Army Officials in giving this Squadron many tests of endurance, both physical and mental. The night of January 10th, 1918, Kelly Field was visited by one of those famous surprise sandstorms, and lo and behold, what a havoc one such can produce! There, in the pitch dark, blinded by a cold dust-laden wind, none but the brave could endure. But the early morning found our organization practically intact and hovelled together fifteen and twenty in each remaining serviceable tent.

On January 14th, we were filled with both joy and misgiving, for it was then orders were received for our departure from, the First Training Brigade. This order also brought with it a change of officers. We had thought that an order to move could mean but one thing, and that was to start on a long journey across the pond. Our joy was short lived however, as we found out soon afterward that we were bound for the Second Training Brigade. On to<p of this disappointment we were to have new officers, and we felt we had been robbed both of our home and of our Daddy, but after a few hard days of building our new camp and getting in personal contact with Lieut. Whelden, our new Commanding Officer, and Lieuts, Beal, Carter and Neeley, we soon found that there were a lot of good fellows in the Army's Commissioned personnel.

Our life in the Second Training Brigade was practically confinement to camp, as we seldom had the privilege of a pass, being required to be in shape for immediate travel to the Port of Embarkation; in fact, not a day passed but an orderly rushed in from Headquarters with the request for a report of our personnel, records or supplies. Headquarters never caught us asleep on reports, for M. S. E. Frank Judge simply ate up the paper-work. His advice and counsel was sought by all and it was rumored that he assisted many ardent admirers in phrasing their love message to "her" at home. Our equipment was always the best to be had for Sergeant 1st Class Walter C. Grace, was always first to scent the arrival of any new stuff for issue. and if it only depended on equipment, we would have been in France among the first.

During this period little crabbing was done by the boys, even though deprived of all privileges, and detailed for fatigue or guard. All were ready to put up with anything, providing the reward would be overseas service. What little time we had for recreation was easily taken advantage of, and a cracking good baseball team developed under the enthusiastic leadership of Sweeney, hailing from the environment of New York, and a promoter of pugilistic matches. Many a good team went down to defeat at the hands of our sluggers, and possibly through the wise judgment of our umpire, Lieut. Whelden.

It was while at the Second Training Brigade that our number was changed from the 236th, to the 662nd Aero Supply Squadron, as the entire Air Service was being re-numbered in order to conform with the late War Department plan. This change, as did all orders, affecting the Squadron, again gave grounds for a rumor that we were to leave at once for France, and on March 14th, 1918, a wild cheer went up when notice was given to pack up and break camp; but we were only destined for another disappointment and a wild night's experience, for at one o'clock that afternoon, a line of trucks pulled up which soon carted us over to Kelly No.2. There we were to take the lines which were to be left vacant by the 615th Aero Squadron, which was bound for the Happy Hunting Ground. As there were no quarters available, we were forced to spend a night in three hangar tents—and where is the man who will ever forget the job we had in erecting those shapeless circus tents? In the teeth of a cold wind and steady drizzle, we worked long after dark to get in under cover. However, we were rewarded with a cracking hot meal well prepared under the most trying circumstances by our able kitchen force.

Our life in Kelly No. 2 proved very interesting, although the hours of work were long and hard, as practically every man was assigned to Special Duty in the field to work on airplanes and motors, a work full of interest and one that made you feel that you were doing a real service, or would soon be properly trained to take the long looked-for trip. We worked both day and night shifts, and our cooks were compelled to give a regular cafeteria service, but lived up to their jobs like real men. The opportunities to go to the city were much better here, providing you had the time or were not too tired to entertain the ladies.

As a rule, with most organizations, there are periodic spells of grumbling about the mess, but as an organization, there have been very few days when there was dissatisfaction with our eats. This can be considered remarkable when you take into consideration that our organization messed in the field longer than any other in Kelly Field. All our meals until late September were

eaten in the open and prepared on the old field ranges with no cover but the sky. and neither rain, wind nor dust dampened the determination of the cooks to put out real chow, and the well-known army stew rarely found a place on our daily menu. This remarkable record was due to the fine spirit in the kitchen under the able leadership of Sergeant 1st Class Paul P. Groben, a man always on the job.

While at Kelly No. 2 we soon began to appreciate the Y. M. C. A. for we were steady patrons at the movies, lectures, vaudeville sketches, boxing bouts etc., in, all of which the 662nd were able to furnish participants'. The building was directly across the road, therefore very accessible, so that all their bulletins were read with interest and every privilege taken advantage of. We can not give the Y directors too much credit for the attention they gave us and the fine programs rendered under their direction.

A man who served a twenty-four hour tour of guard there, most assuredly did a day's work as no one could get a wink of sleep in the guard house. When we were hauled back to mess all we could do would be to grab a few bites in our hands, for the chauffeur was constantly honking the horn, signaling to pull out again.

At last it came—on May 9th, 1918. a great big envelope marked, "Confidential" with Travel Orders No. 19 contained therein; we can prove it in black and white, and it has the official seal on it. It was a "grand and glorious feeling" when Lieut. Whelden called a formation and told us to prepare to bid Texas farewell as the 661st, 662nd, 663rd and 664th. were ordered to the Port of Embarkation and would entrain at 3 P. M. May 11th, 1918. Gee! What preparations we did make! All the eats and smokes we could gather in were collected for that trip.- and we lived in ecstasy for a period of three days, but everyone had overlooked the rabbit's foot or the horse shoe, for at 11 o'clock of the morning of departure, a telegram came from Washington cancelling our order, and our part in the Farewell to Kelly Field consisted of lining up at the railroad tracks to bid a sad and gloomy farewell to the other three Squadrons when they pulled out. That same day we received orders to report to the Aviation General Supply Depot on the Frio Road:, in Kelly Field, and the next day the funeral procession started for that station. It was a broken hearted bunch of chaps that pulled in there early in the afternoon, but our special training in building camps of our own soon provided comfortable quarters for each squad, as we pitched our tents on any vacant spot we could find next to the warehouse.

It is here we had our full share of guard duty, for it seemed: we were on every other day but there was one redeeming feature; we had real shot guns and real ammunition that would actually do some work if called on for duty, and then too. we had the pleasure of filling the hearts of the new rookies about the field with awe and fear, because we walked our posts with fixed bayonets and none cared to approach within jabbing distance.

Early in the month of August a trip was taken to New Braunfels, Texas, in trucks and a weekend trip was enjoyed at Landa Park where wonderful swimming facilities and plenty of dancing were offered. A good mess was provided as the kitchen equipment was carried with us. All men were

able to attend, as the two Squadrons at the Depot alternated in taking care of the necessary duties at the Depot while each one took pleasure in this outing.

To show that the 662nd was alive to the occasion it was the first organization to give a "Victory Dance" after the signing of the Armistice, and on Saturday November 16th an eye opener in the way of a dance was shown to the ladies of the nearby city. Having just moved into our new barracks (after nearly a year in tents) every man was keen to put on a real party. The barracks were cleared of all bunks and furniture, and the walls and ceiling covered with a maze of red, white and blue streamers. At one end of the barracks a platform was built for Kelly Field's 15 piece orchestra which furnished a most delightful program. Probably one of the greatest surprises of the evening was the tasty lunch prepared by the cooks consisting of three courses, including a chicken salad that will long be remembered. During the evening a creditable minstrel was staged by three members assisted by the Squadron quartette.

It was not our good fortune to close the year without a heavy touch of sadness, for on December 15th we lost one of our beloved companions. Chauffeur Walter B. Leonard. Anyone who witnessed the military funeral service as held by our Squadron, could readily see with what high esteem this man was held by his fellow men.

One and all regret that we were not able to do our share over-seas, but the spirit and willingness was most assuredly in each heart. We feel this is clearly exemplified by our steady and consistent attention to duty in this country. We can leave for our homes thoroughly convinced that we have been well repaid for the sacrifices we have made, because of those lasting ties of friendship created by associations with real men from all parts of this wonderful country of freedom.

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

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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.