

PHOTO SECTION 39

LINEAGE

STATIONS

DEPLOYED STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

PHOTOGRAPHIC SECTION

Photo Hot Field Mess

AMONG the various departments on Kelly Field which deserve special mention must be included the Photographic Section, or what is officially known as Aerial Section No. 39. This department is located in a little building commonly termed the "Photo Hut," located in an obscure position just in the rear of the Cadet Wing School, Flying Department.

As far as the Kelly Field activities of this section are concerned, it may be said that it is constantly kept busy photographing and printing views and portraits of buildings and persons both in the Flying Department and in Kelly No. 1. The department is frequently called upon to do like work for Camp Travis, Brooks Field, Camp Stanley, Camp John Wise and Fort Sam Houston.

But in the broader scope of its work, its men are here trained to take photographs from airplanes in flight, showing accurately the country over which they fly. Thousands of pictures are taken and from these is constructed an immense map of the terrain covered. The country within several hundred miles of San Antonio in each direction has been photographed, more than 100,000 exposures having been made. The department also recently made moving pictures of stunt and formation flying under the direction of an expert from the Committee on Public Information, of Washington, and these "movies" will be shown in all the large cities and towns over the country. The pismires from which maps are made are usually photographed from a height of from 7,000 to 10,000 feet. They are made on 4x5 inch plates and after being developed and printed are enlarged to twice this size. These maps are used by pilots of aircraft flying over strange country and are also preserved among the permanent records of the United States Geographical Survey, in Washington.

When these maps are to be made the members of the department leave the Field with their motor lorry and trailer and follow the course of the plane doing the photographing. This lorry is thoroughly equipped to perform every function of a photographic department, from the actual photographing to the final turning out of a completed photo. The members of the department boast that they can turn out a completed photo eight minutes after they receive the film. This lorry outfit is also equipped to provide quarters and living accommodations for the men in charge. They carry their own provisions and do their own cooking and in fact live during the entire trip in their lorry and trailer. The outfit provides its own electricity, but also has an acetylene plant for use during emergency.

Lieut. Joseph H. O'Connell, former Head Instructor in Map Interpretation at Cornell University, is in charge of this little band of photographic workers, and their efficiency and ability is attested by the fact that only a few months ago several of the contingent were sent to France to co-operate with the American Expeditionary Forces.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 27 Oct 2011

Updated:

Sources