118 AIRLIFT SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE
118 Aero Squadron organized, 31 Aug 1917
Redesignated 639 Aero Squadron, 1 Feb 1918
Demobilized, 6 Jun 1919

118 Observation Squadron, activated and allotted to NG, 1 Nov 1923

639 Aero Squadron reconstituted and consolidated with 118 Observation Squadron, 1936

Ordered to active service, 24 Feb 1941
Redesignated 118 Observation Squadron (Light), 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 118 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942
Redesignated 118 Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter), 2 Apr 1943
Redesignated 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 11 Aug 1943
Inactivated on 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 118 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine and allotted to the Air National Guard 24 May 1946
Activated, 1 Jul 1946
Federally recognized, 7 Aug 1946
Redesignated 118 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Mar 1951
Inactivated, 1 Nov19 52
Redesignated 118 Fighter-Bomber Squadron and activated, 1 Jan 1953
Redesignated 118 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1 Jul 1955
Redesignated 118 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1958
Redesignated 118 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, Aug 1961

Redesignated 118 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 12 Jun 1971
Redesignated 118 Fighter Squadron, 31 Mar 1992
Redesignated 118 Airlift Squadron, 1 Apr 2008

STATIONS
Kelly Field, TX, 31 Aug 1917
Garden City, NY, 3-13 Jan 1918
St Maixent, France, 29 Jan 1918
Ourches France, 3 Mar 1918
Amanty, France (detachment at Ourches), 24 Mar 1918
Chatillon-sur-Seine, France, 8 Jun 1918-1919
Mitchel Field, NY, 22 May 4 Jun 1919
Hartford, CT, 1 Nov 1923
Jacksonville, FL, 16 Mar 1941
Charleston, SC, 22 Jan 1942
Tullahoma, TN, 8 Sep 1942
Morris Field, NC, 9 Nov 1942
Camp Campbell, KY, 2 Apr 1943
Statesboro AAFld, GA, 23 Jun 1943
Aiken AAFld, SC, 29 Aug 1943
Key Field, MS, 25 Oct-18 Dec 1943
Gushkara, India, 16 Feb 1944 (detachments operated from Chakulia and Kharagpur, India, Mar-Jun 1944)
Chengkung, China, Jun 1944 (air echelon at Kewilin, China, 16 Jun-14 Sep 1944
Liuchow, China, 14 Sep-7 Nov 1944
Suichwan, China, 12 Nov 1944-22 Jan 1945
Laohwangping China, after 14 Apr 1945)
Liuchow, China, 25 Aug-26 Sep 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 5-7 Nov 1945
Suffolk County AFB, NY
Bradley ANGB, East Granby, CT

ASSIGNMENTS
Unkn, 31 Aug 1917-Jun 1918
Second Corps Aeronautical School, Jun 1918-Mar 1919
Unkn, Mar-4 Jun 1919
Connecticut NG (divisional aviation, 43rd Division), 1 Nov 1923
IV Army Corps, 24 Feb 1941
66 Observation (later Reconnaissance; Tactical Reconnaissance) Group, 1 Sep 1941
III Reconnaissance Command, Oct 1943
AAF, India-Burma Sector, Jan 1944
Fourteenth Air Force, 12 Jun 1944
Tenth Air Force, 1 Aug 1945
Fourteenth Air Force, 25 Aug-7 Nov 1945

103 Fighter Group/ Fighter-Interceptor Group 1946-6 Feb 52
4709 Defense Wing -1952
103 Fighter-Bomber Group (later Fighter-Interceptor Group, Fighter Group, Tactical Fighter Group, Fighter Group, Tactical Fighter Group, Fighter Group, Operations Group) 1953

ATTACHMENTS
Tenth Air Force, 14 Feb-12 Jun 1944
23 Fighter Group, 16 Jun 1944-15 Aug 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS
Mission Aircraft
JN
TW-3
PT-1
BT-1
O-2
O-17
OX-12
O-1
SE-5
BC-1, 1936
M-1
O-38, 1931
O-46, 1936
O-47, 1939
P-39, 1942
O-49, 1942
O-57
O-58
O-59, 1941-1942
B-25
DB-7
L-5
P-40, 1942
L-5, 1944-1945
F-6, 1945
P-51
F-51
F-84, 1953
F-94, 1956
F-86, 1957
F-100, 1959
F-102, 1966
TF-102

F-100, 1971
A-10, 1979
C-21, 2007

Support Aircraft
B-26
C-47
C-54
U-3A, 1970
T-29, 1972

COMMANDERS
Lt Christie
Cpt Emanuel Fritz, 24 Dec 1917
Maj Talbott O. Freeman, 1 Nov 1923 (27 Jul 1923)
Maj. William F. Ladd 31 Dec 25-31 Dec 29
Maj. Hubert E. Johnson 1 Jan 30-May 41
Maj. Harry W. Generous May 41-4 Nov 41
Maj Ragnar Hanson, 11 Mar 1941
Maj Russell Daniels
Maj Robert Weirman
Maj Edward O. McComas
Cpt Oran S. Watts, Jan 1945
LTC Charles C. Simpson, Jr., May, 1945
Cpt Marvin Lubner Jun 1945
LTC Thomas L. Carroll, 7 Aug 1946
Maj John C. Rice, 28 Sep 1950
Maj Howard W. Spencer, 16 Dec 1950
Maj Randal B. Hathway, 1 Mar 1953
Maj Walter R. Miller, 23 Apr 1954
Maj Randal B. Hathway, 30 Nov 1957
Maj Walter R. Miller, 10 Sep 1958
Maj Wesley R. Holder, 8 Nov 1961
Maj Norman L. Turnbull, 1 Mar 1963
Maj Edward Bonetti, 8 Nov 1965
LTC John W. Dunn, 17 Jan 1967
LTC George L. Rivest, 1 Apr 1968
LTC Raymond R. Lilley, 2 Sep 1971
LTC Henry O. Pasqualini, 23 Sep 1972
LTC Raymond R. Lilley, 1 Apr 1973

HONORS
Service Streamers
Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers
Antisubmarine, American Theater
India-Burma
China Defensive
China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Distinguished Unit Citation
Hunan Province, China, 18-25 Jun 1944

EMBLEM




The distinctive badge or emblem of the 43rd Division Aviation, approved August 9, 1928, "represents the Connecticut Colonial secretary making haste with the Colony's Charter to secrete it in the oak tree, since known as the Charter Oak, to prevent its seizure by the British. It is emblematical of safety, speed and integrity. The code letters are the first letters of the motto, 'Fidele et Alerte'—Faithful and Alert."

On a yellow disc with a black border, a representation of a Connecticut colonial secretary running with the colony's charter in his left hand proper (hat, coat and breeches blue; hair, vest, tie, shoes and stockings black; face, hands, shirt collar, shoe buckles and charter white) all encircled with a black annulet broken at the top with white spots, similar to the international code letters "F.E.A.", in base a white and black fleur-de-lis. **SIGNIFICANCE:** History relates that in 1662 a royal charter was issued that among other things resulted in the union of the Hartford and New Haven colonies, a forward step in the formation of modern Connecticut. In 1687 Sir Edmund Andros, British administrator of the New England colonies, visited Hartford and attempted to execute "quo warranto" proceedings against the royal charter. Tradition explains that in the course of a discussion at night over surrender of the charter, the candles were extinguished and the charter itself (which had been brought to the meeting) was removed from the table and spirited away where it was hidden in a large oak tree, afterwards known as the "Charter Oak". Consequently, the charter was never revoked. Thus history and tradition were combined to produce the emblem of the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. This emblem was officially recognized in 1924 and approved under U.S. Air Force standards in 1953. The emblem represents a "colonial secretary" running with the Charter of 1662 to hide it in an oak tree. (Approved, 13 Aug 1953)

MOTTO
FIDELO ET ALERTE—Faithful and Alert

NICKNAME
Flying Yankees

OPERATIONS
The 639th (then the 118) Aero Supply Squadron was organized and mustered to its full strength of 150 enlisted men on or about 1 Sep 1917 as a Regular Army organization at Kelly Field, TX Every member of the squadron had enlisted voluntarily at Fort Slocum , N.Y., and everyone was enthusiastic over the possibilities of his becoming a pilot in two months. For they were all told, like many others who enlisted early, that they would be trained as pilots and would be actually flying within a month, surely not over two months. It was not long before the men were disillusioned of this most extravagant prediction for nearly four months the work was largely infantry drill, K.P., guard, and fatigue, some of the men were given schooling in the rigging of airplanes and the handling and care of airplane motors.

The original personnel were not left intaot. On Oct 15th, 1917, seventy-three men, selected according to their trades, were transferred to squadrons which were under orders to go overseas. On December 25th, 1917, twenty-four more of the original 150 were transferred out. The losses were made good with replacements of men, some of whom had been drafted; and there grew up splendid unity and squadron pride and, above all, A great eagerness and impatience to go "over there" without further delay.

The commissioned personnel of the squadron while it was in the States consisted, up to the day

orders were received to leave Kelly Field, December 20th of never more than one officer. Upon its organization the squadron was placed in command of Private E. K. Sawyer, who was relieved on September 12th by 1st Lieut. R. Veit. He was relieved on September 19th by 1st Lieut. Marshall who reigned until November 10th. Lieut. Robinson took his place only to be relieved in turn by 1st Lieut. J. G. C. Christie. Lieut. Christie remained a month during which time he completed the equipment of the squadron as far as was possible, studied and classified the squadron personnel, and continued the instruction in drill and military discipline.

Early in December orders were received to prepare for overseas service and to remain in readiness to leave on a 24 hours notice. Lieut. Christie, anticipating with considerable pleasure his early departure with the squadron, was relieved on December 24th, 1917 by 1st Lieut. Emanuel Fritz and placed in charge of a construction squadron. Orders were received to proceed to Garden City, N.Y. the next morning, on the 27th ten additional officers were assigned for duty; Lieut. Gillett, assigned as adjutant, Lieut. Hansen, as Supply Officer, Lieuts. Little, Lewis, Ruggles, J. S. Hall, W. E. Dove, W. N. Snow, W. B. Burkhead, and Lieut. E. M. Ross. All of the new officers were from the Infantry Reserve Corps.

On December 28th, 1917 the squadron boarded the train at Kelly Field and started the long journey to France via Garden City, New York. Just as a last reminder of Texas, the weather men favored us with a typical sand and wind storm; it brought back the days in the tents as recruits. It is certain that much of the Texas sand was brought to France in the baggage and clothing. The troop train carried also the 24th and 25th Aero Squadrons, and it consisted of nine tourist sleepers for the enlisted man, six baggage cars, three of which were served as kitchens also, and a Standard sleeper for the officers. All of the cars were old, especially the tourist sleepers. We looked for a three days ride to Garden oiey, but no one supposed that it would take six and a half days. It was a ride which none of the old members of the squadron will forget. It began to grow cold at New Orleans. After this there was a continual loss of time due to the cold; frozen standpipe at watering places, heating systems in the cars frozen, broken couplings, etc. But Jersey City was finally reached on the morning of January 3rd, and a ferry boat was boarded for Long island Garden City, or rather the Aviation General Supply Depot and Concentration Camp near Garden City, was reached about nine that night, an unusually cold night. On the ferry boat and train from Long Island City were five other squadrons; the 24th, 25th, 49th, 50th, and 121st or 122nd.

The barracks assigned to the squadron at this new camp were a delight; but, when the barracks sergeant reported that the steam heating system was not working, he took all the joy out of life. The stay at Garden City lasted but ten days. During this time further personal equipment was received end others, such as extra shoes, cooks, and underwear, were taken away. Eighteen men were lost here by illness and A.W.O.L. All of those were transferred to the Casual Detachment. To make good the loss patricianly twelve men were received from the 229th Aero Squadron.

Capt. Robert P. Souther was assigned as Medical Officer in January, 1918 and a few days later Lieuts. Little, Lewis, Dove, Birkhead, Ross, and Hall were relieved and assigned to other

squadrons. Orders were received on January 10th to proceed to Hoboken, N.J. to embark; but it was not until 6 P.M. January 13th that a start was made with several other squadrons; the 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, and 127th all supply squadrons, with Major Charles C. Benedict, attached to the 118, in command.

The morning was so cold that many of the men had their ears frozen. Hoboken was reached by train and ferry. Sailing down East River, every man took a long last look at Lower Manhattan. In the afternoon embarkation was completed, the 118 being the last squadron to go aboard. Our ship proved to be the "Agamemnon" the former German Lloyd ship "Kaiser Wilhelm II. Beside the eight aero squadrons there were aboard about 900 negro labor troops, a large number of civilian mechanics, carpenters, etc., and a number of casual officers and soldiers.

The voyage to France; January 13th to 28th. The trip across was not totally without incident. The "Agamemnon" in quitting her dock at Hoboken smashed into a lighter dock but the delay was small. About the fourth day out a heavy sea was encountered, and at night the call "Depth bomb overboard" was mistaken and relayed "Troops overboard". All was excitement at once. The ship was put about, but too sharply, and the rudder jammed. There followed two or three hours of rough sailing; suspense for the timid ones as the big ship wallowed almost helpless in the big sea.

The decks were lighted for the first time since leaving the dock, and the water swept with powerful searchlight for a drowning man but the report proved false and the excitement and concern was shifted from a drowning man to the violent movements of the ship. It was reported the next day that the maxim angle the ship careened to was 41½ degrees. Trucks, furniture, loose equipment, even men, were thrown about and considerable damage was done. After a few hours the rudder control was repaired and the journey was resumed. This incident was the only one of excitement; the rest of the voyage was, , kept extremely interesting by the presence of the cruiser "Martana", some destroyers and the transports, "Metawascet" and the "Mt. Vernon", the latter the sister ship of the "Agamemnon" and formerly the "Kronprinzessin Cecilie". Having her so close for several days gave us an excellent idea of the great size of our own ship. Other routine incidents, such as mess, quarters, boat drill, etc., introduced considerable humor at times.

Land was sighted the morning of the 24th, and in a few hours with feeling of great relief the beautiful harbor of Brest was entered. There followed four more days on the ship, and then debarkation on the morning of the 28th.

France; January 28th to November 11th. Brest St. Maxient Brest did not welcome the troops with bands and flags, and the streets were not lined with cheering women, children, and old men like some had supposed. Brest must have been hardened long ago to receive fresh soldiers. Brest started the 639th this French education. Here Gendarmes looked like they might be officers and were duly saluted. Here were seen the first P.G's hindoos and Chinese laborers; and here were first not the vin sisters, "blanc" and "rouge". Some of the men adopted both of the sisters at once.

Coming out of the hold of a big ship, from cramped quarters, made the well ventilated little French railway wagons, disrespectfully called box cars, that were lined up awaiting us, look roomy indeed. They were to hold "40 hommes" or "8 chavaux en long". The first sight of them was disappointing and raised many doubts as to several things, especially since the trip to our next stop was said to take three days. , there is humor even in a bad prospect. So everyone climbed aboard prepared to make the best of it. Orders were received just before starting of our destinations. Maxient in the Dept. "Deux Sevre" and also orders much to our deep sorrow that Capt. Souther would not accompany us. He was to remain as Surgeon at the Pontonezen Barracks Hospital. During his short stay he had won the respect and regard of every officer and man. Several members of the squadron also had to be left behind temporarily to recuperate from the "mumps" contracted on the ship. The train journey was shorter than anticipated and uneventful. Every man, , strained his eyes to note the strange and new conditions, also to look for soldiers of whom there seemed to be very few.

St. Maxient, Deux Sevre: January 30th to February 28th. St, Maxient was reached on the night of the 29th and in another hour the men and officers had been marched to their new quarters the "Presbytere Barracks" which, just like the trees at home to which George Washington had once tied his horse, were famous boast they once housed Napoleon's troops. Since all of the troops in once at one time belonged to Napoleon the claims must be true.

St. Maxiant proved to be a delightful city, but very few of the squadron enjoyed any liberties to see the town. Mumps were discovered again and "Presto!" the whole squadron was quarantined which meant imprisonment in the big thick-walled stone building and no chance to go out except to drill. The confinement continued for the entire stay at this camp four weeks; but fortunately both Washington and Lincoln were born February, and to honor their memories everyone was permitted to go out in formation to the marketplace and witness baseball games. The time at St. Maxient was spent largely in drilling school of the soldier, squad, and company of an completing personnel records, and classifying the men according to trades and into sections in anticipation of possible assignment to duty as a transportation and supply unit.

Ourches, Dept. Mouses March 3rd to May 24th. On February 28th orders were received to proceed to Ourches, Department Meuse, to report to the Commanding Officer thereat. It took three days to make the journey by French railroad. The cold rain and snow encountered enroute combined with the crowded accommodation 2nd and 3rd class wagons with eight men in a compartment took away much of the pleasure and interest of the trip.

When finally St. Germain, our detraining point, was reached, we learned that there were no Americans in the neighborhood; but, after a March across the flats of the River Meuse to the tiny Hamlet of Ourches, we met the commanding Officer a lone lieutenant who broke the sad news gently that we were the first Americans there, that we would have to be billeted in barns, and that our work was to be construction work the building of a filing field and aviation camp. It was a cold Saturday afternoon, the streets were covered with slush, the men were cold and wet and fatigued from the long train journey. The prospect of moving into barns with the cattle

aroused no enthusiasm. , this was the first real liberty that the men had had in over two months because of travel and quarantine, so that what looked to be a poor prospect was looked upon as a new and interesting experience in their army life.

Work on the camp started early the following Monday morning. It was the first exercise of any value since December 20th; blisters, sore backs, lame feet were therefore the main complaint at sick call the following morning. Another squadron the 465th Aero Construction Squadron arrived a few days later, followed in another week by Co. B of the 119th Machine Gun Battalion.

The latter stayed and helped in the construction work but a few weeks. Thu 639th and the 465th together built the camp; barracks, mess halls, hangars, store rooms, graded the fields, built roads, dugouts, and ditches. Toward the end of March the squadron moved out of billets and into the newly constructed barracks, so nicely situated on the hill side and overlooking the broad flat and winding course of the River Meuse. About April 1st the camp and field were ready for the first combatant air unit to move in. The 1st Aero Observation Squadron, under Major Ralph Royce, arrived with Spad observation planes and a full complement of motor transportation. Construction work, , continued but the aerial activities added to the interest. The month of April, contrasted to the beautiful March, was a miserable month of rain and mud, and rubber boots and raincoats were the order. Work was considerably delayed. Flying even was limited and the night was not disturbed with the continuous hum of aerial motors, nor were the days longer interesting because of the lack of aerial activity. The month of May, , will never be forgotten clear and sunny, making bathing and swimming in the Meuse a daily occurrence. While at Ourches the men of the squadron became unusually friendly with the village folk; hardly a man but considered he had a "home" there where he was always welcome. This was in striking contrast with the welcome and reception accorded upon its arrival in Ourohes. In May, 1916, just when the “Y" and new bath house were being completed and the Red Cross had started its building, came the orders to move to Amanty in the same Department and about twenty miles farther away from the War. Travel was by auto truck on a beautiful morning after a night shower had laid all of the dust on the roads. Lieut Hansel with a small detachment were left behind at Ourohes as a transportation.

Amanty: May to June 8th. The stay at Amanty was a brief one but always full of hopes, conjecture, and rumor as to future work. The feature about Amanty that appealed to each man strongest was the fact that most of the construction work was completed, and the camp was not on a steep hill side. The idea of being camped, or rather camouflaged, in a forest excited interest at first; but, when the "Spanish Flu" epidemic reached camp and attacked nearly everyone, the closeness of the woods was blamed; and it was a glad heart on June 8th the squadron, including the transportation and trucks left at Ourches, again moved this time to the Second Corps Aeronautical school at Chatillon-sur-Seine (Department Cote d'Or). During the remain at Amanty the men were engaged in the construction of a few hangars and driving trucks, while a few were detailed to work in the machine shop and on a few planes. A few man seized opportunities to go into the air as passengers. As a whole the stay at Amanty was pleasant, but the "Flu" epidemic took away a good deal of the joy toward the end.

Chatillon-sur-Seine (Cote d'Or): June 8th to November 11th. The trip of 140 kilometers to Chatillon via Neufchateau and Chaumont was made in trucks and took the best part of a day. no barracks were found on arrival the camp made an excellent impression and the fact that the squadron was to be broken in as a "service squadron" raised the hopes and spirits of the men quite perceptibly. Four days were spent in putting up and moving into three Adrian barracks. Then the squadron was classified according to past experience and placed in the machine shop, E and R shop, radio department, armory, and on the field as airplane crews, being paired in each case with men of the 89th Squadron, who were to act as teachers. Since most of the men were mechanics in civil life, they picked up the new work very easily, and in about two months they worked separately and on their own responsibility and on their own planes, motors, and whatever jobs were to be accomplished. The work at Chatillon gave nearly every man an opportunity to work at his own profession or trade, and with very few exceptions each man preformed his work enthusiastically and meritoriously.

On August 7th thirty additional men were assigned, bringing the strength up to 177. The new men were taken into the squadron family and soon made themselves a part of it. On November 11th, the day that the Armistice was signed, the squadron was still in Chatillon and was performing the same kind of work, the men on that day being scattered according to their abilities and experience, as follows: on the field in plane crews, in the machine shop, in the E & R shop, in the radio, gunnery, transportation, and supply departments, and in headquarters.

The squadron was formed originally from recruits who enlisted voluntarily in New England and New York, but because of transfers and other losses, the personnel on November 11th consisted of 173 men and represented most of the States of the Union, about as follows: New England 17% (Mass alone 12%), Middle Atlantic States 29% (New York alone 17) Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio 13%, Other Eastern States 17%, States west of the Mississippi 24%. When it left the States the squadron had but a few non-commissioned officers.

All grades above that of private were held vacant until the men had proved their fitness to fill them and until the work required men of their grades. Few demotions had to be made, most of those being among those promoted too hastily in the States. The difficult conditions and the hard manual labor at Ourches gave an excellent opportunity for measuring the personal caliber of each man, even the many received no opportunity in their own lines of work. When the mechanical work at Chatillon was taken up, many men who showed no particular aptitude at Ourohes showed exceptionable adaptability, energy, and technical ingenuity which won them corresponding promotions. The grades above private that had been filled by November 11th were as follows: 6 Sgts. 21 Sgt 1st Class, 17 Cpls., 17 Chauffeurs, 5 Cooks, 22 Pvts.1st class For the vacancies in the grades of M.E., Sgt. 1st Class, etc., there was at that time keen competition. Of the enlisted men four were recommended for commissions: Sgt. T. P. Smith a Pilot, Sgt. 1st class Varney as a Supply Officer, and Pvts. Rosenheim and Rhodes in the Infantry upon completion of the training. The signing of the armistice prevented the actual granting of commissions.

Upon arrival in France, Capt. Souther, who had made himself exceedingly well liked as squadron

Medical officer, was detached. Lieut. Ruggles at his own request was returned to the Infantry on March 30th. On April 1st was received an order transferring and recommissioning all the squadron officers in the Aviation Section, Signal Reserve Corps much to their regret and discouragement. In June Lieuts. Gillett, Haneell, and Mulholland succeeded in being returned to the Infantry, Lieut. Mulholland later being wounded at the Front. On November 11th the commissioned personnel included Lieut. Fritz, as C.O., and 1st Lieuts. Snow and McKinley, the latter having been promoted to 1st Lieuts few days previous.

Just before the Armistice was signed, the squadron had prepared and was ready for the first number of CONTACT, an eight page paper to be issued from time to time to chronicle squadron incidents and history.

The Squadron smoker held in the mess hall on Thursday, the 13th of February, proved to be an decided success and a real innovation in Squadron activities. In response to Norton's noon-day appeal, a large and representative assembly of Squadron members was present, considerably in advance of the hour stipulated for the inaugural ceremonies. whether the attraction lay in the novelty of the occasion, or whether it was due to the fact that the "Bunch" had been slighted by Pete McArdle and his cohorts, is a matter of conjecture. , it was very evident that everyone was accompanied by a keen appetite coupled to an inexhaustible supply of good spirits—some exceptionally good, evinced by the jocularity that prevailed throughout the entire shack.

At 8:15, coffee, camouflaged from the usual beverage with beaucoup milk and sugar, was served with delicious sandwiches—as much of both as each one tin night he could comfortably stow away. Judging from the average capacities on this occasion, one could not be censured too severely for thinking ill of the regular evening chow and the Mess Sergeant responsible for it. In reality, it was no reflection on the regular evening repast, but a tribute to the efforts exerted by the Sergeant mi this particular occasion.

After all present had well eaten, cigars (the very best obtainable) were passed around, while Milady Nicotine reigned supreme for some time. Even Willie Barrans ignored his usual conventionalities and indulged in a rare Havana ; rare, he avers, for reasons he doesn't dare utter in public. Nevertheless, Willie must be convinced that he is either not on intimate terms with Milady, or that his taste for the weed is perverted or still undeveloped, inasmuch as Milady's sworn devotees vouched for the fine quality of the smokes.

Many came prepared in case the moniker applied to the blowout should prove erroneous; but these same lost no time in sinking their own supply of smokes when they saw what a live committee had provided for them. What followed was a real treat and a revelation. Charles Smith, who for more than a year had deprived us by his modesty of some real musical treats, took his place at the piano which Dad Lewis so kindly loaned for the occasion, and rendered popular music, interspersed with just enough of the classical to make the affair highly appreciable.

Sergeant Paine later played all the popular rags to the fullest approval of the crowd. If the crowd

was surprised at Smith's ability, it was more than astonished when Venske, of pugilistic fame, assumed a position near the piano and in his sweet, full baritone rendered two of his popular ballads entitled, "I'm Tying the Leaves So They Won't Come Down," followed by the great hit of our childhood days, "School Days." The applause accorded the "Battler" was deafening, but his modesty deprived the boys of another encore. Wolff, whose cognomen is in no way typical of his disposition, sang in his usual splendid manner, accompanied by Paine at the piano. Both were fully appreciated b those present.

Pete McArdle filled the next twenty minutes chock full of interest with his clever narrations and comic songs, which seem to claim augmented praise at each new hearing. Though troubled with a severe cold, Ranahan followed McArdle and was excused only when he had practically exhausted his extensive repertoire, so well were his offerings received by the boys.

At this juncture, when enthusiasm had attained its highest pitch, "Honest John" took the floor and addressed the meeting, explaining the object of the procedure, which remarks were carried on by "Mother." He informed the men in part that a Squadron had been decided upon, to be paid for from a fund the men might gather for that purpose. The Squadron members were privileged to exercise their own judgment in the selection of the men they considered most capable of producing the most satisfactory results in such a book. And this occasion was to be utilized to hold a popular election—the first in the history of the Squadron. It was 9:00 p. m. when the meeting had been called to order, and the business of electing an editor-in-chief was placed before the house. Here it was that the political spirit displayed itself, while the Smoker now assumed the aspect of an election "blowout" such as it is the wont to bold in "God's Country."

Sergeant John B. Burns was nominated for chief editor and was compelled to accept the nomination in spite of his earnest request to lie excused. Paul Byrne, John Hums and Norton were on the ballot for chief editor, the final official count indicating that Norton had been elected to the position. The ensuing twenty minutes were replete with heated and interesting discussion, wherein parliamentary law was very frequently referred to. As time for "lights out" approached, general eloquence increased, and it became evident that ten o'clock would find the election hardly half oxer. No time was lost in seeking a solution, so candles were very generously distributed throughout the ball. In the dim candle-glow the following nominees were announced as the choice for associate editors: J. B. Burns, C. W. Stockwell, P. J. Byrne, W. J. Shannon, and W. F. Galtes. After a count of the ballots, entailing every precaution to assure fair play, John B. Burns, Chellis Stockwell, and William F. Galtes were named as the selection of the Squadron for associate editors.

The hilarious spirit of the crowd was in no way affected by a visit from the guard, Oscar Johnson, patrolling Post 1. Several suggestions for an all night session followed his appeal for less noise from the Mess Hall.

Sergeant McArdle was at all times willing to turn over his shop to the troopers for the night, but on second consideration it was deemed advisable to call the meeting adjourned and to repair to

the hay-heap. in a motion by Weisblum "that we quit," the meeting adjourned and the assembly filed out, taking as many of the Mess Sergeant's candles as they could get away with unobserved.
The Smoker in itself was a treat and a great success, while the electoral feature was novel and thoroughly appreciated by the men. So pleased were the boys with this smoker and so strong did they pull for a repetition of it, that all hoped to attend another.

Almost a year ago today I met for the first time the Aero Squadron under the command of Lieutenant Emanuel Fritz, at Garden City, N. Y. Then you were fresh from Kelly Field, Texas, and as I look backward now, fresh in many other things pertaining to military work. Yet, though the training was lacking at that time, the spirit which teas going to make the 6jQth one of the best organizations in the A. E. F. was there. This was shown by the willingness and ardor with which you worked during the bitterly cold days and nights at the concentration camp. After traveling separate paths for some time, it was a pleasure for me to put you again under my command. The old spirit to do your best is still there. Guard it carefully. Any organization is only as good as the spirit which imbues it. Many changes have taken place since the squadron was formed, all of which, I believe, have been changes for the better. I have no doubt that you are competent to perform any task which miqht be assigned to an aero squadron. 'Fins is due not only to you. but also to your commander. Lieutenant Emanuel Fritz, who has done and done well all in his power to better the organization as a whole and the members of it individually. I wish to congratulate you, men of the 6jQth Aero Squadron and your commander, upon your efficient and faithful service while in the A. E. F., but above all for the good work you have done in making the Second Corps Aeronautical School what it is at present.

We look upon Colonel Benedict as being one of us. August, 1918, while we were at Chatillon, that Colonel, We first met him at Garden City, where the 639th was then Major, Benedict was again to lie with us, this made part of a provisional wing of eight squadrons.

He was in command of this wing on its way to France nautical School. and until it was again separated at St. Maixent into its Colonel Benedict is a graduate of West Point and eight component units. All of this time he was carried a West Pointer through and through. As an aviator, on the rolls of the 639th as an attached member, and few are more proficient than he. lie is quiet hut never did its rolls bear a more distinguished name. observant, firm but fair, a man to he trusted and respected.

At 4:30 p. m. on the 30th day of August, 1917, the men that were to be formed into the 118 Aero Squadron the following day arrived at Kelly Field, South San Antonio, Texas. Fort Slocum, New York, was our starting point. There we recruits had been assembled from various places of enlistment. By far the larger number of men hailed from New York, with New England a close second. All of us had enlisted voluntarily and with great eagerness in answer to the country's call for "aviators." Yes, they told us we would be flying within a month. Upon our arrival at "Kelly," tired and hungry, after our four days' journey from Slocum, we were met by a sergeant and marched to Field Headquarters and lined up for inspection While standing there on the burning sand we received greetings from several soldiers who had preceded us to the new

aviation field by only a few weeks They took great pleasure in jesting the new "rookie" outfit, telling us of the numbers who had been victims of the terrific heat, and how more were poisoned daily from the bites of the rattlesnakes that inhabited that Sahara-like region. But their stories were taken with a grain of salt. Soon a captain came on the scene and the Sergeant commanded us to stand at attention. He gave us a careful chest and throat examination to determine whether or not anyone had contracted measles, mumps, or something of a more serious nature during the journey.

All of us were found to be in good health and were then turned over to another officer, who took us to a spot where it seemed agricultural specialists had been successful in the cultivation of at least weeds and cactus plants. As the sun was sinking" in the west we were informed that we must draw an iron cot and a single blanket apiece from the Post Supply Department. The blanket constituted our only bed linen for that evening. We were also told that this chosen spot was to be our home and that we must make the best of it. And we did.

Scarcely had we drawn these things when a hungry member gave the "let's eat" cry. Small foraging parties were immediately formed. They set forth to see what could he obtained from the various kitchens and returned with good results. "Corn Willie," the same who later attained such fame in the A. E. F., was for the first time introduced to us. We also obtained some real good bread, "the staff of life." The stall' being considerably light, we could not lean upon it as heavily as we wished. Our blankets were then carefully folded so as to make a sort of sack to put ourselves into. Many bad previously remarked how durable the beds were, and after placing ourselves upon the blackened springs the sentiment was general. Some of the men had a good night's rest, nevertheless, while others testified the following morning that the noise of the rattlers was too much to permit refreshing sleep. It was about eight o'clock the next morning that we were called to attention by our new "Commanding Officer," Private E. K. Sawyer.

He organized us into a company, choosing men with previous military service to act as sergeants. The sergeants were: John ("Bill") Paul, Frank Durdan, and Fred R. Bloom. Paul J. Byrne was to act as sergeant major, with Irving Weisblum as his assistant. We also learned that we were to be known as the 118 Aero Supply Squadron, whatever that meant. The men were then put to work extracting weeds and cactus plants, in order to clear our camp site. After this task was completed we pitched our tents, and this, it must be mentioned, was a tiresome job under the burning Texas sun. At the close of the day, having erected twenty-two tents, enough for the entire squadron, we moved our beds inside. Bed sacks were issued to the men and filled with weeds of the finer kind, as the springs made quite an impression the evening before, and it was with much difficulty one could locate a soft spot. The following few days were spent in "policing" around our tents and making a respectable looking street.

Tom Yohe displayed some talent in beautifying his tent by placing dainty little cactus plants and sea shells around the entrance which seemed to say "welcome." The intense heat bothered us considerably, particularly the first few days, and each morning at drill-call several men were excused from drill on the strength of the "bad shoe" excuse. During our short stay at Fort Slocum we were unable to procure shoes for all of the men. Several had, therefore, to continue

wearing their civilian shoes; hence, "had shoes fall out" was a common command. There was an increase in the "bad shoe" epidemic when the supply tent received a quantity of aviation instruments—picks and shovels—for elementary training. Picks and shovels did not come as a surprise, because we perceived miniature implements of this type hung over several squadron headquarters. To many it seemed a fitting aviation insignia, and others were dumbfounded and in their next letters home excused themselves for not being able to take the family up for a ride, as they had originally planned. Hard it seemed, but we went at it willingly, realizing that we were making our first sacrifices as soldiers of war. We realized, too, that, being among the first to enlist, we had to help construct the camps. Later, the daily work included four hours of infantry drill in addition to other work that was assigned to us.

All this time we were in quarantine, but were allowed to visit the road at South San Antonio each evening to purchase apples, pears, watermelons, and other fruits from the Mexican peddlers. Many had no difficulty in cultivating a negro's appetite for the famous melon. The entertainments held about this time in the large Y. M. C. A. tent helped considerably in breaking up the monotony of quarantine evenings. The new- 118 Aero Squadron was, , not lacking when it came to presenting talent, for with Hogan as a dancer, Ackle as a hypnotist, Patenaude as an impersonator, and Mullen as a vocalist, we were "there." The three latter mentioned were, to our great regret, transferred later to other squadrons, but they have constantly corresponded with us, expressing their desire to be with us again. Now that all the men had received their full quota of inoculations and the sore arms had healed, we looked forward to getting aeroplane experience or orders for our departure overseas.

After quarantine was lifted the "Top Kick" was kept busy each evening distributing passes to the city. Fifty were issued each night, with instructions that we must be in camp before eleven o'clock. It was a common sight in passing the best hotels and dining rooms to see men of the squadron struggling with a large juicy steak or placing an order for a chicken dinner. The grill room of the St. Anthony Hotel w-as a favorite landmark, where some of us devoured many a "soup to nuts" course. Sunday, of course, was the day that afforded the most time and pleasure. As reveille was the only call answered on that day, we had the opportunity of visiting the San Jose and Santa Rosa churches, Breckenbridge Park, the historic Alamo, and other points of interest.

The Buckhorn Saloon, where so many pairs of antlers and steers' horns were artistically displayed, will long be remembered—for the horns, of course. For playhouses, the Majestic seemed to have the best call, as this house always had a program of high-class vaudeville and moving pictures. Turner's Dance Hall and Parry's Rooi Garden had a strong appeal for the dancers of the squadron, and there we were formally introduced to Southern damsels. Calls came in frequently for "details" of bookkeepers and truck drivers, and when the non-commissioned officer in charge of the crowd was checking the men up, Varney, who was supply sergeant, knowing what the work would probably be, would quickly produce the picks and shovels. Six men were picked each day to do police work in the kitchen, such as washing pans, paring potatoes, and various other jobs of such nature. These men were automatically given the rank of K. P., and the job itself was a rank one in Texas, as it meant continuous work, especially

during the sandstorms. More than one modest individual gave wax to rash cuss words when Texas started moving.

The kitchen had a large canvas covering and was in charge of McGovern as acting mess sergeant. The mess he put out was what we termed "regulation," as we always knew what we would have for each meal liver for breakfast, beans, pickles and lemonade for dinner, and stew for the evening meal. The beans were sometimes cooked, sometimes not, and often burned. It took Mac some weeks to teach (?) his understudies how to cook the beans as they were cooked in Boston, and we often wondered if Mac really knew himself. Since there were no tables, we sat on the ground, the non-commissioned officers always having a keen eye on us to see that sanitary regulations were complied with.

Most of the guard duty at this post was done with wooden clubs for weapons; and whoever was assigned the post that took in the wood pile was suit to be always on the alert, because large rattlesnakes were supposed to dwell within and to make their appearance in the small hours of the morning. The first mail to arrive was tendered a cordial reception and when "Slim" Callahan, our mail orderly, shouted "mail call," the men dashed from the tents acclaiming him the most popular man in the squadron, "denial" Gene developed a marksman's eye and had no trouble in throwing letters and papers to the right men in the impatient mob. On the 19th of September we were given a new Commanding Officer, and instead of ranking in the enlisted class he proved to be a Lieutenant. Our new C. O. was First Lieutenant Charles W. Marshall, who, during his stay, worked hard for our interests.

As we were now well acquainted with the camp and its surroundings, it was a pleasure to visit friends from our home towns who had enlisted before us and were quartered in the wooden barracks and furnished with much better facilities for comfortable living. It was our ambition and desire to live in similar barracks. Lieutenant Marshall was of the same opinion and was successful in having our outfit removed to Barracks No. 33 on October 6, 1917. Everybody was happy that day, regardless of what his duties were. No sooner had we settled in our new homes than Dame Rumor called upon us in the form of a going-out message, which strengthened the feeling of good-fellowship that existed. It seemed unlikely that we were to leave, yet the rumor, false, caused each one to be a trifle nervous.

All of us were anxious to get hack North, in order to show the old folks and friends how we looked in O. D. uniforms; then to cross the sea and take our chances at whatever was allotted us as our hit in the greatest of all wars. The following were made non-commissioned officers on September 17, 1917: Sergeants, Paul J. Byrne, William I. Paul, Fred R. Bloom, James A. McGovern, Edgar G. Varney, Edward J. Murphy, Thomas Durdan, and James P. Atwell ; Corporals, Louis Whittenborne, Irving Weisblum, Thomas F. Norton, William Brandt, and John B. Burns.

About the 10th of October we drew our first pay from Uncle Sam and frequent trips to San Antonio were thus made possible. The conveyances most used were taxis operated by independent taxi companies; their cars were kept busy between the hours of 5:00 p. m. and 11:00 p. m. On the return trips the military police were always on the job, searching the men to

see if they had any liquor with them. Unofficial orders were coming in daily that we were to leave for various places, such as Egypt, England, Russia, and France. On October 29th eighty men were transferred to various squadrons that left that day and the following day for Garden City, N. Y. This put a big hole into our squadron, and took many of our best men. Lieutenant Marshall was relieved from duty on the 10th of November, and a few days later the squadron was placed in command of Lieutenant 1. G C. Christie, Sig. R. C. It was evident that his aim was expressed by the saying, "Contentment brings results," and during his short stay with us he gained the affection and admiration of all. Major Claggett, who was in charge of eight squadrons (our squadron included), gave our new C. O., and the men, valuable instructions, bringing the squadron to a high standard of perfection.

Major Claggett had his office in our headquarters. Thanksgiving arrived and with it came a turkey dinner with all the "fixins." The afternoon offered a football game between the men from Kelly Field and a team composed of men from Camp Travis, the new National Army Cantonment of the Southwestern section, located to the north of San Antonio. The game was attended by a large number from the squadron who were anxious to see "Ted" Smith's performance, our lone representative on the team. The game was exciting and was won by the Travis men at a score of six to five. Upon our return to the barracks we found the cooks and K. P.s much fatigued after their strenuous domestic efforts, hut not too tired to serve us a little chow.

Two schools were opened for the purpose of instruction, one being for non-commissioned officers, the other offering a course in the mechanics and care of aeroplanes and motors. The former was attended by the non-commissioned officers and the latter by forty men who were considered best adapted for motor work. Men in both classes made very good progress, with one exception—"Buck" Atwell, who attended the school for mechanics. We had now been soldiers over two months and the signs pointed to anything but our training as pilots, as had been promised us upon enlistment. Lieutenant- Bagley, Burnett, and others were attached to the squadron for a short period, making a "study" of supply work.

They had just been commissioned in the service, receiving their training at Kelly Field. Tins worked with us until given command of a squadron or some other permanent berth. While they were with us we had two fire calls. One of them came long before sunrise and was heard by few, while the other took place in the afternoon within the section occupied by tents and caused little damage. Among the men of the squadron who took and successful passed the examinations for entrance to school were the following: Holley, Norton, Buchannon, Gregory, and Conron. Holley and Norton remained with the squadron, upon the advice of Lieutenant Christie, while the other three men were transferred, a few days later, to the 84th Aero Squadron, and received their training at Kelly Field.

On December 13th, Sergeant James Smith and Private Roy Adams were transferred to a photographic detachment and left the following day for Garden City, there to embark immediately for overseas duty. Simultaneously with the transfer of these two men came a "Great Norther," which struck the camp and played havoc particularly with the men who were occupying the tents. It visited us in the barracks, too, causing the sand to pile up in sheltered

spots outside the barracks and make its way through the cracks in the buildings, covering everything in sight with "Texas confetti." The following days were clear and the bath-house and laundry stands were well patronized. As it was then close to Christmas, trips to town became more frequent and purchases of armadilla baskets, Indian rugs, pennants, and other appropriate gifts were made and forwarded to our homes. Mail orderlies had larger sacks to bring to us, especially to those who had not informed relatives and friends that we were to leave soon for France. With the advent of Christmas it was hard to determine whether we 'would eat our holiday dinner in the Southern camp or on the train, but we decided to have a turkey dinner anyway. At the same time, we learned that we were to lose our popular C. O., Lieutenant Christie. On the holiday morning Hogan, who was mess sergeant, gave us a hearty breakfast of steak, potatoes, and onions.

But few of the "preparedness advocates" were absent from this meal, as it became known that the dinner was be a hummer. At noon, when everybody was "sitting pretty" at the dinner table, Lieutenant Christie and Lieutenant Emanuel Fritz, our commanding officer to he, entered the mess hall. Upon their entrance everyone snapped to attention, hut had only risen from their places when the command "rest" was given by Lieutenant Christie, who at the same time stated that all military formalities would be dispensed with during the dinner hour. The K. P. force and cooks got busy and served a dinner that we will long remember, both for its excellent quality and its generous quantity turkey, cranberries, pie, ice cream, and everything oh, boy!

At the close, and just about the time each bad his Havana going in good style, Lieutenant Christie informed us that he was to be transferred and, in brief, stated his regrets at not being able to have the pleasure of making the trip overseas with us. He also gave the squadron a good recommendation when he said that no one bad imposed upon his leniency and that it had not been necessary for him to "tighten up" at any time. He then introduced our new commanding officer, Lieutenant Emanuel Fritz, F. A. R. C. Upon being introduced. Lieutenant Fritz made a brief after-dinner speech, and "boosted" the squadron of which he was about to take command. He also stated that he would carry out the policies of Lieutenant Christie and said he knew that he had the best mess sergeant in the service, which remark brought cheers and laughter, while Hogan, who was resting his elbows on the bench in the kitchen, bashfully smiled.

Before his departure, Lieutenant Christie was presented with a silver cigarette case. It was an open secret that orders for overseas were daily expected, and in preparation for it the following additional officers were assigned for duty on December 27: Lieutenant Hansell as Supply Officer and Lieutenant Gillett as Adjutant ; also, Lieutenants Little, Lewis, Ruggles, Hall, Dove, Snow, Ross, and Birkbead. All the new officers were from the Infantry Reserve Corps. That same day orders were received, a final inspection was held, and we were ready to leave. The big day had come. We were to leave the next day, December 28. Orders were to proceed to the Aviation concentration Camp at Garden City, Long Island, N. Y., there to await the first available transport for overseas.

We traveled by rail, accompanied by the 24th and 25th Aero Squadrons, each squadron having a mess (baggage) car of its own. Texas bade us a grudging farewell, for she did her best to blow

up a good strong sand storm, which reminded us of the earlier days when we were obliged to cover our food with our hats to keep the sand away. The trip to Garden City took six long days, in cars that had been discarded after a number of years of service for the Pullman Company. One of the tourist sleeping cars, in particular, was very uncomfortable, as the beating system was frozen, and all along the line there seemed to be one obstacle after another. In every town en route—New Orleans, Montgomery, Atlanta, Richmond, Baltimore, etc.—we encountered the coldest weather the oldest inhabitants could remember.

We stopped at Houston, New Orleans, Montgomery, Ala., and Athens, Ga., for short periods of exercise. In each of these cities we were tendered only a mild reception ; it seemed that troops on their way to embarkation ports paraded these same street so frequently that the native became accustomed to it. Occasional shouts of "Get the Kaiser!" and "Give him Hell !" were heard all along the line. Knowing that we were soon to become members of the American Expeditionary Forces, these exclamations made our blood run warm, and each soldier marched with a firmer step and clearly showed his belief in the seriousness of the task that lay before him. Our mess car caught fire outside of Washington, but the fire was easily extinguished with only moderate damage.

On the 2nd of January at 8:30 p. m. we drew into the Philadelphia Station, where we were met by several Red Cross Canteen workers, who distributed sandwiches, coffee, cigarettes, and post cards. The Red Cross won our hearts that night. Long Island City was readied the following afternoon by ferry from Jersey City, and there a similar treat was shared. The same evening we arrived at our new camp near Garden City, Long Island, with the mercury hovering around the zero mark. The entire journey was characterized by the most intense cold and bodily discomfort. The railroads had just been taken over by the Federal Government and the employees en route seemed to show their disfavor by giving as little service as possible. In some of the larger cities, as much as six hours were lost in an endeavor to thaw out and repair the pipes of the worn-out heating system. The Long Island Railroad took us right into camp and we had but a short distance to march to barracks no. 22, only recently completed.

Orders for transportation overseas arrived on January 10th and all were anxious to be moving. Some of the new officers who came to Garden City with us were transferred to other organizations. They were Lieutenants Little, Lewis, Hall, Dove, Ross, and Birkhead. Captain Robert J. Souther was assigned as medical officer, On the morning of the 13th of January we arose at four o'clock and started out for the train that would carry us to the boat. No one was accused of overeating, as the morning menu consisted of a piece of cake and an orange. Xo directions were given, hut the En Route Texas to Garden City.

with steam heat, cots, and mattresses; for comfort, this couldn't he beat The busiest man. instead of being the supply sergeant, as is usually the case when a squadron moves, was on this occasion the mail orderly, for he played Santa Clans by emptying five sacks filled with letters, presents, and Xmas cards Telephone and telegraph wires were kept busy during our tin-day stay at this concentration camp, as passes to leave camp were forbidden. Many of the boys had friends and relatives call upon them to hid them a last fond farewell before crossing the

submarine-infested sea. The work at Garden City was mainly that of completing records, making passenger lists, and getting supplies and clothing that could not he obtained in Texas; also, doing our bit to keep the power plant going (shoveling coal in such weather was anything but pleasant). Several men who were taken sick on the train were transferred out of the squadron as not being able to recover enough to make the journey overseas with us. A few, also, living in nearby cities and towns, were determined to disregard Post Orders and enjoy a "French leave." Some were fortunate in rule seemed general that the orange should he eaten first, and it was. Captain Souther, our medical officer, and Lieutenant Fritz led the parade afoot toward the station, following an auto which served as a guide. The trip to the station was our last in cold weather. "Sunny" France could certainly not he that cold. The Red Cross wool was very useful that day. , in spite of this, a few fro/en ears, noses, and fingers were reported.

We reached Hoboken at nine o'clock and remained on the fern while the baggage of our squadron and that of other squadrons was put on hoard. After all baggage had been loaded, the men of other squadrons marched up the CANGplank and were assigned their places. It was not until four o'clock that afternoon that the ferry was cleared of baggage and troops. Being the last to go aboard, the time waiting for our turn afforded us ample opportunity to think of the future and of the pleasant land of Liberty we were to leave and fight for. Our lives, in our minds, depreciated about ninety per cent in value, and we felt that if we were among the ones to return victoriously to the States we would lie extremely fortunate.

The eagerness we entertained to get into the fight was intermingled with honest anxiety, and we took many last looks at the sights that surrounded us. Our transport proved to be the U. S. S. Agamemnon, formerly the North German Lloyd liner Kaiser Wilhelm II, an immense vessel indeed. we were the last to go aboard, our quarters were among the best. Sergeants first-class were given staterooms, while the rest of the Squadron was fortunate in having upper compartments. Some of us were quartered in the mess hall and took care of the mess hall and line, receiving extra food as our compensation.

We lined up for our first chow at 4:15 p. m. and were served "navy beans," which surely tasted good, as this was our first meal since early morning. Eating with us were seven other squadrons, casual companies, a large number of civilian employees, and about 900 colored roopers—about 5000 in all. Norton's "let's go" was heard for the first time, keeping the mess line in motion so as to have everything clear for an entertainment with the squadron Victrola after supper for those who were quartered in the mess hall. Seven squadrons accompanied us on our ship, numbered 121-127, inclusive, and the entire group was commanded by Major C. C. Benedict, J. M. A., carried on our squadron rolls for transportation.

The trip across was not as eventful as we had expected, for we all had dreams of seeing the gunners popping away at submarines now and then. This did not take place; there was not even target practice. Boat drill and mess took up most of the entire trip. The call for boat drill sounded at nine in the morning and at two in the afternoon. Each section was assigned a certain exit and we marched up to the life-boats or rafts wearing our overcoats, life preservers, and having our canteens full of water. We remained at our station for about two hours at each

drill and during this time the boat was given a thorough cleaning. A number of entertainments were given in the mess hall (luring the trip, each with varied bills. Witteborn managed the boxers, the sailors gave the movies with their broken films, and there were quartets and colored battle royals. These vaudeville shows made the long evening hours more pleasant, especially since no one was permitted outside on the decks after dark.

The first few days out the weather was splendid and it was a pleasure to get out on the decks and gaze off toward the horizon, wearing all the time those cute little sofa pillows known as life preservers. On Friday evening a severe storm sprang up and what happened is better told by Captain Morgan, U. S. N., Commander of the Agamemnon, in the following extract from a New York newspaper: "On the next trip across we defied all superstitions of the sea, but never again. We started away from Hoboken on the 13th of January, 191S. In addition to our crew of 56 officers and 1,137 men, we earned about 3,000 troops, casual officers and 1411 civilian employees.

"The day before we cleared, the Agamemnon listed a bit at her dock and water rushed into the hold through a couple of port holes, but quick work with the pumps prevented any serious results. On the first day out we encountered fresh breezes and night fall saw the barometer falling fast. The next two days the storm increased, and to make matters more uncomfortable the surgeon reported that scarlet fever had broken out among the men of the 122nd Aero Squadron, which came from Minneola. "At 9:00 p. m., on the 18th, the alarm sounded, man overboard ! A mountainous sea was running.

I went out onto the bridge at once. It was an impossibility to attempt to launch a boat, so I ordered the ship turned about in the forlorn hope that the man might lie washed back onto the deck again by the high seas. As the Agamemnon turned about she rolled to 30 degrees. The heavy seas jammed the telemotor hard to port, and the big vessel was without steering apparatus.

"Waves broke clear over the top deck of the steamer and all the deck glasses were smashed in no time. Life boats were splintered and many of them were carried away. Time after time we managed to 'jockey' the ship out of the trough, but within a few minutes she was back there again, rolling harder than ever. "The troops were huddled in the dark recesses below decks, regulations forbidding any lights, and too much cannot be said regarding the personal bravery of those men. "At 1:45 in the morning the engineers succeeded in adjusting the telemotor and we all thought the danger was over.

But we had not reckoned with the sea. The Agamemnon had been rolling steadily during the time repairs were being made, and apparently not wanting to be cheated of its prey the sea seemed to increase in its fury. A smashing big wave struck us, and over we went to the starboard to the almost unbelievable roll of 40 degrees. "When the indicator pointed to 40 degrees every one turned white. Word was rushed to the wireless room of our position, so that it the worst came the world would at least know where we foundered. In a few seconds the vessel with a seemingly human effort began to go to port again, and then it was that we got the

maximum roll of 43 degrees.

I guess everybody thought it was all over, but luckily just at that time we to maneuver out of the trough and, with the steering gear fixed, went safely on our way." While the ship rocked, the negroes prayed fervently, making promises such as, "Oh, Lord if you'll make this ship sail straight 1 shure won't shout no more craps," and. "Boys, I'se g'wan to write ma wife an' tell her to get annuder nigger." They also sang a few hymns, repeating each one several times until it seemed they would tire of it themselves. These hymns, not at all musical, gave his merriment and were the means of many not realizing the seriousness of the situation. When the ship again sailed smoothly, we labored for a short time repairing the tallies and broken partitions. The following afternoon we met the U. S. Battleship Montana and the U. S. Transports Mt. Vernon and Matawascott. The Mt. Vernon, formerly the German liner Kronprinzessin Cecilie, was a sister ship of the Agamemnon and was of the same size, capable of making approximately the same speed.

On Monday morning, five well camouflaged destroyers appeared, coming From different directions and struggling valianth with the heavy waves. Joy prevailed, as we not only had company now, hut protection. They kept in the form of an irregular boundary for the three transports, zigzagging in and out all the time When they had us well covered, the Cruiser Montana felt that her services were no longer required and started hack to escort others to France. The Matawascott was left in the rear with two destroyers as the Agamemnon and Mt. Vernon burst ahead at full speed with three destroyers as escorts, which remained with us until we entered the port of Brest.

Brest, France Fortunately, the morning in January as we entered the harbor, was clear and beautiful, and we had a good opportunity to view the beautiful hay and adjacent bills of Brittany. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief that he was once more within sight of land. Accompanied by our sister ship the Mt. Vernon, we proceeded up the harbor. As we sailed along, numerous things of interest took up our attention, such as an occasional French submarine traveling on the surface of the water, queerly camouflaged destroyers, observation balloons, or a hydroplane out on scout duty passing over us. we made our way to positions just opposite the city and there dropped anchor.

All had hopes of landing at once, but on that point we were doomed to disappointment, as four long days were to pass before we were to set foot on "Mother Earth." , more freedom was allowed us than we had had when under steam, and while waiting for our turn to go ashore we were afforded much amusement watching a small French hoy paddling alongside the ship. His boat was a heavy, awkward rowboat of a type used mostly by fishermen about the harbor. At one end of it be would gleefully dance, catching packages of cookies, coins, or whatever the soldiers aboard ship might throw to him. Some of the donations would land in the water hut lie quickly paddled about and recovered them. Coal and water were taken on from small harbor boats manned by oddly dressed sailors, none of whom could understand English, and hut few of our number were able to grasp what they had to say.

They were not at all slow in making us understand that they were more than willing to receive all donations of tobacco that we might give them. In fact, a canteen full of fresh water, of which they had plenty on hoard and we none, called for a plentiful supply of "Tahac" in return. Among other things of daily interest was the captive observation balloon allowed to float over the city during the day. Often as we stood upon the deck and looked out upon the high walls that surrounded the city we wondered if we would get a chance to see what sort of life the people lived who were beyond the walls. Here, I might say that a few were privileged to that pleasure hut the majority enjoyed confinement on shipboard.

The few who did go ashore went there on baggage details or on other duties ill preparation for the landing of the entire squadron, and while ashore managed to see some of the French people and their methods of living. At last our transportation orders were received and on all troops on hoard were unloaded, with the exception of the Aero Squadrons. Much enjoyment was experienced in watching our colored friends as they disembarked. They had been the life of the trip and it was with regret that we saw them scramble cautiously down the CANGplank and pack themselves, with their baggage, upon the barge which was to carry them ashore. They were a merry lot and all swore that they wanted just one more trip across the pond, and then "never again," Early the following morning, we were notified to make ready to land.

All was confusion as we fixed our packs, took down our bunks, and policed our section. At the appointed hour, every one of us was on deck awaiting our turn to pass down the plank from the ship that had brought us safely so many miles across the deep. At last, all the Aero Squadrons were aboard the "Limy" barge and we left the side of the Agamemnon, passed the Mt. Vernon and arrived at the landing quay. Many queer sights greeted us as we passed along the waterfront.

Strange looking ships and stranger looking people confronted us. Among them we saw many German prisoners working about the docks loading freight upon peculiar and tiny French freight cars. As we set foot upon the earth, we once more thanked God that this privilege had been granted us, and with light hearts marched away toward the city. After leaving the docks we were led up a steep grade, walled high on either side, and, loaded with our heavy packs as we were, the climb to the city was far from a pleasure trip.

Our march was not of long duration, for upon reaching the upper level where the city proper was located, a "column right" was given and the squadron passed through the gate into the railroad yard where we were given our first real broadside view of the railway coaches within which soldiers are most accustomed to travel in France. A complete train of these magnificent side-door "Pullmans" stood at attention, awaiting our entry. Each bore the familiar sign "40 Hommes on 8 Cheveaux," meaning that each car was capable of transporting 40 human beings or 8 animals.

At first sight we looked upon these carriages in dismay, wondering if the United States Government expected us good American citizens to travel in such affair-- as these; but we were not left long in, doubt on that score, for about 30 men were assigned to each vehicle and were

told to await further orders. Each man dropped his equipment in the vicinity of the car in which he was about to travel, and thereupon the men gathered in groups to talk the situation over.

Hunger and thirst were among our first thoughts. Water happened to be plentiful and soon each man bad his canteen filled, but food was another proposition. One fellow managed to locate a bakery where he made known that he desired a loaf of bread. In payment he threw down a good American dollar bill, but received no change. Thinking this price rather high, he said nothing, but walked out wondering if prices for all articles in France were in proportion. Since then he has received considerable education in regard to such matters.

Food in any quantity was not obtainable at the station, but some good American Red Cross nurses showered us with apples from over the wall on the street above, and also lightened our appetites by allowing us to feast our eyes on some real American girls doing their bit in the war. Soon after mid-day we were loaded upon the cars with our rations of hardtack, tomatoes, corn willie, beans, and a little jam.

The distribution of these articles was in charge of the mess sergeant, who endeavored to place equal quantities of each article in every car; but as a matter of fact some cars fared better on jam than did others Nevertheless, his intentions were good, the distribution could be criticized somewhat, also his condition as to equilibrium.

It was while waiting here for the train's departure that many of the fellows made their first acquaintance with the "Yin" sisters—Blanc et Rouge. Having heard much of their presence and popularity throughout France, many of the men made haste to form the friendship. Our commanding officer was averse to having the acquaintance made at that time, but even his watch fid eye was not sufficient to keep the sisters away. In a few instances members were made over joyful by their presence and close association.

At 2:00 p. m. the miniature locomotive gave vent to its shrill whistle and we were off, but our destination was kept secret. For some time the report had been current that the squadron had been assigned to duty in Egypt, and now as we traveled southward the report gathered strength that we were headed for the Mediterranean, then to cross into Egypt. The train rolled on till dark and then every man began to make preparations for sleeping, though no very extensive preparations were necessary as there was but one thing to do, and that was to lie down upon the floor and use another sleeper, or possibly a case of hardtack, for a pillow.

Few of us will ever forget our first night's ride in a box ear bouncing about over the rails like a cork in a heavy sea. Many times we expected the cars to leave the tracks at the curves, but each time they would right themselves and roll along evenly once more. The night finally passed and at the first streak of daylight all were up, brushing the straw and dirt from their clothing. Early in the morning, we pulled into Nantes, where all were unloaded and given our first taste of French "cafe noir." far from tasty, but acceptable after the night's ride. After a short stop we entered the cars once more and continued our trip southward. The day was fine and many things of interest were to be seen from our position in the doorways and windows of the cars. Late in the

afternoon we received word that we were approaching our journey's end and would probably arrive at our destination that evening.

This put an end to our hopes of going to Egypt, but nevertheless the prospects of quitting the train that night were welcomed. We had left Brest with three days' rations, and now that the trip was nearly at an end and half of the food was still left, everybody filled up to capacity. St. Maixent, our destination, was reached the evening of January 29th, St. Maixent By the time all had left the cars everything was in complete darkness The Squadron lined up beside the train by the light of a single lantern, and at a signal from the commanding officer we executed "squads right" and marched down into the town. The streets were very crooked until we finally passed through a stone archway into the courtyard of what was later found to be the Conclaux Barracks.

Our stay here was short, for the command to bait had hardly been given before orders to march again were issued and we passed out of the courtyard back into the crooked streets. After a short march we again entered a stone archway into the walled courtyard of the Preshytere Barracks, now to become our home For a period of four weeks. The courtyard included two large three-story stone buildings. The 122nd Squadron was assigned to the lower floor and the 118 to the upper.

The second was already occupied by the 106th, later called the 800th. To this sky parlor we quickly retired by way of a staircase with many twists and turns. We found two large vacant rooms within which the one hundred and fifty of us were to make ourselves comfortable. In short order candles threw their light upon the emptiness, our equipment was quickly thrown upon the floor and each man tried to find room to spread his blankets. In the course of an hour or so, the cooks of the squadrons that had been here several weeks sent us word that the)' had prepared us a sumptuous meal, consisting of "slum." There was a rush for the courtyard with mess-kits, but horrors! the slum was burnt. The cooks were duly informed of the high respect in which they were held by all of us.

Burnt stew cannot be camouflaged even with large pieces of hardtack floating about, nor can it in any way be made tasty even to the hungry man. For that reason, we all "couched" upon the hard floor that night with empty stomachs and revengeful thoughts as to what should be done to that mess sergeant and his can-openers on the morrow. It bad been our pleasure that night before retiring to find in the 800th Squadron a few men who had previously been, members of our organization; it was a pleasure to talk over old times with them and to listen to their experiences since leaving our outfit.

Not a few of the boys expressed the desire to return to our midst where they could associate with their original "buddies." Many of them had enlisted with us at Ft. Slocum and we had formed close friendships. The following day, order was brought about somewhat; squads were assigned sleeping spaces, bed sacks filled with straw, and things became slightly more comfortable. We were able to look from the windows of our elevated home upon the roofs of what appeared to be a sizeable town. St. Maixent was searched for upon the map and found to

be in the Department of Deux Sevres, about one hundred and seventy-five kilometers north of Bordeaux.

All had hopes of seeing French life and also of tasting some of the French pastry and liquid refreshments; but again disappointment greeted us at first hand. The Squadron was quarantined and our prison consisted of the barracks buildings, plus the courtyard surrounded by a high stone wall. The yard was not large, sufficiently large to stretch one's legs. It was bordered on the far side by bleacher seats which were well patronized at all hours of the day, rain or shine, Sundays included.

Because of the frequent rains, this yard was usually a sea of mud, our first introduction to French mud. France is often spoken of as "Sunny France", but our first month in the country failed to impress us with much of the sunshine. Our meals were eaten in the court in the open, standing or squatting in the mud. As little time as possible was spent in eating, but of necessity the French bread issued to us required considerable time for biting and chewing. One of our number, McBride by name, can testify to the extreme hardness of this bread; in fact, he still shows effects of one battle with an extra hard crust.

"Corn willie" was served plentifully and frequently. Chicago, the home of this food, became unpopular and the few self-respecting sons of Chicago in our midst were never left in the dark as to what the remainder of us thought of "Chi." The dearth of sweet things and variety in our food was alleviated somewhat by the Y. M. C. A. The "Y" had two small rooms just inside the main gateway and the limited space was usually crowded; but nevertheless it gave accommodations for letter-writing, games, and a general lounging place, as well as a small canteen. The canteen, though small, supplied us with French chocolate which contained enough sand to make a good mortar.

There were also French apples anil nuts, but of a far inferior quality to our own American fruit. "Sky Pilot" Jones was often able to bring samples of French pastry from local bakeshops, a small morsel which would cost "beaucoup centimes"; occasionally he had sticks of licorice for sale and they became very popular because seldom obtainable. It was at this "Y" that we first began to get acquainted with and in some respects learn the value of our new friend, the franc. Previous to this time the good American dollar had been the basis of all financial dealings that we had ever had, but now our cash was all in francs and the value of any article was given in francs or fractions thereof.

The French money system was not hard to become familiar with, but it was soon learned that our francs would not buy a large quantity of any article. We had few ways of spending our money as no liberty was allowed outside the barracks enclosure, except in a few individual cases where some men's ingenuity found for them methods of getting out and seeing the town. The would-be sick enjoyed the greatest liberty along this line, as they usually managed to get lost in traveling from the barracks to the hospital and return.

The guards were also frequently awakened by the late return of some member of the post as he clambered over the wall or scrambled in through the window of the coal room. But these few

had exciting tales to tell of their experiences with French mademoiselles, all of us gained a little idea of French life and customs while out on our almost daily bikes into the surrounding country. These hikes were our life savers, as they gave us the much needed exercise and also a little variety, something to see and think about. We saw many strange things, and to our unaccustomed eyes there seemed to be an unusually large amount of black worn by the people. Their wooden shoes, which resounded upon the stone pavement like a troop of cavalry passing in review, took our fancy.

Another thing which impressed us all was the fact that all houses were built of stone, instead of wood as in our own land. Every structure, no matter how small, was of massive stone construction. All the roadways were bordered on either side by lines of trees; this custom, we were told, was started by Napoleon as a means for giving his troops shade while on the march. Our hikes usually came in the morning, and the afternoons, if pleasant, were taken up by drill in the market place. Here, we spent many a weary hour trying to become efficient as a well drilled organization. Lieutenants Hansell and Ruggles had some difficulty at first in getting us to maneuver as platoons, but after numerous mix-ups and before our departure, the Squadron was able to keep a company front with the best of them.

Another lesson we had to learn was that of military courtesy, and examinations in this art were given each member of the outfit before the commissioned officers. Lieutenant Hansell surely found out how little some of the men knew regarding such matters while questioning them in the little back room on the second floor of the officers' quarters. Lieutenant Ruggles learned numerous rules to be followed by sentinels on guard duty, which he found impossible to locate in the guard manual. Passes to the outside world were to lie issued to those passing the examinations but they were never really issued. On February 17th, word was received that our squadron number had been changed from the 118 Aero Squadron to that of the 639th Aero Supply Squadron.

It was hard to get used to. but 639 soon meant more to us than 118. One pleasure which every man enjoys, at least semiannually, is a good bath, but bathing facilities were few during our stay at St. Maixent. Hot or even warm water was almost unobtainable, except upon two occasions when an effort was made to give us baths. For the first bath arrangements bad been made with the proprietor of a hath house in the town to give us baths for one franc fifty each, and we were to go to the bath house by squads.

The first two squads marched there for this purpose, when orders were issued by the medical officer that no more men would be taken to the bath house because of the possibility of spreading measles. This means of giving the men baths being forbidden, another method had to be devised, and this was to heat our water in large G. I. cans. Each man was allowed one bucketful of warm water, a small recess in the wall being used as a bath room. Here, for the first time since leaving Garden City, we were able to shower ourselves with lots of soap and a little warm water. Seven minutes was allowed each man. About this time, a few' of the familiar scenes observed within our enclosure were: Childers on the wood pile, Blough taking bugle lessons in the straw shed, orderlies carrying heaping plates of French fries across the yard to the

officers' quarters, an aged French newsboy standing at the gate blowing his fish horn and informing us that he had copies of Chicago Tribune for sale, and "Swiss Admiral" doing laundry business m liaison with a "frog" laundryman.

The boys had a basketball, which was in constant use whenever the weather and ground conditions would permit. Close order baseball games were occasions of great interest. Of all our hikes, the one we enjoyed most was the last. On that day Lieutenant Ruggles was in charge and marched us up into the hills to the rear of the "range"; there we followed the paths in single file until a broad, open hillside was reached, where we broke ranks and spent a pleasant rest period by singing familiar songs. The day was ideal. After the rest, we fell in, trailed down through the ravine and up the opposite hillside, which brought us directly into the rear of the French rifle range, where practice was going on.

We had progressed a little too far when the machine guns opened fire in our direction, causing us to beat a hasty retreat. Upon our return to the barracks we learned that the squadron bad orders to leave for the front that same day at 2:00 p. m. This was the moment all had been looking forward to and in short order everything was in motion. Mattresses were brought and hastily emptied of their straw and coo-coos, blankets and packs were made up with astonishing rapidity, so that at the appointed hour all was in readiness. The last to fall in were those who had been living m the hospital temporarily; they now flocked back to the ranks in all haste. Even as we arrived at the station the last of the hospital birds fell in.

Upon our arrival at the railway station, we tried to guess which cars had been sidetracked for our special use. Here again the prophets were misinformed, for after three hours of patient waiting we were issued "corn willie," tomatoes and hardtack, from the cook car, that being the only part of the organization which had entrained. The delay was occasioned by the impossibility on the part of our officers to secure better accommodations for us than the box cars the French offered us. Third-class carriages were promised for the following morning, and as night was coming on we marched out of the railway yard and spent the night at the Conclaux Barracks, the same to which we had paid a visit on our arrival at St. Maixent a month previous. Here we were given quarters in a large stone building adjoining the Cathedral. Chow was served from a common kitchen and the great outdoors served as a mess hall.

We were lucky enough to obtain a second evening meal here, all eating heartily of the stew, the common dish at St. Maixent. During the evening the Conclaux "Y" was heavily patronized. Hot chocolate and sandwiches could he had, also accommodations for writing a last word home before we left for we knew not where. Our sleeping quarters consisted of a large room formerly used by the soldiers of Napoleon, access being gained by the most crooked and the darkest stairway it had ever been our privilege to explore.

Our bunks were not over comfortable, but we managed to pass the night, and also the next day, in these barracks. That night, February 28th, at 11:00 p. m., we marched to the station once more and found third-class carriages in place of the box ears. No time was lost in getting aboard, one squad of eight men to each compartment. Almost immediately the peanut whistle

blew and we were on our way. Preparations for a night's rest were begun at once, but we soon found that eight men and their packs were more than a single compartment on a French railway train could accommodate comfortably. Eight men cannot stretch out on the two narrow seats, at best only large enough to hold them all in a sitting position, so other means had to be devised. A few managed to squeeze themselves under the seats, but in most cases they soon came up for air. Others stretched out in the narrow aisle of their respective compartments, serving as foot rests for their comrades.

Still others more daring, and naturally not the heavyweights, found resting places on the hat racks over the seats. These were by far the best locations, and best suited to the long, slender individuals with a never-failing ability to hang on, even during their sleeping hours. In these various ways we managed to pass our three nights of travel. Few slept because of the cramped quarters, but no one complained, as we were all aware that American soldiers traveling to the "Front" in France could not expect accommodations similar to those to he had in the States.

Our route led us through 'fours, Orleans, Troves, Chaumont, Langrcs and Neufchateau. At Chaumont, the G. H. Q. of the A. E. F., we made a stop upon the viaduct, the highest and longest stone bridge that most of us had ever seen. From our train upon the top of this structure we could look across the city and down through the valley of the Marne, which at a future day we were all to travel as dust-covered soldiers returning from duty at the front. After leaving Chaumont, sights of unusual interest attracted us; numerous troops, trains of French soldiers, an occasional Red Cross Hospital train bringing its load of wounded back to the base hospitals, and large quantities of war material in process of being stored or transported. Everything was interesting, because it featured the "big show" in which it was about to be our privilege to play an active role.

A real American railway train, drawn by an honest-to-God American locomotive, greeted us on the last day of our trip with its never to-be-forgotten Yankee whistle, and gained our applause. On this same day, we were treated to another sight, falling snow. At the time of our departure from St. Maixent, spring was coming swiftly on, sending out her greeting in color. Now our trip was taking us into the snow country and a real snow storm was under way. We traveled on, not knowing our exact destination, but upon arriving at Neufchateau all were certain that our trip was fast approaching its end.

At the stations we saw soldiers of all colors and all nationalities; some seemed to be carrying more than their share of decorations, but four years of severe Bridge over the Marne at Chaumont. fighting gave many a man an opportunity to win all the medals then existing. At last the word was passed along that the next station was our and that we would detrain at that point. All was excitement now as the train rolled into the little station at St. Germain in the Department at Meuse. We looked out upon a broad and desolate expanse of river flats, broken only\ by the tree-bordered banks of the River Meuse, upon whose banks many a historic and bloody battle had been fought. As we stood upon the station platform we could look out across the snow-covered flats upon Ourches the little village of Ourches, which we soon learned was to be our new home.

Ourches-sur-Meuse is a small hamlet ten miles west of Toul and six miles southeast of Commcrcy in the Department of the Meuse. The Front was less than ten miles away. It was largely in this Department that the A. E. F. were given an entire sector, referred to as the Toul sector. To this advance zone of the A. E. F. was the 639th assigned. It was March 2, 1918, when we got off the train at St. Germain, and after a forty-minute hike through the deep, soft slush and snow, arrived in Ourches. We were met by Lieutenant Karl ("lark, the only American officer then in the town, and were thus the first Americans to be quartered in Ourches. Naturally, the French people looked us over with critical eyes.

Lieutenant Clark led us to our billets, which, to our amazement, we found to be unused portions of barns, lofts, and stables. But with grim humor every man unslung his pack, selected his resting place and prepared himself a bed of straw, of which there was plenty in each loft. Many of the more adventurous of our number spent the evening exploring the town. It took but twenty minutes to make a complete circuit. All the confection shops, wine shops and cafes were carefully located, with a view to the great dav when our overdue pay would be handed to us. Because of our several moves, we were a month behind in pay, and nearly every man was broke or very badly bent. In the billeting the squads were kept together, and thus a few squads bad the good fortune of being assigned an empty room or two next to those occupied by the peasant owners.

Dingy rooms and lofts they were on the whole and reeked with stable odors. But, wonder of wonders ! most of these squalid looking houses, and even the barns, were equipped with electric lights, evidently introduced by an aggressive salesman of a nearby hydro-electric plant. It seems that in the small hamlets the homes, stables, and barns are built under one roof, and cows, horses, poultry, and human occupants use the same entrance. Not infrequently when a soldier would grope along a dark hallway toward his quarters he would be met by the family stock on its way out. Those squads assigned to lofts and stables had difficulty in dodging rain coming through the leaky roofs. The prospect of spending much time in our new quarters was anything but pleasant, hut even at that the freedom they offered us compared to the quarantine confinement of the previous month in barracks relieved our feelings considerably.

Our French friends seemed more than willing to meet us half way socially, and fortunate was the squad that could count among its members one who had studied French. Many of us had experiences similar to the following: It would be determined upon to pay the French family in the house a visit. A hold knock on the door would firing the "qui est la?". Upon entering as smilingly and as politely as possible we were always invited to make ourselves at home, and a mediocre one-sided conversation would commence. With the exception of our interpreters, we had to limit our part of the conversation to exclamations of "Oui, oui," and to smiles intended to give the impression that we understood what was being said. The interior of the abode was usually amazing to us in that it was so small and narrow, dark, cold, and cheerless, but clean. Our minds would wander back to our school days, wherein had been painted for us the picture of great and friendly France.

No teaching had prepared us for such poor scenes of home life. We were usually billeted with the poorer peasants, so these impressions were not at all general. Evenings spent with our French friends were always happy evenings. The hosts, with their rapid-fire French, plied us with questions bearing on the United States and what we expected to accomplish. The children invariably gathered around us and begged for "tabac, cigaret, chocolat." Those fifty centime "French-English" conversation books came to be worth their weight in gold to us, and many had progressed far enough to agree to return "ce soir et manger oeufs beaucoup." The hosts, of course, brought out their best wines, and no one was known to refuse any of it.

A more enjoyable evening than the first one in Ourches had not been experienced since our arrival in France; not only entertaining, but instructive, it was, for while our presence was still a novelty, our hosts told us much of themselves, the war, and France. Our first night in the billets acquainted us with the ubiquitous rat rustling among the straw, water dripping through leaky roofs as the snow melted, and the drone of night-flying aeroplanes. One squad reported the next morning that its French neighbors were much alarmed and rushed about the house crying, "Boche! Boche!" but if it was an enemy plane we didn't know it.

The novelty of a night-bombing airplane flying over us, and of the continuous thundering of heavy guns at the not far distant Front, was of such great interest that fears and conjectures gave way to awe, wonder, and impatience to see more. We learned later that it was very common for Boche planes to fly over Ourches and that the village had indeed been bombed a year before. Indeed, upon our arrival in (lurches we found an increasing anxiety on the part of its inhabitants that the great activity of the enemy the two weeks previous would increase and end with a destructive bombing raid because of the presence of American troops. To the nervous natives, every plane that hummed overhead was a Boche plane. we soon learned that the Boche visits were far less numerous than they supposed.

As for ourselves, we soon learned to distinguish between the bum of the various types of motors, and thus learned to welcome the sound of a Handley-Page or an F. E. by night, and that of the Nieuport and Spad by day. The hum of a Mercedes motor always brought a crowd of ill wishing soldiers looking skyward. Our first Sunday in Ourches deserves special mention. In the morning, at inspection, we were informed by the C. O. that we were to start the construction of an American flying field on the edge of town, to be occupied by three observation squadrons as soon as completed.

We were also told that the work had to be rushed, and that while it was a disappointment to all, officers and men alike, it was necessary work and must be done by someone; and that we were serving the cause just as well in construction work as in any other kind of work. It was heart-breaking news to all of us, especially because we bad dreamed of becoming a squadron employed in transportation and mechanical lines alone, and because many of us still hoped for that flying training promised so faithfully by the recruiting sergeant some months before. No one ever pictures an Aero Squadron licking the Hun with pick and shovel.

The subject was discussed all day, pleasure was uppermost in each man's mind, for it was the first day of liberty since we left Kelly Field over two months before. Some of the men disported themselves like young horses just turned out into a pasture after a bard week in harness; others tried to drown their sorrows in this or that, and one man actually landed in the river by mistake. Still others bent on seeing things explored the surrounding country as far as Vaucouleurs. It was a long and great day and everyone did as his fancy dictated. By Monday morning the snow had almost disappeared. We were divided into groups, armed with picks and shovels, and marched to the scene of our new activity. Our first task was to excavate bases for barracks and to transfer some lumber to the building sites.

But few of the men had ever done excavating before, and then only at Kelly Field, most of the men being mechanics and clerks. The more politic ones grieved over the fact that war compelled them to disturb the beautiful surface of mother earth with such menial instruments as picks and shovels. The first few days produced some effect on the earth's surface, and more in the way of blisters on our hands. But it was our duty, and being among the first 200,000 of the A. E. F. to land in France, we had to expect to help in the construction work. And work we did. Nobody ever worked harder.

An important compensating feature in construction work is that one can see his results grow, and our results grew rapidly. During the first week at Ourches, another squadron— the 465th Aero Construction Squadron arrived, fully equipped with all manner of construction equipment. We found them capable and agreeable companions. A few days later, a company of the 119th Machine dun Battalion arrived to assist ns, but they remained but a short time. This company later distinguished itself as part of the 32nd Division. Barracks and hangars were put up in record time, and by April 1st the field had been near enough completed to receive the first of its quota of observation squadrons.

The 1st Aero Squadron arrived first, and a few weeks later came the 12th. As the barracks were completed, the 639th and 465th gave up their cheerless billets and moved into the board barracks, much to the glee of all concerned. It was pleasant at the field. The camp site overlooked the now beautiful green valley of the Mense and the partially wooded hillsides. With the arrival of the two observation squadrons, and later the meteorological men with their small toy balloons and the pigeon men with their traveling "coops" and flocks of homing pigeons, interest in surroundings and in the conduct of the war became intense. Furthermore, the squadron had now actually accumulated eight motor trucks, a touring car, and several motorcycles, so that every man obtained an opportunity either as chauffeur or as part of a "loading detail" to see much of the surrounding country. Some went close to the trenches, others to the far Alsace front, and many got to Nancy.

Toul, and Bar-le-Duc. That planes were now actually working over the front lines with our field as a base inspired us to greater effort. It was a tangible evidence that we were accomplishing something. Daily the ships of the 1st and 12th would fly over the lines to take photographs of the enemy's positions or activities, or to act in liaison with the Infantry or assist the big guns in regulating the direction of their fire. When they came back from a trip, those of us who could

would gather close to the pilot or observer and listen to the story of his day's experiences. When planes returned riddled with bullets it brought the actuality of it all home to us very vividly. The 1st Aero Squadron was equipped with biplace Spads, while the 12th had to get along temporarily with old A. R.'s. None of us will forget the days when ships never returned from a trip, or the days when aviators were killed accidentally on our own field; how quiet and sad the camp was on such days!

Hut there were days that were full of excitement such as when a Boche ventured too far into the American lines and was chased by our Nieuports, or when the allied anti-aircraft batteries opened up with a barrage around a high-flying Boche, only to puncture and dot the sky with hundreds of balls of smoke. On such occasions we would yell as though it were a baseball game. Also, we would wear our tin derbies to protect us against the falling shell fragments. Then there was the day when Lieutenant Barnaby in endeavoring to fly out of the valley near the mess ball struck our tin house, gave Canaday, its only occupant, the surprise of his life, and caused the plane to turn upside down; and the day when we beard the rattle of a machine gun overhead, only to see a Boche plane fall in flames.

And who will forget how Lieutenant Thaw in "taking off" skimmed the top of Coale's tractor, tearing off the steering wheel and causing Coale to duck for cover; or how Rhodes was saved from a watery grave by brave little Eddie Connor; or the days of the big drives, how crowded the roads were with miles and miles of camion and artillery and soldiers. Who will forget the false alarms of air raids, when we were ordered to work with our tin derbies and gas masks handy; or the night just before we left Ourches, when the batteries opened up on a supposed German raider. It was too interesting to rush for a dugout. And then who will not recall the happy days when the water tank had to be filled in St. Germain; or the days spent on McGovern's wood-cutting detail or "summer outing" camp; or the Sundays in Yaucouleurs, the baths in Toul, the mademoiselles in St. Germain, the diving hoard on the river, the "cheap" confections one could buy, rolling the bones after taps, and stud poker?

But who wants to remember excavating bases for barracks and hangars in a cold rain on a Sunday, or splitting solid limestone rock in the dugouts, digging trenches for a pipe line, digging an ammunition pit, hauling" rocks off a steep slope by wheelbarrow to the rock crusher before the narrow-gauge tracks were laid, peeling spuds for Hogan, groping at night along streets kept dark to deceive the Huns, the morning after pay day, corn willie. Mistered hands, sore backs, etc.? But to get back to the earlier days: On March 27th we moved into the barracks, and great was the rejoicing. A few days later we moved into our new kitchen.

The original kitchen was but an abandoned vehicle shed, at one time part of a winery. It was a good makeshift, at that, but it was unpleasant to have to stand in line and eat in the rain. Our officers ate with us, they found a dark storeroom for shelter and a barrel for a table. Our new barracks were set deeply into the hillside and camouflaged with boughs. In the barracks we were all together and were brought into intimate association with one another. Here we spent the happiest days and nights of our army life. Here we became buddies and confided to each other our past histories, our ambitions, and plans. Here we wrote our letters, before tables

were placed in the mess hall. Here Holley ran a small but well stocked canteen for us. so that we were well supplied with American cigars, cigarettes, canned fruit, and chocolate. For lights we worried along' with candles, electric lights were installed the week we moved away from Ourches. All the windows were draped with black curtains at night, that no light might penetrate to the outside and give a possible Boche raider a clue to our location. On several occasions we anxiously awoke to hear a ripping and tearing and crashing, to find that the wind had ripped off our roof and left us exposed to the rain.

Daily, after supper, or before, the men would wander to town, each to his home to a friendly fireplace and a free meal, or to his favorite "old standby," either Lucy's cafe, where the biggest woman in town moved around with the grace of an elephant, or to the little grocery to fight off the temptation of buying at the owner's price, or to listen to tales of the war. Then there was the "tabac" store down by the bridge, frequented by those who thirsted for knowledge or a pleasant chat with a chic mademoiselle. Many of the men won promotions at Ourches.

The hard work and trying conditions soon brought out the true character and worth of each man, and it was told us that if a man would not shirk such unpleasant and heavy duties as construction work involves he would lie valuable anywhere and could hold a promotion. It was work that developed character as well as muscle, and even though promotion came slowly to some, their records at Ourches were always big factors in determining whether or not they could hold a promotion. As the glorious month of May drew to a close we saw our days at Ourches grow shorter. The wildest speculation was indulged in as to what our next step would be and whether it would be a continuation of construction work or a chance to become a service squadron like the 1st and 12th.

The Y. M. C. A. by this time had erected a hut and started entertainments, the Red Cross put up a large building, a real bath house was built, and electric lights and running water installed. But there also came an order to move. Such is army life; you get settled, then acquainted, everything runs smoothly, and in comes a G. H. Q. order to move on. Not that one minds the moving if the change brings more excitement or more useful work, but the anxiety is wearying. On the 23rd day of May, we received orders to proceed to Amanty, headquarters of the first bombing group. That evening the men gathered at their favorite "hangouts" and discussed what the future might hold in store.

All regretted to leave the best camp in the A. E. F. It was the best, and we don't say it because we built it. It was not stuck in the woods nor in a mud hole, and it was close to a small village, a good river, and what is most important, close to the big war—as close as a flying field could hope to be. From the flying field we could see the quarries at Commercy, the road to St. Mihiel and Verdun, the line of observation balloons behind the trenches, our planes flying over the lines and back in daytime and the star shells at night. Always we could hear the thunder of artillery in action, the roar of planes overhead, and see the endless streams of troops bound for the front.

Now we were to move even further from the war, to Amanty this time, about fifteen kilometers

to the south of us. On the morning of the 24th we climbed into trucks and were off. About twenty men were ordered to remain at Ourches with Lieutenant Hansell and our transportation equipment for two weeks longer, to finish hauling lumber, gas, etc. On June 9, when we made our next move, these men rejoined us with the trucks and equipment. Amanty The camp at Amanty was hidden by a forest, making the outlook from the barracks rather dull. our work was to be of a higher class than heretofore and that was worth a lot. We constructed a hangar, worked in the machine shop as mechanics, drove trucks, and overhauled airplane motors. It was here that the "flu" epidemic found us and caused us to patronize sick call in crowds. At one time, sixty-seven of us had the flu and the barracks were turned into a sick ward. Happily, it lasted but a few days and no one suffered seriously. Here, also, some of the men received their first opportunities to ride as passengers in airplanes, and many were the wild letters written in description of the experience. Hopes of the would-be aviators rose high while at Amanty.

The Y. M. C. A. at Amanty was a "stunner," with big Jim Goodheart in charge; pool tables, piano, phonograph, lounging chairs, magazines and newspapers, and a counter where there were plenty of cookies, hot chocolate, and smokes. There were movies, vaudeville, and a real live American girl to talk to. Pleasant as were the few days at Amanty, we didn't regret it when orders came to proceed to Chatillon-sur-Seine, for with the orders came the rumor that at last we were to train as airplane mechanics, and perhaps later return to the Front with planes.

With light hearts, we packed our bags and started for our new home in our own trucks. It was an ideal day. but very dusty. The journey was of some 120 kilometers, and lay through Neufchateau, past Domremy, the birthplace of Joan of Arc, through Chaumont and Chateau Villain. Hogan and Ins "can-openers" started ahead of us. It was already after noon when, after passing through Chaumont with still several hours ahead of us and a gnawing sensation in the region of our stomachs, we came upon the very welcome sight of Hogan's truck drawn up alongside the road, and his "can-openers" guarding a table loaded with bread, jam, and corned willie, and a steaming G. I. can of coffee.

No meal was ever eaten with greater relish, and even corned willie himself was honored by a second round. So unexpected was this handout, and so much appreciated, that we voted never to call our cooks "can-openers" again. Chatillon-Sur-Seine It was six o'clock Saturday evening, June 8th, when the leading elements of our camion train rolled into Chatillon-sur-Seine, bearing a very hungry, dust covered bunch of 639ers. Chatillon is a town of about 5000 inhabitants, located in the Department of Cote d'Or, 80 kilometers northwest of the historic city of Dijon, and 70 kilometers southeast of the once famous city of Troves. A short distance beyond the town limits, in full view of the ruins of the chateau of the dukes of Bourgogne, we were soon to settle for a more protracted period than we had anticipated, and much less desired.

Our greatest ambition at that time was to return to the Front as soon as feasible with our own airplanes and pilots. Thusly, we thought to accomplish the greatest good and most effective work to ruin the Boche. Chatillon is a prominent name in French history, the dukes of Bourgogne having selected this town for their abode from the 10th to the 15th centuries, making it the capital of their territory. Commerce and industry thrived under the Bourgognes,

until the havoc of continued wars, oppressive measures, and excessive taxation finally destroyed the weaving industry that had previously been so lucrative.

Even today, several large factories are in operation there, three of them having devoted their entire facilities to the production of munitions throughout the entire period of hostilities. The town proper comprises two distinct districts—the Chaumont, or newer section, and the Bourg, or ancient section, the latter replete with important scenes of great historical interest The River Seine, which has its source 30 kilometers distant, separates before traversing the town, one stream passing through the main section of Chatillon. One of the most scenic spots in the vicinity is the source of the River Douix.

It flows from under a cliff of solid rock, 100 feet in height. Strange indeed must have been the impression made on the French people of Chatillon by our men, bedecked with the dust of a day's travel. It was necessary to drive through the principal streets of the town to arrive at the aviation field, which was located on a higher level than the town, about one kilometer southeast of the Bourg section of Chatillon.

The mess sergeant, with his crew, had arrived as a sort of vanguard, and several of his helpers were already exploring the town as our camion train drove through. A decidedly superficial observation of the town on the part of the late arrivals drew rather favorable comment, but everyone was anxious to get settled before devoting serious attention to the burg. Hence, it was with intense satisfaction that the boys, for the most part unrecognizable, a result of the white dust, an inevitable sequence to a day's ride over French roads in dry weather, clambered off the camions, shouting for assignment to billets and something to appease the appetites that had been for the most part neglected during the course of the day's travel.

It required hut little time to learn from the men of the 89th Squadron, the only squadron already at the Post, who had anticipated our arrival at least two months previously, that there was located there a very large Infantry Officers' School ; though the aeronautical school was still a small feature, boasting only four hangars housing 24 A. R. airplanes and an Adrian barracks, quarters for the 89th, and a circular hospital hut. utilized for a mess shack. A rather dilapidated tent served as a "Y," where Webster did his utmost to satisfy the wants of the boys. After an exchange of ideas with the men of the 89th, prospects among the men of our squadron for real homes with the Chatillonais we thought were very discouraging if the boys at the Infantry School were half as active as were the 639th at Ourches.

Once separated from the greater part of the French real estate we had so involuntarily acquired, the mess sergeant barked out a summons for chow, which consisted, that evening, of the customary short order Army menu—cold corned willie, pickles, bread, and the inevitable coffee. Even this prosaic bill of fare received unusual attention, so hungry was the bunch after the fatiguing day's journey. Chow finished, inadequate accommodations necessitated sending all except 40 of the men over to the Patronage Barracks, where several companies of Infantry students were quartered. The Patronage enclosure comprised several large, antiquated buildings, typical of simple French architecture, and several Adrian barracks, one of which was

assigned for our occupancy.

Dark had already settled before we arrived at the Patronage enclosure, and after each man had carted in three or four bunks, then recovered his barracks bag from the general confusion before locating definitely for the night, the hour was too late to permit an exploration of the town, so the majority of the men "bit the hay" to enjoy a much needed rest. Those who deferred filling their bed sacks with straw immediately after it arrived, were "SOL" when the fact dawned upon them that they had neglected to do so.

For these, there was no alternative but to pass the night as comfortable as possible on the hard boards. Practically everybody was feeling as fit as ever the next morning, and the Patronage detail (as those of us who billeted there were known) inarched over to the field, garbed in fatigue clothes, to get breakfast and commence work on the foundations for our barracks, which had been very quickly laid off by Captain Fritz. Several of the boys that morning inaugurated the custom of dining with the doughboys, which afforded them good eats and leisure time to jaunt over to work. Inasmuch as our first day in Chatillon was a Sunday, only half the men were detailed to work in the forenoon, the remainder replacing the morning workers in the afternoon. Everyone had opportunity to "once over" the town, comparing observations that evening.

The bunch, with Buck Atwell on the job, succeeded in erecting a small tent, which served temporarily as a kitchen, and a larger one, utilized for supply and orderly room. The latter was devoted to this same purpose during our entire sojourn in Chatillon, going to salvage only when we packed our bags and made ready to quit the place. That first Sunday, several had already cultivated the acquaintance of some of the town celebrities, Countess de Big John and Madam Sho Sho figuring more prominently on the list than the others.

The ruling in effect that all men be in by nine o'clock was an innovation hardly appreciated, after enjoying the liberties which Ourches had afforded us. The Aeronautical School at Chatillon was originally intended to be but a minor feature of the Second Corps Schools grouped there. The object for which the Aero School had been established had in view the final training of aerial observers prior to their assignment to active service "over the lines."

The course offered comprised Aerial Photography, Artillery Reglage, Aerial Gunnery, and Infantry Liaison ; three weeks of good weather sufficing to complete the final training, provided the aspirant had successfully qualified in all these important branches, and favorable weather conditions had prevailed during that time. Practically speaking, it might have been properly termed a "Finishing School for Observers," inasmuch as anyone capable of filling all school requirements in the various topics could be depended upon to go successfully on missions over the lines. Eleven officers comprised the first class of graduates, which fact offers an idea as to the capacity of the School as we found it on our arrival there. Four hangars, a supply hut, a Swiss hut for a radio office, a Swiss hut for headquarters, two Adrian barracks for student observers, and one for officers' mess, and three barracks occupied by the 89th Squadron, were the only buildings which had been erected prior to our coming.

Plans for extension had been formulated, and we were to be instrumental in assisting to materialize the first part of them. On Monday, June 10th, work on foundations and construction of our barracks and mess hall commenced in earnest, the entire work being completed, save for the installation of bunks, on the 14th, having required only four days to prepare foundations and to erect three Adrian barracks. A detail built and installed bunks on the arrival of material a few days later. That our Ourches experience had not been amiss is evident from the excellent results obtained here.

Those who at Ourches had played a heavy roll in the drama of "Licking the Kaiser" donned their togs again, while with the same picks and shovels and "Irish Capronis," but with a new incentive (that of obtaining a service squadron basis "toute de suite"), they arrived at objectives with greater speed than they did up Front. June 15th, picks, shovels, and brouettes were returned to the supply tent without a semblance of regret, and approximately a hundred men were assigned to work on the flying field. The squadron was lined up and classified according to previous experiences, the nature of the work to which each was assigned harmonizing with individual adaptability. Some found themselves very much at ease in the machine shop, E. & R. shop, radio department, armory, and others on airplane crews all to work in conjunction with, though for the present under supervision of, the members of the 89th Squadron, until such time as 639's capability to assume full charge should evince itself.

At that time, the 89th expected to return to the Front with their own quota of airplanes and pilots, when we were to succeed them in e\ cry department on the field. Though our men qualified quickly, the 89th did not make its departure, plans developing differently and the continued expansion of the school required them to remain. Our new work was to consist in keeping planes in commission. Captain Falk informed us from the start that a plane was either in commission, or not, and our duty was to avoid the "not" as consistently as possible. To realize this, it was sometimes necessary to pull a block or two on a motor, grind valves, and keep the motor and ship in perfect "flying" condition with a minimum loss of time. Work, thoroughly executed, would preclude the possibility of serious accidents due to mechanical causes.

It was with regret we learned two weeks after our arrival at Chatillon that Lieutenants Hansell, Mulholland, and Gillett were, at their own requests, to return to the Infantry. The Squadron presented each of them with a gold signet ring, in expression of its esteem and regard. All three succeeded in returning to the scene of real activities, Lieutenant Mulholland earning the privilege of displaying a wound chevron, due to an encounter with a stray piece of Boche "H. E." Lieutenants Snow and Mckinley remained with the outfit, the former being assigned to the Post Supply, while the latter acted in the capacity of Post Censor and Intelligence Officer until placed in command of the 89th Squadron in January, 1919, previous to its departure for "Home."

Making friends among the Chatillonais proved a facile matter, some of the boys meeting fair Frog maidens, others assuming the obligations of providing smokes for just so many additional subjects of President Poincaire and supporters "I the tri-color. Eating course dinners where a permit to do so was required, buying bread "sans ticket," were quickly enacted without the so-

called necessary permit or "ticket" by those who knew a little French, and likewise by those who knew it not so well.

Prime favorites with the hospitable people of Ourches, the 639ers were soon strongly entrenched in the affections of their newly made Chatillon friends, and reciprocal courses in French and English were established in short order. Chateaus were not requisites for those who wished to master the difficulties of the English lingo, the echoes, in a soprano voice, emanating from mere "somethings" that might be described as "Holes-in-the-Wall." If the mademoiselles progressed as rapidly as did our men, Chatillon would speak English as extensively as French, after the signing of the Peace Pact.

About a month after our arrival at Chatillon we witnessed the first fatal accident at the school when Lieutenant Robbins and his observer were burned to death after a fall following a forced landing at the Infantry School. The obsequies were held the next afternoon, and u e witnessed our first military funeral l in France. Work was declared off for the day and both squadrons formed in a procession. A Fiat truck, sides dismounted, and covered over with white cloth, draped in black, served in place of a caisson. The procession formed in front of the Hotel de Yille, the French undertakers making a very droll appearance in their high-top hats covered with black oilcloth, as they busied themselves preparatory to the march to the cemetery.

Leading the procession was the Mayor of Chatillon, followed by some of the prominent Chatillonais and French officers. The various uniforms of the French Officers and Veterans of 1870 contrasted greatly, affording a real interesting spectacle. Then came a detachment of Infantry—the firing squad—followed by the pilots and observers from the school. The truck followed, heaped with floral pieces almost concealing from view the caskets draped in Old Glory. Following this were our two squadrons and many French civilians.

After the usual simple but impressive ceremony over the grave, a fellow-aviator flew over the cemetery and dropped flowers on the grave of his unfortunate comrades. Our work on the field had offered numerous opportunities to take trips in the planes, and interesting indeed is the experience of the first ride above the clouds. Those awful forebodings prior to the "taking off," only to be pleasantly disappointed by finding the ground leaving one and the objects becoming smaller and smaller, without even the slightest ill effects, are now pleasant memories. But, if the motor had failed or the ship had fallen into a nose spin, what then? Then a pleasant whizzing through space for an indefinite period. Finally, after a few tight spirals to lose altitude, with the ground looking up over the side, came the descent, a successful landing, and the conviction that flying is the only thing, with a desire to mount again at first opportunity.

It was not long until frequent flights became a part of the daily routine and all thought of hazard was forgotten. By July 10th, our Squadron had not only taken over several airplanes, but was in full charge of two hangars, with the 89th Squadron in charge of the other two, responsibility being evenly divided in hangar number five.

Work on the field offered everybody an equal opportunity for promotion and the number of

non-coms increased monthly. Chatillon is ample evidence of the degree of success attained by the members of the Squadron in the various departments to which they had been assigned. The lectures given by Captain Falk were of real benefit to the men of the Squadron, The old wasty stand all profiting in some measure by them, as the continued improvement in the work on the field clearly indicated. Though "beaucoup" pep was necessary in the work, we also found much time with hut little to occupy ourselves. If a ship was out on a mission or not on schedule, the crew might he seen dozing in the sun under the wings of an aeroplane, while some others were boiling clothes, utilizing a "blow torch" against the side of a bucket to furnish the heat. Intense interest was aroused by the arrival, almost daily, of a strange plane from some other field, coming for a replenishment of "essence" or stopping over for the night while on a long ferrying trip.

Practically every type of airplane from a French baby Spad and English Sop Camel to a Handley-Page bomber and Caproni bomber made a call at our field. When either of the last mentioned type sailed in for gas or oil, everyone was as scarce as possible, as it signified almost a full drum of "essence" and beaucoup "huile" entailing beaucoup labor. Whenever a plane made a forced landing forty kilometers or so away from camp, and wrecked up sufficiently to necessitate dismantling it, the crew proceeded to get their blankets and make ready for a night out in some field near some live town. The salvage trip then assumed more of a picnic aspect than a work trip.

A plane was always an attraction to the people in the vicinity where it landed, and when the mechanics arrived on the scene they invariably found a crowd of Frogs there to greet them. The work of tearing down and loading a plane on a trailer was of short duration and usually not very difficult, the men then proceeding to "once over" the town and its offerings. Just such trips caused many to study French, "billet-douxs" becoming quite popular. No one failed to indulge in a real home-cooked dinner when out on these trips, the people showing our men wonderful hospitality at all times. Late in August came the 20th Company, 4th Regiment, Motor Mechanics, who were assigned to crews on the field and in the shops under our men. Their advent marked the beginning of a substantial enlargement of the school, the plans adopted providing for an increase in its training capacity from IS students per month to 180.

Sopwith training airplanes arrived in large numbers about this time, the number of planes on the field having shown a decided increase in accordance with the general extension plans. About that time, "Liberty 1000" landed at our field en route to the Front and caused considerable excitement and interest among the men. After repeatedly hearing so many unfavorable reports anent the Liberty motor, it was indeed a treat to realize that we already had 1000 of these splendid ships playing their part in giving the Boche his due.

In September, the 157th and 370th Squadrons arrived from England and commenced immediately to materialize some of the proposed developments. The newcomers were rather disappointed on learning of the construction work that lay before them, but set to work determined to make the best of it. Then it was we felt that we "had it" on the new bunch. We had spent all our time in France; had labored up on the Toul Front, and now we were capably

acquitting ourselves of the duties of a Service Squadron, our previous work and present occupations warranting us the privilege of watching the "other fellow" do his bit with the instruments of torture—the pick and shovel.

They assisted in erecting additional barracks, hangars, and shops, while 639ers regarded themselves as having graduated from such duties. We certainly had had our full share of such work. Complete machine, E. & R., and overhaul simps were built, a power house installed, and newer and more commodious quarters constructed for the Photo, Radio, and Training Departments.

The number of hangars increased from 5 to 15, housing a total, at one time, exceeding 100 planes. Many of our men shared in producing for the Engineering Department one of the most enviable reputations for efficiency among the Air Service schools and instruction centers in the A. E. F. By the end of August, the positions of responsibility in the diverse departments on the field were evenly divided between the 89th and 639th Squadrons, a fact in itself an excellent tribute to the caliber of men in the 639th. The 157th and 370th worked in on the field after the construction work had been completed.

Each succeeding month witnessed additional promotions, and by November practically all ratings authorized a Supply Squadron had been given out. Unfortunately, the efforts to have the squadron changed to a service basis had not as yet met with success, thus depriving many men of deserved ratings which a supply organization was not permitted to make. This condition gave birth to a new clan—"The Non-Chauffing Chauffeurs"—and some who had once sat in an automobile were now privileged to sport the wheel on the right sleeve. Norton, who made the P. M. detail famous with the morning and afternoon collations from the officers' mess, which he provided for the members of this distinguished detail, eventually had this distinction conferred upon him. Another member of the famous P. M. detail finally attained the rankness of "H. P."

Buck Atwell, after he had relinquished the "Top Kick's" berth, received the title of "Chauffeur" or "Knight of the Bath," and from that time, until his premature departure for home in December, confined his efforts to making the hoys comfortable in the bath house. We also lost Temple, Arlington, Shields, Stevenson, Dorney, and Sheiler, who were transferred and sent home after a siege in the hospital. Stevenson accidentally received a bullet in the leg. Shields's injuries were due to a propeller striking him. Bill Brandt, Steen, Childers, and Traw were transferred to the 1101th Squadron. Brandt, we regret to say, was reported to have died suddenly at Lemans while awaiting orders home. It is with justifiable pride that we entertain the thought that not one of the fatal crashes on our field occurred in a plane having a member of the 639th for crew chief. We had the lowest percentage of accidents for so large a number of flying hours, as compared with the records of the various training centers of the A. E. F.

On November 1, DeHaviland planes, equipped with Liberty motors, began to arrive at the field to be utilized for training purposes. They proved a vast improvement over the Sops and A. R. which, from thence on, began gradually to disappear, Liberties replacing them as soon as the slower planes were worn out. The high efficiency of the Engineering Department under Captain

McLeod's regime, the ingenuity exercised in equipping its shops, the skill of its personnel in maintaining the ships, and the spirit of loyalty, harmony, and sense of responsibility, were a creditable reflection on the men of our Squadron, who filled the majority of the responsible positions. The work performed by our men was directly instrumental in the development of a feeling of confidence on the part of pilots and observers, to secure which was a severe test of our efficiency as well as conducive to their best efforts in the air. The almost unbroken line of ships on the field was another evidence of the merits of 639's mechanical ability.

If a ship were not in flying condition, the prevalent custom ordered it several feet in the rear of the line till necessary repairs had been made. In a short time, a change of a wheel, or the replacement of all or a part of a wrecked landing gear, was speedily effected. Efficiency and speed in such minor details enabled the greater number of ships to be in commission all the time, earning a reputation for the Squadron and for the school, too. Occasionally, some incidental work demanded recognition, as was the case after the unexpected rain and windstorm one night in September. A storm broke without sending any harbinger, and when the wind had ceased its howling and Pluvius called "time" we took stock of the damage done.

Practically every barrack in camp was minus several sections of roof, while sheet iron plates were scattered about everywhere in the vicinity of the circular huts. The "Y" tent was blown down and torn considerably, as was also the orderly tent. The morning after, details were busily engaged restoring roofs and pitching the two tents that suffered so severely in the merciless gale. It was at this time that the orderly tent was changed to a location between our two barracks, where it remained during the remainder of our sojourn in Chatillon. Though much work was accomplished at Chatillon, it was here that we had our greatest amusement. In July, the first group of Permissionaires from the Squadron was unexpectedly off to Aix-les-Bains in quest of whatever a "leave" might offer a Yank. From that time on the men became more familiar with the ways of the French, this knowledge improving as we neared our second service chevron.

Since the first leave, our delegations have visited practically all the leave centers, including St. Malo, Grenoble, Nice, Monte Carlo, Monaco, Lucon, and Mentone. The recollections of Dijon, Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and some of the smaller cities are fixed in the memory of everyone, each for a very different reason, ranging through the entire eligibility list from Yvette to Marguerite. Each returning permissionaire might write a most interesting volume all his own of his experiences and no two would read similarly. No one had forgotten Heinrich's loquacity during the two weeks succeeding his return to the "simple life." We all learned bow be met the Duchess, his irresistible, taking manner captivating her on their first meeting. He told us, also, how lie attended a banquet at the Chateau of the Duchess which Secretary of War Baker and General Bliss honored with their presence, and that when the Secretary asked him for a match, how munificently he acted on that occasion when he said, "Here, Secretary, keep the box." After this hobnobbing with the aristocracy, we know why he captivated the affections of a famous opera prima donna.

Of course, all the men did not enjoy the same prestige, but all succeeded in making pleasant

acquaintances and learned much of France's most attractive parts. Heinrich himself, on his second leave, pursued an entirely different policy from that of his first "permission." He contended that his hobnobbing with the "bluebloods" on his first leave bad exhausted his financial resources, so for his pocket's own benefit be eschewed the high-brows and enjoyed himself more, at less expense to himself, on his second leave, without any excessive search. Every man easily found the sort of diversion most attractive to him. What the Squadron personnel didn't know about the gay "London House" or "Berthouxs Inn" at Lyons does not exist.

The "Pension des Artistes," where the comely French movie stars and young artists make their abode, was penetrated by E. deGray Read and Galtes. Very likely the "de" in Read's cognomen was the powerful influence that overcame staid European conventionalities, gaining admittance to these precincts, inasmuch as "de" is tacked on to the monikers of the aristocracy on this side of the Pond. On the return from a 14 days' absence from "la Belle Chatillon," the attractions of Rosie's Cafe, or Hotel de la Poste, waned and they didn't seem to be the "nice" sort of places we were at first inclined to think them. Once returned from a leave, the greatest desire was to start off on another, the required four months passing as four years.

The well established "Y" erected with the general expansion program proved to be an agreeable surprise. Though Mr. Webster provided amply for us in his dilapidated tent, the influx of the three additional squadrons warranted the construction of the excellent "Y" accommodations we afterward enjoyed. For a short time we had Miss Mann at the "Y," who inaugurated the hot cocoa custom. Her sojourn at the field, proved of short duration, work in Paris calling The Old "Y."

Fortunately, the cocoa custom survived to the end. Entertainments were provided at regular intervals, the local talent periodically providing shows of real merit. Divisional shows also favored us with their offerings from time to time. A baseball league was established, in which we were represented, having returned home only once on the short end of a score. These games provided auto trips to Montigny, Vauxhalles, Courban, or to other towns where our opponents were stationed. The trips were of real pleasure, Murphy and his transportation CANG providing trucks to carry the large band of rooters which accompanied the team on all trips. A combination team composed of men from the 89th and 639th frequently met the strong officers' team which boasted several ex-college and league players in their lineup. T

hese games were always nip-and-tuck affairs, the enlisted men, scoring the victory every time. Week-end auto trips were made to Dijon, Troves, and Auxere, in recognition of the fine work accomplished on the field. That these trips were full of amusement is indicated by the general wish to be numbered among those selected for the next ride. By November, no squadron was producing better results nor holding more of the responsible positions on the field than was the 639th. The Transportation Department, with one of the best records in the A. E. F., was virtually personneled by men from our outfit. Headquarters depended on our clerks and stenos to assume charge of that department, which they did very creditably.

Then "Boastful Willie" decided that the jig was up, telling us so with finality on November 11th. What happened that morning will lie remembered forever. A half hour after the good word had been received, 639tb's settlement bore a more forlorn aspect than the "Deserted Village" itself, the bunch heading for town en masse. That the 639ers played a prominent part in the celebration may be ascertained from the fact that several of us figured in little reckonings after the general hilarity had subsided. But everyone was doing his best that day, and we carried the same enthusiasm into the merry-making that characterized our daily tasks; hence, our exceptional accomplishments on the occasion of the armistice.

Though hostilities had ceased with the armistice, the same spirit that had imbued the men in their work was as noticeable as previously, no one relaxing his efforts to maintain the same high standard of efficiency in all work undertaken. November saw the Thanksgiving issue of "Contact," our squadron paper; the second edition appearing as a New Year's number. The merits of the sheet may be judged from the fact that the Chief of Air Service requested copies of all ensuing issues of the paper; also any cuts of general interest we had used and still had in our possession. These were to be utilized in the official history of the Air Service for official Government records.

A thousand copies were sold of the second number. Rhodes, the Editor experienced same of the difficulties of the regular newspaper scribe. Many libel suits were threatened, but finally dropped when informed that "Contact" could not possibly pay any damage suits returned against it. From November 11th, on, there wasn't a dull moment for any of us around the barracks. Occasionally some of the fellows would join in the social whirl and return after an undeniably pleasant evening spent at Rosie's Inn, or perhaps at the Hotel de la Poste, while still others found amusement in visiting the "Sign of the Red Horse" (Cheval Rouge) or "Big John's" dugout. There were those, too, who devoted their evenings to the mastery of the difficulties of the French language, while the fair instructor simultaneously labored to overcome the difficulties of English.

Each man had his particular rendezvous where he could always call for his "oeufs" and "pommes de terres frites" without fear of disappointment. We could not forget the strong man stunts performed after a social, or a dizzy whirl at popular Rosie's or one of the other emporiums. The way those stoves went over cannot be forgotten, nor can the spontaneous readings from Shakespeare go unappreciated. The boys certainly "knew the town, but we can't say more about it, due to the silence each observed concerning his achievements there. All had real rendezvous, but refused to let too many in on them, thus spoiling their own opportunities. In spare time, or on holidays, the men could he seen going off in all directions, St. Colombe and the smaller neighboring towns offering a welcome to many of the 639th men.

On January 12th, our old friends of the 89th started the first lap of the journey which we all hoped to make as "toot sweet" as possible, to "God's Country." The 639th then became the pioneer outfit on the field and the departure; bin each succeeding day found us as impatiently waiting as on the day previous. Dame Rumor had everyone on the "qui vivc" during the last

month there, and it seemed as though our orders would never come. One hour of drill constituted the day's labor, while most of us tired striving to dope out some means of agreeably occupying the remainder of the time. All excess equipment was turned in during these days and general preparations for departure were in order. "Y" 2nd Corps Aero School from Above places occupied by them were due recognition of their qualifications.

Here it was that the wild rumor artists realized the wonderful field of action that lay before them. Daily the Mexican athletes had either sailing orders for the Squadron or some "straight" or "inside" dope that assured our departure by the end of January. Some were even deploring the fact that we would be deprived of our right to don a second service stripe. Late in January, the work of the school having terminated, orders to return to the United States were requested for our Squadron, and then the real anxiety began. All were aware that each day might bring our entertainments during these days were staged frequently, but the majority of the men preferred association with their French friends, as they anticipated leaving them soon, perhaps never again to see them.

March 5th, excitement exceeded all bounds when we received official notice that we had only two more days in Chatillon. Some men immediately set to work, packing up their barrack bags, while others seemed almost skeptical, fearing that the cheerful news was only a dream. The supply tent looked comparatively bare after all excessive equipment was turned in and served to confirm the good news.

March 6th, the men, with the co-operation of Lieutenant Mitchell, the Engineering Officer, rigged up a fuselage and gave an unprecedented parade through the streets of Chatillori, which is described at length on another page. En Route, Chatillon to Marsas The morning of the 7th blanket rolls were prepared, barrack bags packed, and baggage transported to the station to be loaded on the cars that were already waiting to receive it.

Most of the day was spent in making the rounds of our numerous friends to bid them a final adieu. It seemed as though each man bad been adopted by some fair "Marraine," following the popular French custom. Old wines were brought out after an apparent undisturbed rest of some years and opened, in order that the best of friends might drink together before parting. All were implored to write "souvent" and besought not to forget their friends as soon as they had separated from them.

At eight o'clock the Squadron, in full marching order, formed on the road in the rear of the line of barracks and executed a "squads right" for the last time in the good old environment that served so long a time as our home. The doorways along the streets were filled with people who were to have a final glimpse of us as we marched, singing, along the route to the station. we arrived "a la gare" about 8:30 and piled into our "40 hommes—8 chevaux" Pullmans, eager to be off on the most desired of all journeys—most desired because it was the beginning of the end of our military career. Lieutenant Mitchell was at the station and bade each man a personal farewell.

That afternoon the members of the Squadron had presented him with a pair of field glasses and a gold pin in token of their friendship for him and in recognition of his efforts to further interests of the men. By ten o'clock we saw the last of Chatillon and were then ready to consider sleeping. The men then occupied themselves striving to determine the best means of arranging their bed sack. which they found piled up in the cars on their arrival at the station. It was decided to arrange the bunk adjacent to one another, the boys sleeping "sardine" fashion, i. e., with the feet of one in close proximity to the head of the other. For a time some of the boys were greatly perplexed in their efforts to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the sleeping problem.

Hot coffee had been prepared and the boys "fell out" to enjoy this prior to "setting" themselves for the night's rest, if rest were to be possible in so crowded a condition. By the time we had pulled out of Chatillon the sleeping difficulty had solved itself, as the boys hit the "hay heap" one by one, and a visit with Morpheus en route became a reality. it cannot be contended that sleeping under those conditions was analogous to sleep of a real beneficial nature, because when we arose the next morning fatigue had not been wholly dispelled. Bunks were rolled up and equipment suspended from the ceiling and from the walls through the medium of numerous nails that had been placed there for this purpose.

Everyone was fully awake bright and early, waiting for succor from the cookcar. The night's travel had brought us as far as Dijon, a city known to practically every member of the Squadron. Many had found rare enjoyment there on week-end trips, while everyone who had been on leave had made Dijon a factor in his itinerary. A number of the boys hit direct for the Red Cross canteen at the station, where their healthy appetite were soon appeased by the kindly, good looking, real American girls. A few others (ask Rhodes and Galtes) even perpetrated a morning social call at some of the nearby hostelries where they had formed "friendships" with some of the "fair ones" of the Rochefort country.

About eight o'clock the Squadron "cuisiniers" served hot coffee and sandwiches of the "cold beef" and confiture variety, the boys returning to the cars well satisfied for the present. Shortly after this "petit dejeuner" the tram signaled departure, everyone climbing aboard anxious to cover more distance as quickly as possible.

All the boys were settled comfortably enough in the cars during the day, some sitting in the doorways, wink' Others remained standing, gazing out of the open windows, enjoying the ever-changing beautiful landscapes. An hour out of Dijon and we saw Beaune with its immense American University colony, which several of ns were anxious to attend, but failed to receive the appointment. Each car provided its own impromptu entertainers, time passing tolerably fast with little diversions and spontaneous bursts of drollery.

Eats did not come as frequent as our appetites warranted, and fortunate indeed were those who had prepared for such a contingency, bringing an ample supply) of sardines, cheese, jam and French bread, and even eggs. The generosity and good-fellowship in every car permitted no one to gaze hungrily on the scene, everyone profiting by the preparedness of the farsighted

ones. By nine o'clock, the eve of the second day on the road, the interior of each car resembled a sardine can. In spite of the crowded conditions, sleep proved feasible. Some cars displayed hammocks suspended from the ceiling, as some of the fellows ingeniously contrived to rig up their "shelter halves" sailor fashion. "Tiny" Kennedy thought to utilize his shelter half in that fashion, but decided on completion of the work that he was either too heavy or the shelter half too weak for the ordeal; so he flopped on the floor, where he risked no spill For one of the "far-end" men to proceed to the d alter dark to "once over" the ever-changing environment was quite an interesting accomplishment.

'Twas necessary to rise, and either fall or dive as far as possible toward the mid-section of the car, recovering one's bearings after removing someone's knee or elbow from one's stomach. The method of procedure on the return was analogous, some displaying great skill in judging distance, landing in the majority of attempts directly on their own hay-heap.

Travel a la "40 hommes—8 chevaux" on this trip was a decided contrast to our trip under similar conditions over a year back, when we went from Brest to St. Maixent. On that trip conditions were considerably more crowded and sleep then was utterly impossible, general opinion concurring in severe aversion to French travel methods. Our year's experience had inured us to "war conditions" and with our straw filled bed sacks along, our return coastward was a pleasant contrast to that awful journey "frontward" in January, 1918.

On the morning of March 9th we arrived in Chateauroux. The night had passed in comparative rest, so the bunch quickly "piled oft" and formed a line for coffee in front of a French canteen. This beverage was appreciated, as was the information that we were to "lay over" there for several hours. The wise ones lost no time in exploring the town, their reports on returning to the cars causing many to regret their procrastination. It was true that many of the fellows left Chateauroux in a far more jovial mood than they had entered the burg early that morning. All left Chateauroux with a very favorable impression of the place, for various reasons.

The country traversed on this day was quite pleasing The scenery presented a very agreeable view. Eats, as on the day previous, did not come quite so often as the majority could have relished without pampering their soldier's appetite. Individual foresight again precluded the possibility of anyone's enduring any hunger at any time on the trip. By nine o'clock, the majority of the cars were darkened The quiet did not prevail, as usual, till a considerably later hour. One night had sufficed to inure the boys to the "sardine" mode of bunking. For that reason everyone enjoyed a good night's sleep the third night on the road. We were rudely aroused at five a. m. to enjoy some hot coffee, which was certainly appreciated, in spite of our disturbed slumbers.

Monday, the 10th, found the hunks rolled up earlier than usual, possibly due to the untimely awakening. The doors and windows were opened to admit the best weather we had bad since our departure from Chatillon. Enthusiasm was rampant, inasmuch as everyone was anticipating the end of the journey some time on that day. At practically every station the French "flunkies" were bombarded with fineries as to how soon we should arrive at St. Andre de Cubsaz, our destination. The farther we traveled the later became the conjectured hour of our arrival at St.

Andre, so we decided to ask no more questions. Chow on the third day was consistent with that of the two preceding days. Thrice during the day the hovs lined up for sandwiches and coffee, utilizing their own supply of eats in addition to those provided. By three o'clock we had crossed the Gironde and were moving slowly into the railroad yards at Bordeaux.

Though we expected to leave Bordeaux "toute de suite" after completing another collation consisting of "hash" sandwiches, we were disappointed on that score. A "hot box" was discovered on the baggage car, and alter about twenty Frenchmen had completed their very cursory inspection, it was decided that it would be necessary to replace the car with another one. This necessitated the removal of the contents of the car, transferring them to another that had been switched up for the purpose. The encomiums heaped on the French inspectors might more properly be termed opprobriums, for the boys did not enjoy the prolonged delay. The work of transferring the baggage was accomplished in comparatively short time and everyone was anxious to leave Bordeaux as soon as possible.

When we did start we were minus our baggage car, as a locomotive had in the interim been coupled to the opposite end of the train. Realizing our situation, the switch engine was coupled to the baggage car and followed us up as closely as could safely be done. The crew mi our engine heard the whistling and yelling of the boys and brought the train to a stop. The pestiferous baggage car was thin coupled on and we were on our way again by six o'clock. Marsas and Embarkation Camp Everyone was in readiness to detrain on a moment's notice, hut after a ride of two hours' duration we arrived at St. Andre only to receive the information that we had ten kilometers farther to travel.

The congested conditions of St. Andre and its environs compelled us to billet farther up the line. About 9:30 we detrained at Cavignac and, after piling up our bed sacks, we "fell in" to march three kilometers over to Marsas, where we were to be billeted. The 157th, which accompanied us, did likewise, but proceeded on foot over to Cezac, which had been assigned for their billets. The march through the darkness under full equipment proved to be somewhat of an ordeal after three days and nights on a French "Soldier Pullman." The customary characteristics of the 639th "on the march" were decidedly lacking that night.

Occasionally someone would commence a song, but his enthusiasm invariably failed him as his pack emphasized its presence. The European kilometer, as a linear measure, evoked contempt from a Yank when he considered the superiority of the mile. those three kilometers we traversed, hiking from Cavignac to Marsas, were apparently longer than any American farmer's six miles. It was a fatigued bunch that came to a halt in the vicinity of the field kitchen located temporarily alongside the road in Marsas. Lieutenant Snow and the vanguard, consisting of Weisblum, lice, and Knowles, who arrived three days previous, had prepared some coffee. Even this sugarless beverage, with a piece of bread, was appreciated by all.

By midnight the various detachments had been marched off to the billets to which they had been assigned. No one lost any time in preparing a place to "Hop" for the night—in the majority of cases, on the hard floor.

Once again we found ourselves living in the homes of the French people, but this time under far pleasanter conditions. Many of the boys met the "Patron" that same night and were obliged to accept of his proffered hospitality in the form of some very fine wine. We were the first Yanks to be stationed in the vicinity of Marsas and the treatment we received from the people was above reproach a decided contrast to the environment at Chatillon. Marsas is a hamlet of perhaps eighty inhabitants, located thirty-two kilometers from Bordeaux in the Department of Gironde. It is in the heart of the "Vin blanc" district, the vineyards covering miles and miles of territory. Settlements in this section of France were quite different from those to which we were accustomed in the eastern part of the country.

The houses were located a considerable distance apart, each boasting a fairly large acreage devoted to vineyards. Our routine here consisted of morning and afternoon drill, though shortly before our departure the afternoon period was devoted to athletic activity. The change proved very popular with the boys, inasmuch as it afforded them ample opportunity to decide whether they had retrograded to the class of "has beens" or "comebacks." It is safe to venture that the great majority qualified in the latter category. Discipline tightened here and formations were the prevailing vogue. The men in the different billets came in formation for all meals, or whenever the presence of the entire personnel of any billet was required at some particular place. In proceeding to mess, formation was necessary.

Shoes, both field and russet, were kept scrupulously clean and polished at all times. No one readily forgot the impromptu inspection in lieu of retreat when what we thought was a real shine merited two hours and twenty minutes of extra hiking after supper. The penalty subjected to consisted in covering a prescribed route twice in one hour. This was impossible to do, even should the bunch double time both circuits. The Q. M. treated us exceptionally fine and the mess sergeant by requisitioning the services of Bill Hogan, "a bear" of an ex-cook, and mess sergeant, improved the eats considerably. Effective precautions were taken to assure irreproachable cleanliness of mess-gear.

This served to further the enjoyment of chow and satisfy the many inspectors on that score. Rigorous inspections were held every Saturday, everybody carefully preparing for them. The general improvement in discipline, drill, and appearance was quite marked after our first fortnight in Marsas. After four weeks in our Gironde environment the majority of the boys, to utilize their own expressions, were "sitting pretty."

The French friends of the 639th were counted within a six or seven-kilometer radius of Marsas. The 639ers were favorites at Ourches and Chatillon ; and then at Marsas, experiencing no contenders, in addition to being the first American soldiers there, they found a hearty welcome from the start, which they retained throughout their sojourn there. Many a bottle of ancient "Vin blanc" was brought out after years of undisturbed rest. The people would accept no remuneration for this hospitality, offering it through motives of pure friendship. Tobacco, cigarettes, and occasionally candy, of the issue variety, served to reciprocate the kindness.

During our stay at Marsas it was not Found necessary to appoint M. P.s, a very creditable reflection on the character of the Squadron personnel. Access to cafes was had throughout the day until 9:30 in the evening. Inebriety was, , practically a nonentity. For once, practically ever) man in the Squadron joined in the social whirl of French rural society. The weekly- dances, given under French auspices at Holley's billet and over "a la gare" at Gauriauguet, were largely attended by 639ers. These affairs invariably proved a revelation and a real scream to the boys. One could hardly imagine or easily describe the dances such as those French executed. It was certainly a ludicrous spectacle to witness; a small hall, overcrowded with French whirling dizzily for a moment, then tearing around in skipping fashion.

In reality, it was merely a contest to see who could tramp on the greater number of feet with the least damage to his own. The boys at first essayed to dance, hut experience soon taught them that the spectator's role was the preferable one. The closing dance, , was the one most appreciated. That three-piece orchestra (cornet, violin, and bass) inevitably ground out a jig for the final number on the program. The Amexes usually participated in that number, as it consisted in hopping from one foot to the other.

Most of the comely demoiselles within the dance radius (and they came from miles around) made the "connaissance" of the 63°ers. For this, and other reasons, we had contented ourselves with our new environment and were reconciled to an indefinite stay in Marsas, But we were greatly surprised when, on returning from morning drill on March 7th, we received orders to proceed on the morrow to the French Aviation Field at St. Andre de Cubzac.

Here we were to bivouac for the night, proceeding to Genicart the following day. Genicart was the embarkation camp for the Bordeaux area. Immediately following dinner, men from each billet Preparing for a Review at St. Andre marched to their quarters and prepared themselves For departure. The French, who had learned to know us well, were greatly disappointed to hear that we were leaving them. By supper time all was in readiness tor departure. The hoys set out after supper to bid an revoir to all their friends. Amexes went in every direction that night to see for the last time their newly made friends. Even the chateau at Gauriauguet received two 639ers, offering several of their choicest "old" wines with their an revoir. Of course these were appreciated.

Though "taps" was blown at the usual hour, a great number did not return for sleep until the "wee sma' " hours. At 8:30, the morning of April 7th. the Squadron was on the camions ready for the last view of Marsas. L'institutrice, who had shown a keen interest in the Amexes, had all the children assembled in the schoolyard to wave "adieu" until our camions rolled out of sight. Some "fair ones" followed on bicycles as far as the Route Nationale, At eleven o'clock the squadron descended from the camions at the French aviation field at St. Andre.

But little time was required to assign the men to tents. Everybody then commenced to explore the camp and locate as comfortable as possible for the night. The tents recalled the days we had spent at Kelh Field, though we were content to know that the repetition was for one night only. We were to have been reviewed there by General Pershing, but the plans were changed.

In the evening the boys took a jaunt into town to "once over" the place, main' having previously not been afforded the opportunity to visit the town. All returned to camp "de bonne heure" to get a good night's rest in anticipation of the hike on the morrow. The cooks worked all night preparing sandwiches for the hike. The bunch awoke the morning of the 8th, ready for the march though poorly rested after a night on the bard boards minus a bed sack.

Everybody assisted in loading the baggage on the camions, a method that expedited considerably that tedious job, usually meaning hard work for only a few. It was observed that several camions in excess of those required for baggage transport had been assigned to the squadron. By the "rank" elimination process, only the privates remained to make the hike on foot, according to original orders. After all the camions had departed the privates fell in, and, led by Capt. Fritz, were off on what they thought was to be a hike to Genicart.

But twenty minutes were required to proceed from the Aviation Field to the M. T. C. park at St. Andre, where a halt was called. Capt. Fritz interviewed the officer in charge and two additional trucks were provided, to the great delight of the "Mucks". After an hour and a half of travel through beautiful surroundings, we arrived at camp no. 1, Genicart. The awful hike having been avoided seemed as if it bad merely been bad nightmare. Shortly after our arrival at Genicart we were comfortably located in clean barracks.

Each man, after the wont of 639ers, preceded to familiarize himself with his new environment. The new camp was agreeable enough, but we were informed that we were to leave the following day for Camp no. 2. After a night of excellent rest, we marched over to Camp no. 2 on March 10th. We immediately entered the mill, and "mill" that ordeal certainly was. The following day, when a number of our men were assigned to the "delouser" for duty, we realized what a farce we had participated in the day previous. Rookies that we were on our arrival, the delousing ordeal was certainly a miserable process for most of us; though when our men commenced to put through the newcomers the next day the more ludicrous it all seemed to Us. The men were assigned to various occupations, all affording considerable spare time.

None were supplied with those delicate instruments, the pick and shovel, for which consideration we were truly grateful. We were here under orders calling for permanent duty, though not "permanent" as is ordinarily inferred. The all important question was "when do we leave?". But we had no official information on that score so were reconciled again to the watchful waiting policy. "Dame Rumor" again cast an effective thralldom about the squadron while our "bull" artists adhered servilely to their principles. Some had us on the boat a few days after our arrival at Camp No. 2; others set our departure for a specified time in the near future.

The sagacious ones, , prepared themselves as usual for the development of the reality and paid no heed to the bewildering rumors. As it developed, we were at the Embarkation Camp for about a month, performing our various duties. A large number were assigned for work in the "mill" and thus helped "decootieize" about 40,000 homeward bound men. Others were in the headquarters as clerks, guides, inspectors, etc. The time went rapidly. Genicart was a camp of

daily changes, an endless stream of men entering to be deloused and leaving for the boat. Bordeaux was only a few kilometers south and many of us made several trips there and added to our store of knowledge of French city life.

Bordeaux proved a wonderful city and we counted ourselves fortunate to be given passes so frequently. Back to the U. S. A. Again The great day arrived with a bang on May 8. We were relieved of our duties, again deloused, inspected, given emergency rations and orders for home. Never was there a busier lot of men and early on the 9th everything was in readiness to move. That afternoon we marched to the docks in a broiling sun. Our ship was the S. S. Sierra, formerly of the Oceanic Steam ship Co. This time we didn't mind the crowding because we had plenty of light and deck freedom.

The journey lasted 13 days and was for the most part quite delightful. To make a long story short, we landed on May 21 at Hoboken, and, after running the gauntlet of a number of Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., K. C, and J. W. B. representatives who showered us with candies, tobacco, handkerchiefs, etc., were marched aboard the ferry boat Newburgh and sailed across to Long Island City, where we took a train to Camp Mills.

What a delight to ride in an American train again; real American comfort, real American men and women at the stations. We spent the night at Camp Mills. The next morning we went through another delousing process and then marched to Garden City and entered good barracks once more. Telephones, telegraph, and the mails were kept busy connecting us with our friends. At Garden City our records were brought to their final form, our pay was computed, and by June 6 all of us had been discharged and were on our way home. The officers were discharged a few weeks later.

CAPTAIN EMANUEL FRITZ took command of the Squadron at Kelly Field, Texas, on December 24, 1917, and remained with it continuously until the Squadron was demobilized, June 6, 1919. At the time of his appointment lie was a First Lieutenant in the Field Artillery Reserve Corps, being subsequently transferred to the Air Service. IK has untiring devoted all his time and efforts to the Squadron to make it a strong and efficient organization. That lie was successful in this is attested by the many compliments paid the Squadron from time to time. It may he said of him that he knew each of us individually and always looked out for our will. ire, comfort, equipment, and pleasure. Captain fritz hails from Baltimore, hut plans to make his home in Berkeley, California, after his own discharge, as a member of the Faculty of the Division of Forestry, University of California.

In order to complete certain construction work at Ourches, it became necessary to have a steam roller. A machine of this kind was available but it was located at Vaucouleurs and must be brought to Ourches over the road and under its own power. There was but one man in camp, who, to our knowledge, had any previous experience in operating such a clumsy piece of machinery, and that was Schultz, an ex-locomotive engineer. Therefore, he was dispatched with an able assistant, Ted Smith by name, to navigate the iron monster over the nine kilometers of roadway separating our cam]) from Vaucouleurs. They managed, with some difficulty, to get the

required amount of steam, and after a little more trouble the thing began to move upon the manipulation of the proper lexers But then their troubles commenced. One thing after another delayed their progress and after three days they pulled into the small village of I'gny. Here they left the balky brute by the wayside and returned to camp for more supplies, a distance of not more than three kilometers.

With a fresh stock of fuel and other necessities, Schultz, with a new assistant, Harvey Coale, returned and got under was once more, hoping against hope that they might arrive at camp before the shades of evening fell. This pleasure was granted them, for without further serious trouble they managed to steam up the main highway into camp during the afternoon, with all colors flying and the whistle blowing to announce to all that they bad finally arrived. They were received with much laughter, but they argued that they had had a good trip and had traveled slowly enough to enjoy the scenery.

The 89th Squadron's placid departure on January 12th provoked considerable comment on the part of the members of the 639th. It was beyond our comprehension how an organization, so long established in the place, could take its final leave so undemonstratively and so utterly lacking in enthusiasm. On that occasion the 639th resolved that its departure should he a memorable event, both to the Chatillonais and to the numerous Yanks at the Post. March 7th was destined to figure as the "day of days" for the 639th Squadron.

On the morning of March 6th, each and every man packed his barrack bag and discarded all excess accumulations. The quarters presented a somewhat deserted appearance after everyone bad packed up. Imitations to dinner in town were numerous, many French people providing the equivalent to the "fatted calf" for this exceptional occasion. As some of them explained, they were about to lose those toward whom they bad acted as "marraines," in accord with that commendable French custom.

A "marrainc" is a maiden, or not, fair or decidedly otherwise, who selects a soldier, and interests herself in his welfare. Usually the soldier receives from his marraine letters, smokes, and when practicable as is the case in the Armee Francaise, hospitality while (hi permission. It was their pleasure to take dinner "chez" their marraines at least once a week, a powerful influence to counteract the ennui that comes occasionally by those so far from home. In spite of the general visiting on the 6th, the boys did not fail to consider plans for a final celebration that evening. A parade was decided upon.

Sam Rhodes, Ranahan, and Paul Byrne were assiduously engaged composing words to be sung to familiar airs, while another bunch sought Lieutenant Mitchell and obtained his permission to utilize the fuselage of dismantled Sop. 21, and the field dolly for the occasion. The fuselage was mounted on the dolly and secured with ropes. Whitworth painted a dragon bead on its nose and added such inscriptions as: "Nous allons partir pour l'Amerique toute de suite," "An revoir Mademoiselles de Chatillon," "Fini Cognac," etc. Banners were made bearing similar wordings. Enthusiasm increased and everyone expressed his intention to participate in the parade.

At 6 o'clock, the men assembled in the Mess Hall to rehearse the songs and yells which had been adapted to the occasion. The noises from the Mess Shack could have lead one to imagine a student rally, but 'twas only 639ers preparing for their grand an revoir peerade. Inasmuch as the 157th was to leave on the same train, we invited them to participate in our demonstrations, and they accepted. Though the 157th was a "live" bunch, they couldn't equal the enthusiasm of the 639ers, and eventually took but a small part in the lark.

At 6:30 the bunch "fell in" on the road leading toward Chatillon, tarrying briefly to receive a final exhortation from Top-Kick York, who called on the men to put in all the "pep" they bad. The "Fuselage Monster," gayly bedecked with various flags, headed the parade, with "Dad" Waddel in the pilot's cockpit, and Harvey Coale occupying the observer's seat. The "Monster" was drawn by ropes on both sides by a dozen men The Squadron followed in regular formation, a few of the 157th falling in with us.

Tom Yohe, whose "long suit" bad always been exploding detonators or lighting signal flares at most Main Exhibit in the Bis Parade inopportune times, rendered yeoman service on this occasion. With a large haversack loaded with signal rockets and flares, obtained through Tom's own peculiar ingenuity, be marched along with the CANG, and sent tqi flares as the Squadron started off toward town, while everyone sang "Hail, Hail, the CANG's All Here," as lustily as possible. Occasionally a halt was called and the "sky-rocket" yell was given for the 639th, followed by another for the 157th.

As we passed through the main part of Chatillon and everybody was singing with all his might, the windows and doorways on both sides of the streets became thronged with curious Frenchmen, who had not seen nor heard anything similar to this since the day of the Armistice. It was with considerable apprehension that we approached the M. P. at the foot of the lull. But we were relieved when, in passing" headquarters, a group of M.P.s looked on at the orderly riot with only blank amazement. If the M.P.s had any inclination to interfere they quickly reconsidered, after one look at the long parade. The farther the parade advanced, the greater became the enthusiasm, Yohe's pyrotechnics maintaining pace with the general progress. By this time the French population was fully aroused and cognizant of the fact that 639 was surely celebrating its departure.

By 7:30, the procession arrived at the Hotel de Ville and five minutes later filed into the "Jardin du Mairie" and halted while a large assembly gathered round to take in the "doings." "Dusty" Rhodes, Paul Byrne, Ranahan, and York ascended to the band stand. Paul Byrne and Ranahan duetted, the crowd joining in and repeating the chorus. From "We Hate to Leave You" we went right through our entire repertoire several times, interspersing the songs with "beaucoup" sky-rocket and locomotive yells, which were ably led by "Dusty" Rhodes.

These last were surely a revelation to the French and added to their astonishment. After the songs and speeches the march was resumed and continued up Rue de la Gare to Rue dc Chaumont, thence down by the Hotel de la Poste, where a halt was called. Paul Byrne and Ranahan mounted the fuselage and again we exhausted our collection of songs and yells to the

approval of the crowd of French and American spectators that had gathered. Yohe was on the job with a red and green flare that added considerably to the scene. Interesting indeed were the expressions noticeable on the faces of the Yanks—officers and men, who were among the spectators. It seemed as if every face there registered envy, or at least deep longing; numerous remarks we overheard confirming our conjectures on that score.

‘’From the Hotel de la Poste, we proceeded along Rue de L'Isle to L'Eglise Saint Nicolas, minus any appreciable diminution in enthusiasm, though the noise possibly decreased in volume, inasmuch as the hunch by that time became quite hoarse, and the few 157th men who had started with us weakened before we were well started. All along the line of march, on the going and return trip, tobacco and cigarettes, of the "issue" variety, sometimes known as the "reject brand," were tossed to the French who chanced to be nearest. At the foot of the hill we found further evidence of the perfect co-operation and harmony existing in the Squadron, in the truck which we found waiting to help the "fuselage monster" up the hill and over the last hard stretch of road between town and camp.

On our return to the field the bunch lost no time in piling up the hundred boxes or so that had previously served as our personal lockers, and it then poured "essence" on the immense heap and touched a match to it. In Indian war-dance formation the hunch serpentined around the blaze, singing and yelling with all the vocal power that remained. The fire illumined the sky for miles around. When Lieutenants Watts and Wood were espied in the crowd, they were given cheers, followed by cries of "Speech, Speech." These affable "Loots" responded and both were profuse in their praise of the work and character of the 639th.

They wished us all a speedy and safe return to "God's country," and civil life. At this juncture, Yohe lighted a flare that illumined the sky for fully 20 minutes, while the men arranged themselves in groups according to rank. The rankest Sergeants 1st class and Buck Sergeants made up the first group, the Corporals and Chauffeurs the second, and the privates of both the "Buck" and "High" variety the third. Each group in turn cheered for itself, the "Private" aggregation easily carrying off the distinction of having received the loudest acclamation. The three groups then cheered "ensemble," producing a surprising volume of noise.

An hour of celebration on the field left only a heap of smoking embers, the closing incident occurring when Ray Schenck auctioned off the ashes. Whether or not the highest bidder carried off his award is unknown. Captain Fritz, who had followed the parade a short distance, unknown to the men, also occupied a very inconspicuous position on the field for the reason, we later learned, that he did not wish his presence to act as a restraint on the enthusiasm of the men. We were glad to know that he had witnessed the celebration, and enjoyed it immensely. It is a safe wager that no outfit, larger or smaller than ours, ever evidenced such unity and squadron spirit with so unbounded an enthusiasm.

The affair was absolutely original, and will undoubtedly remain the only one such—a testimonial to the irrepressible spirit and initiative of the 639th Squadron. The following excerpt from a letter received by Lieutenant Snow from M. L. Richebourg, in whose house he was

billeted while at Chatillon, gives an idea of what the French thought of our celebration and indicates also how successful it was: "Le lendeniain de votre depart l'aviation a dit un grandiose adieu. On a promene par les rues un avion a qu'on avait enleve les ailes et convert descriptions; 'Finis Cognac,' etc., etc. Cela a fait la joie des grands et des petits qui out suivi le cortege en applaudissant."

The Supply Sergeant's job was generally conceded to be the biggest graft in the Army. The Supply Sergeant and the Mess Sergeant were always represented hand in hand, but in most cases this representation was not correct. The Supply Sergeant seemed to be the friend of anyone who was in a position where there could be reciprocal benevolence. The Supply Sergeant was severely censured; he did not have to be too careful of his clothing; paper was easily secured; little conveniences were unconsciously usurped. He must necessarily have considered all who approached him as solicitous thieves until they had performed some act of unusual honesty before him.

Therefore, he was unpopular among the men, often the most unpopular man in the organization, because so few realized his position. In the 639th Aero Squadron the Supply Sergeant had no doubt—but certainly unintentionally—practiced some of the regular Army Supply Sergeants' notorious graft. He and the Mess Sergeant were attached with a mutual end in view. But he accepted only those things which were forced upon him, and then honorably considered them as a kindness toward himself—not the job.

When he retired from his job, the same respect was shown him, he was no longer able to bestow favors. Below this superficial layer of velvet, we believe that the Supply Sergeant had more tribulations than any man in the outfit. Since we are writing an "in memoriam," we may pass on to express our truthful retrospections. The Supply Sergeant was a medium between a CANG of rapacious soldiers and an exacting officer, while he could please neither at the same time. He was like the two-faced Janus who smiled on one side, but frowned on the other. The nature of his work was multifarious.

He and the Understudy sorted and counted the dirty salvage in order that we would not outwit the Q. M. and still keep the "best policy" immaculate. It was one of the Understudy's jobs to clean the pistols, while his boss was accountable for them. At one time a pistol was lost, and could not be replaced, at which "his Nibs" was unreasonably vexed. Everything—from a two-cent shoelace, up—was the Supply Sergeant accountable for. Several days after notices had been posted, there would be many men who still wanted various articles which we did not have and could not get. Ladenson bored us for several months for a pair of shoes of a size the (J. M did not have; so we were obliged to take his malignant curses without a whimper. Phoebus, long after we had packed our property to turn it in at Marsas, came for a pair of breeches to match his coat.

Rhoades never had his full equipment at any one time. The day before we left Chatillon for Marsas, he reported to the Supply Sergeant that he did not have a shelter half in which to wrap his blankets. Hicks always glided into the supply room, introducing himself, "Don't get hard with

me, will yo'?" Reynolds even threatened to gather a predatory CANG to raid the supply room. The Boss and his Understudy were interrogated concerning clothing in the "tin hut," mess hall, Y. M. C. A., barracks, and everywhere but the supply room; so that they were shocked into saying a hundred unbiblical things.

The Understudy was often unable to build a fire to suit "his Nibs," and "his Nibs" never hesitated to express his dissatisfaction in the most diabolical sarcasm. And "his Nibs" was often displeased at the way the floor was swept and the dust that lay on the boxes. Then, when he was in the hospital at Chatillon, the new C. O. had another disposition which had to be mitigated.

The Understudy was dispatched to buy the temporary C. O.'s morning paper and had to assume the position of valet as well as assisting the Supply Sergeant. the Supply Sergeant was successful in becoming quite popular with the Q. M., so we always had the pick of clothing in Chatillon. Many of the organizations there had to pass through more red tape than we did. But the best we could get was always greeted with complaints, and our hearts thus became hardened. A man would enter the supply room with a broad grin and exit with curses hurled at us and on the entire Army.

Gustafson, took charge of the funeral and spared no effort to make the ceremonies as impressive as possible. The bodies were removed to the A. E. F. hospital at Chateau-Villain, thence to one of the school buildings at Chatillon. Solid oak, lead-lined caskets had been secured from Dijon and the bodies were allowed to lie in state until the time of the obsequies. Each casket was covered by a large American flag and almost hidden beneath a bovver of fresh flowers. A guard of honor, composed of non-commissioned officers, remained posted until the cortege left for the cemetery.

At 2:00 p. m. on the 22nd, led by the Artillery band of the Division and a company of Infantry, the procession left the flying field and marched slowly to the American cemetery at the other edge of town. The bodies were carried on a three-ton Packard truck driven by Chauffeur Whooley, assisted by Private Shove. The truck had had its sides removed and was draped with black and white. It made an admirable substitute for an artillery caisson. The hearse was flanked by the honorary pallbearers—eighteen officers—six for each of the deceased. Following the hearse were the mourners: first, a large group of officers, then the 157th Aero Squadron in a body, and then members of the other Squadrons, and a number of French citizens.

En route, the solemn music of the band served to create a deep impression, and caused everyone to realize more forcibly, the transiency of life. Accompanying the procession, but high overhead, was Lieutenant Henricks DH-4 plane, he and his observer, Lieutenant Meyer, seeming to hover over the column on guard, while the drone of the motor sounded sad, rather than, as usually, combative. On arrival at the cemetery, the various organizations were drawn up and aligned to form a hollow square about the graves. Chaplain Shank performed the last rites, and the splendid quartet of the 157th, a favorite of Lieutenant Gustafson, rendered "Lead Kindly Light." Rose petals were dropped on the caskets, and after each one was lowered the firing

platoon fired a salute of three rounds, the band played a dirge, and the bugler sounded "Taps." Lieutenant Henricks, who all the while was circling overhead, then glided silently down, and as he passed over the graves. Lieutenant Meyer from the rear seat dropped flowers.

The men returned to camp filled with a deep sense of sorrow over the loss of the popular officers, and flying that night was discussed as being too risky for a permanent occupation. this feeling toward flying soon wore off, the memory of the deaths and the impressive ceremonies will undoubtedly remain forever.

One day Sergeant Thompson and the touring car chauffeur, Hull, made their initial visit to the kitchen in the capacity of K. P.s, and believe me they did their share of the chores. Hull shoveled two tons of coal and cut one-half the wood as an appetizer before breakfast. Thompson, besides carrying the coal and wood into the kitchen, pumped three G. I. cans full of water and scrubbed several greasy pans before he satisfied his hunger. I was surprised to see the men report for kitchen police, and when 1 inquired of the Top Kick why these two non-coms happened to be on such an easy detail for Sunday he informed me that they reported late for retreat on the previous evening, and that he would see to it that all such offenders would receive the same penalty in the future.

As far as I was concerned, both Thompson and Hull did their duty and did it well, and I can assure you they both enjoyed a sound night's slumber after finishing at 7 :30 p. m. A few days later, our old friends, "Sixteen Franek" and "Parson" Davis, helped to do the chores, and believe me it was a scream. Franek had attended a dance the evening previous in a nearby town, and he naturally didn't feel well that day, for he hadn't hit the hay until 4:00 a. m. You know it was a bit hard for him to report at 7 :00 a. m. for K. P. Poor Franek! He peeled four bags of spuds, two bushels of onions, and one peck of carrots, besides hauling in two cords of wood, shoveling some coal, and scrubbing a dozen pans or so.

After getting through with this, Cook Chauffeur 1st Class Hogan let him (Franek) scrub up the kitchen while he (Hogan) was resting himself. "Sixteen" said, after he finished that night, that he didn't think he would volunteer for K. P. again tomorrow, but thanked Hogan before he left the kitchen at 7:30, saying that he enjoyed his visit very much and hoped that he would meet either Hogan or myself sometime after we were discharged—in Chicago.

He assured us that he would extend us a warm reception. I suppose he meant that he would blow us for a few drinks in some swell cafe in the Loop, so I told him I didn't drink. Sam Rhodes was one of the detail for K. P. one day. He wasn't feeling at all well, because he told me so when he reported for duty at 7:00 a. m. He said he had been up most of the night and thought he wanted to answer sick call at 9:00 a. m., as he would like to lie marked "Quarters." Since I thought he had been nursing a sick friend the night before I said he could answer sick call. You know me, I sure pity anyone that is sick. Well, Sam reported to the infirmary at 9:00 a. m. and came back to the kitchen at 9:30 a. m. marked "Duty."

Poor Sam! During his absence I found out that he had been up most of the night, all right, but

not nursing any sick friend. Instead, he had been nursing the kitty in a poker game in No. 5 Barracks. When I laid eyes on him I put him to scrubbing pans, pots, and garbage cans, and told him that it was his duty to have them all shining and cleaned well enough to eat from. He started well, but during the course of events in the morning my eyes were attracted to other details and I forgot Sam for the time being.

When I glanced in his direction he was gone. I asked Cook Franka Paul if he had seen anything of Rhodes and he said, "I 'a Rhodesa was outa da kitch for one a hour." So 1 get out on Sam's trail and, after searching through both barracks, I found his royal highness as snug as a bug in a rug with his trench shoes under his bead for a pillow and dreaming of Cupid and little angels. I sure was raving, so I grabbed Sam by the slack of the breeches and asked him if he thought he was on a vacation, or if he really understood that he could be court-martialed for refusing to obey orders. Poor Sam! I hated to do it, but I had to, and everything about the kitchen was looking spic and span that night. The boys appreciated seeing Sam on K. P. and heartily gave him the K. P. yell, which I may mention was composed by Sam himself and used many times when the Squadron paraded the streets of Chatillon.

On June 8th, the 639th Supply Squadron, 1st Lt. Emanuel F. Fritz, A. S., commanding, reported at this post to receive training as a service squadron. Since its arrival it has acted in that capacity, orders being issued on June 14th to this effect. Three of the squadron's commissioned personnel were transferred to the infantry; Lt. Snow was assigned as ass't post supply officer, and Lt. L. G. McKinley as post censor. Lt. Robert Aaronson, of the French army, arrived on June 16th to fill the position of instructor in artillery adjustment and infantry liaison, left vacant by the departure of Lt. Blanc for service in the United States. He came to this post directly from the Flanders front, where his squadron was stationed, and immediately proved himself an able, interesting and energetic instructor. Under his guidance the programs for training in his two departments were greatly improved and his course of instruction, presented in the class room in unfavorable weather, gained the earnest attention of the students because of its original and practical features.

As a reward for their past excellent and long service with the A. E. F., amounting to one year and two months, LTC C. C. Benedict released the 89th Squadron from further duty and they departed for the port of embarkation on the 12th of January, under the command of Lt. McKinley, formerly of the 639th Squadron, who was placed in command on December 30th, 1918. With the squadron, Lts. Miller, Rogers and Butcher departed. 1st Lt. Omer O. Gain, M. C., who reported to the school as post surgeon on June 24th, was placed in charge of the infirmary. Two days before the declaration of the Armistice a fatal accident in Sopwith 63 caused the instant deaths of 2nd Lt. J. W. Buckley, pilot, and 1st Lt. H. E. Clark, observer, near Veuxhalles. A forced landing of a Liberty plane, on January 24th, 1919, caused the death of pilot, 2nd Lt. Charles O'Neill, A. S. In a collision with a Salmson over Le Tracy February 20th, 1919, 1st Lt. C. L. Gustafson and 1st Lt. R. B. Messer, were instantly killed. The order making Lt. Gustafson a captain was published the nest day.

THE month of February, 1918, saw the transfer of the 89th Aero Squadron from Colombey les

Belles, in the Toul sector, to the Chatillon sector, and unobserved by the Huns, they quietly took possession of their new billets. The next few weeks were spent in getting ready for the coming battle.

The zero hour was set for seven o'clock on the morning of March 28th. Lt. Falk took command, M. E. Buettner and his grease hounds holding the pivot; Sgt. Peterson and his chauffeurs hauling up ammunition, supplies and slum. Sgt. Dupy, in charge of the Motor Overhaul platoon, was working his men overtime on the "barkers of the air," in the form of rejuvenated Renault motors, while Sgt. "Slim" Barnes' platoon of screwdrivers and ripsaws afforded splendid support on both flanks. Not an aileron broke.

The battle raged, and in order to man the incoming Sops, G. H. Q. ordered more men; whereupon the 639th arrived in full battle array from the Toul battle sector, camouflaged with French dust. They were immediately assigned to the support of the 8pth in the A. R. division. Boiler, Phoebus and Fraser were placed on the line, in liaison with Buettner, Morgan and Robbins of the 89th.

Murphy and his gasoline eaters re-enforced Peterson, while Knutson, Quinn and Holz rendered invaluable aid to Dupy and his Motor Overhaul platoon. "Slim" Barnes sent in a call for aid, and Reifert, Pilgrim, Jessup and Demmon were immediately dispatched to the scene of action. In less than two weeks' time both squadrons were fighting side by side.

The increase in the size of the field called for a larger staff. Lt. Hanlcy went in as assistant to Lt. Falk, while Lt. Alliason took charge of the Motor Overhaul; Lt. Scovel took over Sgt. Barnes and his platoon; Lt. Larer created—for himself—the position of Property Officer and Lt. Cort was installed as Instrument Officer and Fire Marshal.

The condition on the field at this time was any-thing but pleasant, due to lack of supplies, particularly spare parts. This state of affairs was over-come only by the American spirit, "In union there is strength," and the boys were gluttons for work. Week-end sick leave was granted. As a result of this cooperation, the battle progressed, with the 2nd C. A. S. well advanced in all departments, fulfilling all confidences placed in it. Owing to the increased number of transportation

Col. Benedict, young in years, is an old hand at the war game and a flyer of no mean ability. It was a source of great joy to the men of the 639th to have their old C. O. at the head of the organization to lead them on once more. In the person of Capt. McLeod, we became possessed of a man who knows the engineering game forwards and backwards. Capt. McLeod came to this sector from the 7th A. I. C., where he established an enviable reputation. He has also seen service at the front all the way from Flanders to Toul.

In this battle there was no preliminary fire by the cork artillery, usually headed by 370, 157 and 639 with a heavy barrage support from 89th Aero and 20th Company, but rather a spontaneous mass attack on the village entrenchments by the entire post. The news came at 9 o'clock and at

one minute past nine the attack was launched. It was a hard-fought affair and all day long, far into the night, hostilities were carried to the very heart of the town. Men staggered here and there, wounded temporarily by the overwhelming strength of the enemy, but still carrying on the fight. With a stoutness of heart deserving of better success, they fought on and on, with never a thought of the final reckoning.

This battle proved conclusively what hundreds of minor engagements failed to teach the fact that there could be no victory over the alcoholic and diabolical forces of wine, women and more wine. Also, that a negotiated peace was out of the question. Lt. Bradford stated the matter exactly in his famous speech after the battle. He said: "Boys, it's a tough old war but we gotta go on."

In the course of time it was resurrected and redesignated the 118 Observation Squadron and assigned by the War Department to the National Guard Bureau. Then, troops that composed the 43rd Division came from Rhode Island, Connecticut and Vermont. So The National Guard Bureau, in Washington, first assigned the new 43rd Division Air Service to Rhode Island The reason was simple. There was not, at that time, any air field in Connecticut capable of handling military type aircraft.

After the opening of Brainard Field, Hartford, in Oct, 1922, efforts were immediately launched to secure the new Air Service unit for Connecticut. Through the efforts of then Governor John H. Trumbull, Congressman E. Hart Fenn, and others, this effort was successful. Money to build hangars at the new field, on land secured from the City of Hartford, was approved by the State Legislature in the spring of 1923. After that, Rhode Island relinquished its claim to the 43rd Division Air Service, and the unit was reassigned to Connecticut.

Surprisingly enough, the first commanding officer of the newly formed 118 Observation Squadron was not a Connecticut man at all. He was a proper Bostonian, if there ever was Talbot O. Freeman. Of these, the 118 Observation Squadron, Connecticut National Guard, comprising 12 officers and 52 enlisted men was federally recognized on November 1, 1923.

Major Freeman's recruiting task was not an easy one. He was not just looking for healthy young men who might be trained in infantry tactics. On the other hand, he was looking for healthy young men who might be trained in infantry tactics but who were already trained photographers, engine mechanics, and technicians in several other fields including electronics. So recruiting went slowly, but by November, 1923, Major Freeman had an organization composed of 15 officers and 51 enlisted men, which was federally recognized November 1, 1923.

The unit’s first aircraft, the JN-4 Jenny, arrived on 13 Jun 1924. The unit's insignia, the Flying Yankee was originally hand-painted on the side of one of those Jennies, by Elmer Lindquist.

The unit held its first training camp at Mitchell Field, Long Island, NY, in July, 1924, and its

second in the same month the following year. During this period the squadron grew and prospered. In fact it outgrew its facilities at the State Armory, on Broad Street, Hartford, necessitating the making of plans for a separate armory at Brainard Field, where its hangars and workshops already were established. The Connecticut General Assembly, of 1925, appropriated $114,500 for new buildings and equipment for the Observation Squadron and work on this project was started in the fall of 1925.

The second unit of the 43rd Division Aviation to be organized was the 118 Photo Section. Federal recognition was given this unit on February 1, 1926. The third unit organized, the 118 Medical Department Detachment, was federally recognized on December 14, 1926.

On 1 May 1926, the 118 Observation Squadron gave up its quarters in the State Armory, Hartford, and moved to Brainard Field, into its new buildings which were almost completed.

During the summer of 1926, SGT John D. Kent, a lineman, was "pulling through" a propeller on a Jenny at Brainard Field when the engine caught and the prop hit him before he could step away. John Kent became the first casualty in the history of the 118 Aero Squadron, 43rd Air Service.

Late in Nov 1926, 1LT Earl W. Fleet and SGT Charles F. Arnold took off from Brainard Field on a flight which was to cover about 5,000 ground miles. During it they visited 21 different National Guard air installations in 28 days. The purpose of this trip was to establish the existence of the 118 Observation Squadron as a going concern and to exchange ideas on current and future policies and systems of administration and operations at National Guard fields east of the Rocky Mountains.

The legislature of 1925 provided funds for an armory and hangars at Brainard Field. These quarters were dedicated on 21 May 1927, by a very successful air meet. The flood of March, 1936, rendered these buildings unfit for further use. A grant from the W. P. A. was obtained by the State and work immediately started on a new and modern hangar and armory which were occupied in 1938. Prior to May 1, 1927, the units assembled for training and administration at the State Armory. During the time the new quarters were being constructed, the organization operated out of Rentschler Field, East Hartford, and occupied quarters at the State Armory.

Field training was conducted at Mitchell Field, Long Island, during 1924, 1925 and 1926. Prior to the summer of 1927, the State purchased a tract of land and buildings at Groton, constructed an airport and converted one of the buildings into a barracks. During the past 12 years, the field has been greatly enlarged and additional quarters provided. Since 1926, with the exception of the summer of 1935, when the organization took part in the First Army maneuvers at Pine Camp, New York, it has trained at Trumbull Airport.

Major Freeman, the first commanding officer, resigned because of the pressure of business on December 31, 1925. Major William F. Ladd followed in command and held the post until December 31, 1930, when he was appointed the Adjutant General of Connecticut. Major Hubert E. Johnson has been in command since that date.

24 Mar 1929, Cpt Arnold R. Rasmussen, adjutant of the 43rd Division Aviation, was killed shortly after noon today when the plane he was flying crashed in the road directly in front of his home on Bradley Avenue. Francis H. Smith, of this city, a member of the Guard Reserve and Rasmussen's passenger, was injured, but hospital authorities said tonight he has a good chance for recovery. The tragedy, witnessed by the flyer's wife, his brother and several other relatives, was perhaps the most destructive wreck of a plane in the annals of state flying. "The plane was virtually demolished. Splinters of wood and remnants of the fuselage and wing covering fabric were scattered over the roadway in all directions. The engine, a Wright 'Whirlwind,' was thrown clear of the plane, landing about 20 feet away and but a few feet from the spot where Rasmussen's brother and cousin were standing at the time." Francis Smith, who received a bad blow on the head and a fractured jaw in the accident, recovered.

Two commercial flyers, Mr. W. J. McMullin, of Roosevelt Field, New York and his passenger, R. L. Oakes, of New York City, were killed when their plane collided with a National Guard O-38 observation plane, piloted by Captain Herbert Mills, near Rutland, Vermont in the 1930's. After the accident, Mills reported he was flying at about 4,000 feet and looking at the ground to determine his location.

He was to land at Rutland Airport to pick up a brother officer, Lieutenant Harold L. Nadeau. His attention was attracted by the whine of another propeller. He looked up quickly and saw the other aircraft, a Bellanca cabin plane, in front of him, slightly higher and to his left, in a glide and coming directly toward him. In his report of the accident to The Hartford Times, Joseph H. Callahan, then a non-commissioned officer in the squadron and an employee of the newspaper states: "Captain Mills instinctively pushed the control stick to the right and started to roll, but the planes collided.

Captain Mills' body was decelerated from about 110 miles an hour to almost nothing in an instant. He was thrown forward with such force that his heavy safety belt broke under the strain. His forehead hit the cowling, but the belt had saved his life. "Again, acting instinctively, he reached to unfasten his safety belt, but it came off in two pieces in his hand. The two planes had by now broken away from each other and were falling rapidly, as Mills rose to bail out. It was as though he was propelled by springs, he said.

A slight push with his feet, and he was thrown clear. Fumbling for his parachute ring, he pulled the ripcord and his fall was checked by the spreading silk. "The O-38, shorn of its wings by the impact, dropped to the ground like a huge rock, where it buried itself in the center of Rutland Airport— which was to be officially opened and dedicated about 30 minutes later. "The two men in the Bellanca, it is believed, were killed instantly, when they were thrown through the windshield of the cabin monoplane. Their bodies were thrown clear, landing far apart, about a mile from the airport and a few hundred yards from where their plane crashed into a cultivated field. "The left landing light of the O-38 was found in the cabin of the Bellanca.

The squadron, or elements thereof, called up to perform the following state duties: riot control

at the textile workers strike at Putnam, CT, in September 1934; and flood relief at Hartford, CT, 19 March-1 April 1936. Conducted summer training at Mitchell Field, NY, or Trumbull Field, CT. Detachments were sent some years to fly spotter missions during the summer training of the 192nd Field Artillery Regiment.

Again, on August 2, 1935, death visited the Observation Squadron. It happed at Trumbull Field, in Groton, on a summer evening. Again, the Hartford Times had the story: Groton, August 2 (Special) "Lieutenant William H. Laughlin and Staff Sergeant Russell E. Clark, of Hartford, members of the 43rd Division Aviation, 118 Observation Squadron, Connecticut National Guard, were killed when their plane crashed near the Trumbull Airport here about 9:30 p.m. "The crash occurred just after the two National Guard flyers had taken off from the airport for a return trip to Hartford.

Clark died a half hour after being admitted to the hospital, while on the operating table. "Laughlin died while being taken to Memorial Associated Hospital in New London. "The plane fell into the water near the airport. Lieutenant Laughlin was reported to have been at the controls. "The two Hartford men left Brainard Field at 4 p.m., on a training flight to visit members of the 43rd Division on active duty at Trumbull Field. We have not yet been able to determine what caused the accident,' Maj Hubert Johnson, 118 commander, said this morning."

Called to federal service on 24 Feb 1941 the Flying Yankees were first assigned to the Army Air Corps Anti-Submarine Command. The unit flew long-range anti-submarine patrols in O-47 and P-39. Late in 1944, the Flying Yankees began to train for a fighter/bomber mission utilizing P-40.

The 118 entered the 1940's with war in Europe already a reality and eventual U.S. involvement becoming more and more likely. The 118 was preparing to meet that eventuality. In 1940 the squadron was detached from the 43rd Division to become a part of I Army Corps, Aviation. Simultaneously, plans were being drawn up "for the entire unit to move to Jacksonville, Florida for intensive training over a period of an entire year". The squadron was called into active service on February 24, 1941, and on March 15, 1941, the first 118 aircraft departed for Jacksonville, Florida. The ground element of the squadron departed by train several days earlier and reached Jacksonville in time to meet the aircraft as they arrived.

The total unit strength at the time of the move to Jacksonville, including the officers and enlisted men who accompanied the aircraft, was about 20 officers and 146 enlisted men; 24 of whom were to remain with the squadron until the end of the war. The Squadron Commander was Major Harry W. Generous, later Commanding Officer of the 66th Observation Group to which the 118 was at that time newly assigned.

The year 1941 was a year of transition for the 118. It saw many of the old hands depart for new assignments as the demand for experienced people to staff and lead the new Air Corps units, then being organized, continued to grow. It began to receive more new officers, many of them fresh out of Air Corps Flying Schools. One of them, Lt. Robert W. Wierman, was later to become the squadron's much-respected CO during the period in which it was adjusting to its role as a

"fighter reconnaissance" squadron.

By mid 1941, the squadron was also beginning to show many new faces in the enlisted ranks as more and more of the old guardsmen departed. Many of the new arrivals were selective service enlistees, including a group from Connecticut that, they had not been members of the old National Guard outfit, helped to continue the decidedly "Yankee" influence in the enlisted ranks of the 118. Members of this early group of replacements who, as NCOs, were to remain with the squadron until the end of the war included Privates Ed Straska, Carl Johnson, Paris Pucilli, Rueben Ladd and Joe Ostrowski. In any event, by the end of September 1941, the squadron strength remained about the same as when the unit was called up eight months earlier (The Air Force Archives show the squadron strength on September 30. 1941, as 23 officers and 151 enlisted men10 many, if not most, of the original members of the 118 had now departed.

As the year progressed the pace of squadron activities also picked up. Individuals came and went as many of the squadron's enlisted men found themselves attending various Air Corps and Army schools to sharpen their technical skills and specialties. Others found themselves more often off on maneuvers in such unlikely places as Fort Benning, Georgia; Camp Beauregard, Louisiana; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Laurens, South Carolina. The 118, like most other observation squadrons was diligently preparing itself for a mission that had not changed substantially in nearly 20 years.

The role of Observation Aviation during most of the 20's and 30's was to give close support to Army Reconnaissance activities at Division level; thus the original assignment of the 118 to the 43rd Division. In fact, AFM-1 in the mid 1930's described the mission of Observation Aviation in combat as "to reconnoiter and observe, in accordance with reconnaissance regulations within the reconnaissance zone of the unit to which it is assigned or attached; observe and adjust fire for the field artillery; support front line units by observing and reporting enemy assemblies which constitute an immediate threat, by locating front lines and by maintaining contact between units; and performs such missions within its capabilities as may be ordered by the Commander. Reconnaissance Aviation carries out long range reconnaissance".

Observation units had in fact remained assigned to Army Ground Forces until mid-summer, 1941, when the War Department authorized the organization of five "Air Support Commands"; one Air Support Command to be assigned to each of the four domestic Air Forces and one to the Air Forces Combat Command. The five Air Support Commands were to include all light bomb units, all observation units, tow target squadrons, special photo squadrons, observation balloon squadrons (practically unheard since the war in the trenches in WW I), and special units to handle parachute troops, airborne troops and glider borne troops.

Simultaneously with the establishment of the new commands, the then existing eleven regular and National Guard Observation Groups were officially allocated and assigned to them. The 66th Observation Group, to which the 118 was now assigned, became a part of the 3rd Air Support Command, 3rd Air Force. The 1st Air Support Command, of which there will be more to say later, was assigned to the 1st Air Force and established at Mitchell Field, Long Island, New

York.

The mission of Observation Aviation remained basically unchanged until January 1942, when most units, including the 118, were diverted to Anti-Submarine patrol operations.

December 1941, found the 118 back at Jacksonville after a month of maneuver duty at Laurens, South Carolina. relations between the United States and Japan had become increasingly strained during the past weeks, there was little thought of immediate hostile action, and most people were looking forward to a period of peaceful relaxation during the holidays. The 118 was no exception.

It would be more than two years before the 118 had an opportunity to move directly against the Japanese, but there was no doubt that we were at war. In the hectic days following December 7th, all was confusion. No one knew what to expect.

Following President Roosevelt and the Congress' declaration of a State of War with the Empire of Japan, and the subsequent declarations of war by Germany and Italy, the threat of enemy attack was very real. The 118, like all other military units and installations went on full 24 hour alert; civilian clothes were "no longer authorized for wear by military personnel", and rumors and reports of saboteurs and possible sabotage were everywhere. German submarines now openly attacked shipping in American waters, sometimes within sight of land along the Florida and Georgia coast, and the 118 prepared for its first wartime mission.

In early January, 1942, the 66th Group, including the 118 was relieved from its assignment to the 3rd Air Support Command and assigned to the newly created Eastern Theater of Operations whose primary responsibility was the organization of anti-submarine operations along the East Coast. As part of that organization, the 118 moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and began anti-sub patrol operations on January 22nd. The other squadrons of the 66th Group, the 97th and 106th, were assigned to Miami and Jacksonville respectively. In March, the newly created 19th Observation Squadron joined the 106th at Jacksonville, giving the 66th its full squadron complement and a basic organization that was to continue until August 1943.

The 118 began anti-sub operations equipped with already obsolete O-46 and obsolescent O-47. Neither were designed for offensive operations, and certainly not for over water reconnaissance that took them as much as fifty miles offshore for extended periods of time. The O-46's offensive armament normally consisted of a single .30 caliber Browning machine gun mounted in the right wing just outboard of the propeller arc. Defensive armament consisted of a second .30 caliber gun on a flexible mount aft of the observer's position. With the addition of an A-3 bomb rack underneath the fuselage it was possible for the 0-46 to carry a pair of 100- pound general-purpose bombs if the situation demanded it.

But, even with the addition of the bombs, the 0-46 hardly posed a serious threat to German U-boats roaming the waters of the Atlantic off the East Coast of the United States. Just to complicate matters, the A-3 installation provided less than a foot of clearance between bombs

and runway, which made returning to base with unexpended ordnance a potentially exciting proposition. as a practical matter, most 0-46 missions were flown without bombs (unless there was a known target in the area), and most squadrons, including the 118, came to depend more and more on the 0-47 to fulfill the squadron mission.

Except for brief stand-downs due to bad weather, anti-sub patrol was a dawn to dark, seven days a week operation. Predawn takeoffs and landings well after nightfall became routine, in attempts to catch the U-boats on the surface in the early morning or late evening hours. Examination of pilots' logs from early to mid 1942 indicate that 0-47 missions averaged 2½ to 3 hours in duration, with the 0-46 missions being somewhat shorter. Possibly 95 percent of the flying was over water, in an environment foreign to the squadron's previous experience, inspiring a common feeling that "if we had wanted to see this much water we would have joined the bloody Navy".

Dawn to dusk operations meant a virtually around the clock effort for engineering (maintenance) and other support personnel, an effort that established a pattern for the superior ground environment that contributed substantially to the success of the 118 in China, 2½ years later.

The 118 continued to perform anti-sub duty until mid-August, 1942. Then, as the anti-submarine mission on the East Coast became more and more a task for the U.S. Navy and Air Force squadrons (fighter), and one liaison squadron. Finally, in April 1943, the observation groups were redesignated reconnaissance groups, and the observation squadrons were redesignated reconnaissance squadrons (bomber, fighter and liaison).

As the concept of operations was changing, training concepts were also changing. In August, 1942, the 1st units equipped with larger twin and multi-engine aircraft with much greater range and superior offensive capabilities, the 118 and the 66th Group were relieved from their first war-time assignments, and once again assigned to cooperative training in maneuvers with the Army Ground Forces.

Early in September the 118 arrived in Tullahoma, Tennessee, where it was to spend the next two months providing air support to the ground forces in the Tennessee maneuvers of late 1942. Maneuver duty, to some extent, provided a welcome change from the grueling routine of anti-sub patrol. But, returning to duty with the ground forces after nearly a year's absence, much of it spent in performance of what was technically a "combat" mission, was also somewhat of a letdown. , times were changing, and things were changing for the 118 too.

Concurrently with their release from anti-submarine operations, the 118 and the 66th Group were released from assignment to the Eastern Theater of Operations and reassigned to the 1st Air Support Command. The lst Air Support Command, still located at Mitchell Field, New York, had come under the control of the 3rd Air Force in August 1942 and would move to Morris Field, Charlotte, North Carolina, in late October. There they would be joined by the entire 66th Group in November.

By late 1942 it was evident that the purely observation type aircraft had become obsolete. They had proved inadequate for rendering proper support during maneuvers, and the Army Air Forces had begun to adopt a new concept of operations to meet current reconnaissance requirements.5 To meet those requirements it was decided that observation groups in the future would be made up of one medium observation squadron, two light reconnaissance and 3rd Air Support Commands agreed on a plan to assign all squadrons of an observation group to a single station so they could be trained together as a unit, and where from a central location, flights, squadrons or detachments could be sent out to furnish support as needed by ground units.

At the conclusion of the Fall maneuvers, the 118, the 106th and the 97th Squadrons moved from Tullahoma, Tennessee to Charlotte, North Carolina where they were joined by the 19th Observation Squadron from Pope Field, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. At Charlotte, all would begin a new phase of training that within the next 12 months would see three of the four squadrons committed to overseas deployment.

As the 66th Group moved to Charlotte the old observation aircraft were rapidly being phased out, and the squadrons began receiving a variety of new aircraft including A-20s, B-25s, P-39s, P-43s, and a new complement of L-2, L-3, L-4 and eventually, L-5. As a result, from November 1942 to March 1943, the squadrons became, in effect, composite squadrons, each operating bomber, fighter and liaison aircraft simultaneously. In early 1943, composite flights, detachments and squadrons, that frequently included aircraft and personnel from more than one of the parent squadrons, were dispatched to such exotic and out of the way places as Apalachicola, Florida; Camp Blanding, Florida; Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Langley Field, Virginia; and Fort Myers, Florida, in support of such diverse activities as Marine or Infantry amphibious landing exercises, Infantry and Artillery training problems, and air-ground coordination training.

By December 1942, in addition to the loss of the observation aircraft, most of the original officer personnel of the old 118 were long gone. In addition, many of the second generation of pilots had also departed and the same was true of the enlisted ranks. Increasing numbers of the experienced NCOs and technicians had been lost to the still expanding Army Air Forces, and many of the new enlistees who had joined the squadron since mid 1941 were also leaving for new assignments.

On the other hand, as the observation groups along the East Coast were relieved of their anti-sub duties, and at the end of the Tennessee maneuvers, many of the old observation squadrons were temporarily deactivated or placed on standby status. As a result, many of the officers (mostly pilots and observers) and some of the enlisted men from those squadrons were assigned to more active units, including the 66th Group.

The 103rd and 152nd Observation Squadrons, then stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, in particular, sent a number of people to the 66th Group and ultimately to the 118 Squadron.

Among that group were several pilots who were to remain with the 118 until mid to late 1944 in India and China, including Perry Cox, Earl Davis, Warren Christensen and Carl Eley from the 152nd, and this writer (Charles McMillin) from the 103rd. Four of the five eventually held key positions as flight leaders or, as in the case of Earl Davis, Assistant Operations Officer with the squadron in India and China. Enlisted men who came to the 66th Group from the 103rd included: John Burke (best remembered at Fort Devens for his skill in the kitchen), Norm Collette, Ed Munczenski, and Porter (Squadron Mess Sergeant until the 118 left India for China). Burke, Collette (one of the squadron jocks), and Munczenski eventually joined the 118 and remained with the squadron until the end of the war in China.

The same order that transferred the pilots from the 152nd and the 103rd also transferred Harold Bahlke, later the 118 Communications Officer, from the 15th Observation Squadron to the 66th Group. By late 1942 the squadron began to assume its final configuration insofar as officer personnel was concerned. Tom Crittenden was already on board as Squadron Supply Officer, having joined the squadron in July 1942, fresh out of Officer Training School, and Leon Watkins, the Squadron Engineering Officer, commissioned directly from enlisted status, arrived early in December. Ross Foster, the Squadron Photo Officer, also joined the group, and later the 118, at about the same time.

These Officers, plus Phil Dickey, the Squadron Armament Officer, who arrived in October 1943, remained with the squadron until well after the squadron reached China, and were the individuals directly responsible for providing the ground logistical support environment that made possible the outstanding combat record of the 118 in China. The success of the squadron is thus a direct reflection of the quality of their efforts.

The 118 and the rest of the 66th Group remained at Charlotte until late March when they moved to Camp Campbell, Kentucky, for duty in the Tennessee maneuvers of 1943. The 118 arrived at Camp Campbell on April 2nd, the other squadrons a day or two later. On that same day the 118 was officially redesignated the 118 Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter) and began operations as a "fighter reconnaissance" squadron equipped, for the most part, with early model P-39, plus a liaison section equipped with L-5s. How the 118 managed to retain the liaison aircraft in the face of this reorganization is not completely clear at this late date.

The liaison aircraft and the Staff Sergeant pilots who flew them were to be a highly valuable asset in India and China. The pilots assigned to the newly designated fighter reconnaissance squadrons came mostly from the ranks of the pilots who had been flying single engine aircraft in the "composite" squadrons at Charlotte. Some had previous fighter aircraft experience; some did not.

During the winter at Charlotte, the 66th Group had gained several contingents of new pilots, in addition to those who came from the old observation squadrons. Some were recent graduates of a P-39 or P-40 RTU (Replacement Training Unit); some were not. Some were assigned directly to the 118 on arrival, and some were assigned to other squadrons during the interim period of composite operations. Among the first of those who joined the 66th Group during this period

and later served with the 118 were Frank Bickel, Ray Darby, George Kutsher and Bruce Salisbury. All but Salisbury would remain with the squadron until completion of their combat tours in China in 1944. A second group joining the 66th Group during the late winter or early spring included Don Penning, Berthold (Pete) Petersen, John Powell, O.E. Ward, and Oscar (Pop) Nislar. All but Ward would also serve with the 118 in India and China.

With the addition of all these new pilots, only a handful remained who had seen anti-sub duty with the 66th Group in early 1942.Three of those who still remained were: Major Bob Wierman, now the Squadron CO (since February 1943); Bob Gee, who had joined the squadron shortly before Pearl Harbor and who remained to become "A" Flight Commander in India and China, and Ben Preston who had come over from the 106th in the spring of 1943 to be the Squadron Operations Officer. A fourth "old timer" in the squadron, Frank Palmer, who also joined the squadron in 1942, was still on board and remained until the squadron left for India and China. Palmer was forced to remain behind because of illness, but caught up with the squadron in China in October 1944, and remained until the end of the war as a pilot and flight leader.

designated "Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter)", the 118 continued for a time to perform a mission closely resembling that of the old observation squadrons. Visual reconnaissance of the maneuver battlefield continued to have a high priority, and the fighter reconnaissance squadrons still maintained a liaison officer at the "friendly" forces field headquarters to coordinate ground forces requests for intelligence. The liaison officers each spent a week or so with the "army" before being replaced and were usually pilots who had some understanding of the problems involved in obtaining the kind of information sought by the Ground Forces Commanders.

Most of the 118 pilots now on board had little experience in working with the ground forces. A few had served in the summer and fall maneuvers of 1942, and some had participated in various training exercises with the ground Forces during the winter and early spring of 1943, but most were not ground forces oriented and none were actually reconnaissance trained. The Reconnaissance Training Unit at Key Field, Mississippi, had only recently been established, and the role of fighter reconnaissance was yet to be clearly defined. In any event, those lucky individuals chosen to serve as "liaison" with ground forces found their tour in the woods "educational" but highly frustrating enough to make one appreciate the "good life" at Camp Campbell.

At the same time, the squadron pilots were learning the techniques of low-level aerial photography in the P-39. In the earlier maneuvers and on anti-sub patrol, the actual photography was a task usually handled by the observer with a hand held aerial camera, and the pilot was only responsible for getting the aircraft into the general area of the target and close enough to give the observer (cameraman) a clear view of the subject he was trying to photograph. The fixed oblique and vertical cameras mounted in the rear of the P-39 and operated from the cockpit presented the pilot with a new set of challenges - including more precise positioning of the aircraft and handling the controls and switches for operation of the cameras while traveling at close to 200 miles per hour at low level over the hills and valleys of

central Tennessee.

the squadron continued to perform many "observation type" missions, it was soon called upon to attempt some that were not previously considered a function of observation or reconnaissance aviation. In early 1943, the 1st Air Support Command had lost its responsibility for light bombardment operations and training. At the same time the 3rd Air Force, faced with the impossibility of using their fighter aircraft in ground forces maneuvers because of their involvement in RTU's, and their light and dive bombers because of overseas requirements and the shortage of trained units, was forced to begin relying on the reconnaissance units of the 1st Air Support Command to simulate bomber and fighter attacks "to the maximum extent possible within the limits of the equipment available". The pilots of the 118 thus began their introduction to the kinds of missions many of them would be asked to perform a year or so later in China.

Reconnaissance remained the primary mission, simulated strafing and bombing attacks on ground targets, designed to "exercise" the anti-aircraft defense capabilities of the ground forces and seemingly rigged in their favor, became highly popular with most of the squadron pilots. Most exciting of all were occasional squadron attacks on the "enemy" air forces and their bases. The ensuing "simulated combat" frequently became almost as exciting as the real thing, with 15 or 20 P-39's milling around at tree top level under a broken ceiling of 800 to 1000 feet over or around the Bowling Green, Kentucky airport as one memorable example. Surprisingly, the squadron suffered no "real" casualties in any of these escapades.

Most assigned missions involved single aircraft performing observation type reconnaissance. The concept of the "two ship" tactical reconnaissance mission had not yet been universally adopted or accepted, at least as far as the 66th Group was concerned. Thus many of the pilots were only marginally proficient in formation and anything even remotely resembling combat tactics. This was particularly true of those who had served with the observation squadrons on anti-sub patrol or who had not attended a fighter type RTU.

The 118 remained at Camp Campbell until late May when, as the spring maneuvers began to wind down, it moved to Chattanooga Municipal Airport to join the "enemy" forces. This was a highly popular move for many of the "unattached" personnel of the squadron. The newly created WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) Basic Training Center was also at Chattanooga, a fact duly recognized and appreciated by a number of the troops who. Unfortunately, the stay at Chattanooga was much too brief, and the squadron soon packed up again, moving this time to Statesboro, Georgia - arriving there on 22 June 1943. Here the transition to Reconnaissance Squadron (Fighter) began in earnest.

At the conclusion of the spring maneuvers, and concurrently with the 118's move to Statesboro, the 66th Group Headquarters, and the 19th and 97th Squadrons moved to Aiken, South Carolina, where they would remain until early 1944. The 106th meanwhile moved to Chatham Field near Savannah, Georgia, where they would remain until October. They left on the 15th of that month for duty in the Southwest Pacific as part of the 13th Air Force. They were

redesignated the 100th Bomb Squadron (Medium) in May 1944, and served with distinction in that capacity for the rest of the war. The 19th Squadron remained a part of the 66th Group until February, 1944, when they were assigned to the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) as the 19th Liaison Squadron. The 97th Squadron, the only one of the four original squadrons of the 66th Group that did not eventually go overseas, was reassigned to the 76th Tactical Reconnaissance Group in August 1943, and was deactivated in April 1944.4

At Statesboro, the 118 began to operate more and more like a "fighter reconnaissance" squadron. low-level aerial photography continued to be a major concern, increased emphasis was now placed on two and four ship formation, low-level navigation and basic combat tactics, as well as aerial and ground gunnery. From mid-July to mid-August most of the squadron was on temporary duty at Harris Neck, Georgia for aerial and ground gunnery training. For some pilots this was their first gunnery practice since leaving RTU almost a year earlier, and for some it was the first since their exposure to the rudiments of aerial and ground gunnery in Advanced Flying School more than a year earlier. Nevertheless progress was being made.

While all this was going on, several pilots who had not previously had an opportunity to attend a fighter type RTU were given the opportunity to do so. Shortly after the squadron arrived in Chattanooga from Camp Campbell, Ben Preston, Carl Eley, Perry Cox, "Buzz" O'Laughlin (a recent addition to the squadron) and this writer, plus several other pilots from the 19th and 97th squadrons were sent to P-39 RTU at Thomasville, Georgia. Here, in the sweltering heat of South Georgia in June and July 1943, we received our long overdue "fighter training".

Among other things we learned that the P-39 was not designed for hot weather ground operations, but the emphasis at Thomasville was on aerial gunnery, formation flying and basic combat tactics plus a smattering of instrument and night flying. At the same time a group of enlisted men from the 66th Group, including Tom Lewandowski, Frank Hiss and Henry Wilk from the 118, were sent to Thomasville for further indoctrination into the idiosyncrasies of the P-39. When this group rejoined the 118 in Statesboro in early August, the squadron was nearly intact and ready for the final phase of its preparation for overseas deployment.

On the 11th of August, 1943, the squadron was finally redesignated the 118 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, and two weeks later moved to Aiken to rejoin the rest of the group (less the 106th which was still at Savannah).

By now the Army and Army Air Forces had agreed that, in the future, liaison type aircraft would provide ground units with the air support previously afforded by observation aircraft, e.g., close surveillance of the battlefield, artillery spotting and communications between frontline units. It was also agreed that the primary mission of Tactical Reconnaissance was "armed" reconnaissance and that offensive action was secondary and would be undertaken only when necessary for the successful accomplishment of the primary mission. This was the orientation under which the 118 commenced the final phase of its combat readiness training, but hardly a proper orientation for the mission the squadron would be asked to perform in China.

The concept of Tactical Reconnaissance operations as it was now defined was derived largely from the allied Air Forces experience in the North African Campaigns. The two ship tactical reconnaissance mission, with one ship providing cover for the other in a loose combat weave, was now adopted as standard and would be used more or less successfully by Tac Recon units in Europe in 1944 and 1945. The new tactics taught the maximum use of natural and other cover, including houses, barns, and even haystacks in approaching and departing the target area, which meant operating at minimum altitudes for sustained periods of time. the P-39 was equipped with both vertical and oblique cameras it was obvious, based on the North African experience, that the low level oblique photo mission was by far the most likely to be completed successfully.

At Aiken, the 118 was authorized to conduct minimum altitude navigation and photo training operations on a routine basis. Minimum altitude in this case meant less than treetop level, with the two aircraft of the two ship "tactical reconnaissance pair" frequently flying on opposite sides of buildings, trees and hedge rows.

The concept of operation for Tac Recon was based on the still logical assumption that tactical reconnaissance missions would be conducted during daylight hours in generally VFR (visual flight) conditions. Consequently, very little emphasis was placed on instrument flight training, especially training under actual instrument conditions. Most of the training that was accomplished was done under "simulated" conditions, and most of the squadron pilots had very little if any experience in actual "weather" flying.

Examination of a typical pilot's log for that era reveals a total of less than seven hours of simulated instrument flight training between January and December 1943. Much of that training was accomplished in BT-13 or BT-14 type aircraft with the balance logged in P-39's under the protection of another P-39 chase plane in basically ideal weather conditions. instrument cards were duly certified and issued, most pilots were again only marginally proficient in this phase of their training. This deficiency was to prove costly to the 118 while operating in China.

Meanwhile, the ground echelon was being whipped into shape under the direction of the Squadron Exec, Captain (soon to be Major) James W. Jeffers. All hands were required to qualify on their basic weapons. Physical training in the form of calisthenics, organized sports and close order drill became a part of the daily routine. Lectures and classes on many subjects from "Safeguarding Military Information" to "Sex Hygiene", "Camouflage Discipline" and "Aircraft and Naval Vessel Recognition" kept the troops occupied for hours.

The squadron had received several more new officers during the summer, and by early September was almost completely staffed with officers who would remain with the unit until late in the war in China. Stan Molander was now the Squadron Adjutant, and Bernard Braude was his assistant. Bob Burke had become the Squadron Intelligence Officer, and Vincent "Moon" Mullin had come on board as Assistant Supply Officer.

With the addition of Gus Dinand as Assistant Photo Officer, and Oscar Gunther as Transportation Officer, followed a bit later by a new Flight Surgeon, Dr. John Winkley, the roster of officers was nearly complete. The 66th Group had also taken on a couple of officers who would soon play important roles in the future of the 118. Major Edward McComas, a native of Winfield, Kansas, had come to the 66th Group from the Flying Training Command to become Group Operations Officer, with Captain Ira B. Jones, also from the Training Command as his assistant. The squadron would soon become well acquainted with both of these men.

By mid-September the squadron was well settled into its new routine. On the 11th of September, the air and ground echelons participated in a memorable parade and aerial demonstration in downtown Aiken kicking off the local county War Loan Drive. According to letters of Commendation from city and county officials that personally commended Major E.O. McComas for his assistance in staging the affair, "the air show was a magnificent exhibition of flying...that thrilled the largest crowd ever in Aiken". The air show was highlighted by an "in trail" parade by 16 P-39's of the 118 down "Main Street" at roof top level, and a solo demonstration of the acrobatic capabilities of the P-39 by Major McComas a demonstration that even impressed the P-39 pilots who witnessed it.

In September 1943, the P-39 still had a reputation as a very tricky acrobatic airplane. The unusual design of the aircraft, with the engine mounted in the fuselage behind the pilot's seat, allegedly produced a stability problem that could cause the airplane to "tumble" out of low speed, high angle of attack situations. no evidence was ever actually produced to show that the aircraft would actually "tumble", it did have some unusual spin characteristics and several 66th Group pilots had experienced spin recovery problems in the past six months or so. As a net result, most pilots were inclined to be somewhat cautious in putting the P-39 into unusual attitudes, especially at low altitude (the environment in which the 118 normally operated), thus making McComas' performance all the more impressive.

Flying activities continued at a rapid pace throughout September. Simulated combat missions proliferated as Major McComas (Group Ops) personally took on the squadron "hot shots" and one by one "put them in their place". The squadron became more proficient in formation flying and probably reached its peak in late September for the benefit of a 3rd Air Force Inspection Team performing a final tactical inspection of the squadron before what everyone assumed would be planned movement to the Southwest Pacific. As a part of that inspection the squadron, in a "practice" scramble, was able to get 16 aircraft airborne and back over the field in squadron formation in less than four minutes from the time the pilots scrambled from the alert shack.

On September 29, 1943, the 118 suffered its first fatal aircraft accident since Pearl Harbor. On that date the squadron was shocked by the death of Major Bob Wierman, the Squadron CO, on what was described in the unit history for that month as a "routine training mission" near Aiken Army Air Field. Accounts of the accident vary, but Major Wierman is believed to have gotten into an uncontrollable spin and was unable to recover before the aircraft struck the ground. He may have attempted to bail out but, if so, made the attempt at an altitude too low to be

successful. In any event, the squadron had suffered a great loss, and plans for overseas deployment were immediately cancelled and the future of the 118 looked very dismal indeed.

The shock the squadron felt at Bob Wierman's death had barely begun to be absorbed when it received another shock. Major McComas, not exactly everyone's favorite candidate, was to become the new Squadron Commander!

McComas assumed command of the 118 on September 29, 1943, and the worst fears of many of the squadron officers and enlisted men were soon realized. Bob Wierman had been an easy going individual well liked by most people in the squadron, but Ed McComas was another story.

McComas was a hard driving individual, who on first acquaintance tended to intimidate and overpower those subordinates with which he came in contact. He proceeded to give the squadron the "shock treatment" in an effort to restore its shattered morale. The relatively relaxed atmosphere was gone and all hands began to feel the heat. But more importantly, McComas was determined that the 118 be recommitted to an overseas assignment, and largely through his own efforts persuaded the powers that be that the 118 was still a viable organization whose combat readiness should not be wasted.

Indications were that the 118 had originally been committed to the Pacific Theater (even the new P-39Q's with their long range auxiliary fuel tanks that began to arrive in late September seemed to have the squadron pointed in that direction), but it now seems likely that by the fall of 1943 there was little future for a P-39 Tac Recon Squadron in the Pacific. It is possible that the squadrons' commitment to the Pacific might have been cancelled anyhow, even without Bob Wierman's fatal accident.

In any event, after the cancellation of that commitment the future of the 118 remained cloudy until the decision was made to re-equip the squadron with 18 P-51B's "that just happened to be available" and the squadron and the airplanes were recommitted to the 14th Air Force in China - a decision that in part seems to have been made to satisfy Claire Chennault's continuing demands for more modern aircraft to replace the P-40's with which the 14th Air Force was then equipped.

McComas' assumption of Command was quickly followed with the replacement of Ben Preston by Ira B. Jones as Squadron Operations Officer. Preston had injured his back at Thomasville and had been operating at something less than teak efficiency ever since. As things turned out McComas probably did Preston a big favor by having him replaced. On the other hand, Ira Jones turned out to be an outstanding officer, who soon gained the respect of virtually everyone in the squadron, and who achieved a fine record in combat in China.

On the 12th of October the 118 was relieved from assignment to the 66th Group and assigned to the 75th Tactical Reconnaissance Group of the 3rd Reconnaissance Command for further training as a Tac Recon Squadron.10 This would require the squadron to move to Key Field, Meridian, Mississippi for a period of six or seven weeks prior to movement to the port of

embarkation for shipment overseas. So, instead of going directly overseas, we were to experience one more "stateside" move.

On October 16, the squadron suffered its second fatal accident in less than a month when Lt. Francis (Buzz) O'Laughlin was killed while on a cross-country flight to the Tri-cities area of East Tennessee. His luck ran out when his aircraft struck a mountain while he was attempting to let down through bad weather in the vicinity of Bristol, Tennessee. O'Laughlin had been very popular and his loss was another serious blow to the squadron.

His was the first of several fatal accidents during the next year or so in which lack of experience in instrument flight in actual weather conditions was most certainly a significant factor.

The squadron left Aiken by convoy on October 24 1943, for Meridian. It bivouacked that night at Fort Benning, Georgia, and arrived at Key Field on the 25th, where transition into P-40 and P-51 began almost immediately. There was some additional training in Tac Recon Operations and tactics, the major task for air and ground crews alike was to get "checked out" in the new aircraft.

On August 7, 1946 the 118 Fighter Squadron, CT ANG, was federally recognized under the 103rd Fighter Group.

They were composed of the 118 Fighter Squadron (single engine), the 118 Utility Flight, the 118 Weather Station, and Detachment "A," 203rd Air Service Group. All were stationed at Brainard Field, in Hartford. After inspection and approval of the facilities at Bradley the unit made arrangements to relocate there. Initially using two hangars on the south ramp (where the main passenger terminal is now), they quickly found a home on the west ramp. The first members to arrive found the old base abandoned, the buildings empty but with posters still on the walls, photographs in some of the desks, and hand tools still on the benches.

The Guard received 12 new P-47Ns on 14 Feb 1947, then later five B-26s arrived to be used for target towing by the utility flight. These aircraft had their gun turrets removed and cable winches installed. Live fire operations were conducted over open water off the south shore of Long Island from Montauk Point to 50 miles west, or off the coast of Massachusetts on "No man’s Land" Island. Two B-26's would each tow a 4x60 foot sleeve. By using ammunition coated with colored wax, it could be determined who got hits. For a short time the unit had twenty-six P-47's, five B-26's, two C-47's, four T-6's, one L-5 and an L-19, but a total staff of only fifty-two people. This kept everybody hopping to keep all the aircraft on flyable status.

Maj William H. Greenleaf was killed in an F-47, out of a formation, flying in the vicinity of Bradley Field.

On 24 May 1949, LT Marshall J. O'Quinn was killed when his plane crashed into the side of Avon Mountain within sight of Bradley Field.

On 24 Jun 1949 LT Robert S. Leighton, dove in at Hadlyme, CT, at a little past 7 o'clock in the evening.

Training came to a temporary halt following two fatal P-47 crashes in May and June of 1949, bringing the total of CT ANG aircraft lost to date to seven. On June 28, all CT ANG P-47's were grounded until a cause could be found. The P-47N had two antenna masts forward of the vertical stabilizer whereas earlier models had only one. It was thought that the two antennas disturbed the airflow over the tail and prevented recovery from a stall/spin. The utility flight was inactivated on 28 Sep 1950, and the B-26's were assigned to other ANG units.

The type of air units then allotted to the several states was determined by the defense requirements of each state. Connecticut, as a coastal state, was seen as a natural home for a fighter-interceptor type of outfit, to be used for the defense of its own critical industrial area and also the defense of New York City and the Boston area, as well.

The 118 Fighter Squadron was the first Connecticut air unit inducted into Federal Service following the Korean emergency. This occurred on 1 Feb 1951 and was followed one month later by induction of all other Connecticut air units, from 1 Mar through 15 Mar 1951.

The 118 Fighter Squadron was activated during the Korean conflict for 21 months on 1 Feb 1951, with all other CT ANG units being called up by 1 Mar. The state had been building hangar and warehouse facilities on the northeast corner of the field for the Guard but the unit would have to wait before it could occupy them. Kaman Aircraft leased the new but empty hangar from the state for production of the HOK-1.

The official induction of this squadron was held on 1 Sep 1951 at Brainard Field with full ceremony. that day, the full realization of the never to be forgotten "Korean Police Action" hit home to many families in the Milford area. When inducted into Federal service on 1 Sep 1951, LTC Ruel M. Luckingham was the commanding officer.

After the formal induction at Brainard Field, the three elements, Headquarters, Milford Detachment, and Groton Detachment returned to their respective home stations to complete packing. Camp Edwards, on Cape Cod was to be the squadron's new base of operations. Details from each detachment preceded the main bodies to Edwards as living quarters at this base had been idle since World War II and much reconditioning was needed. Plumbing had to be repaired and lockers made. The mess halls consumed most of the time as all walls, floors, and ceilings had to be scrubbed with disinfectant.

The main body of the squadron arrived on 28 Sep 1951. For almost all of the men it was the first taste of full-time military life. The squadron area was near the end of the most active runway and a "Dawn Patrol" of two or three F-86 would gently arouse the men about 0645 hours as they passed within 500 feet of the barracks with afterburners roaring.

The Guard returned to state control on 1 Dec 1952, without the P-47's, which had been retained

by the Air Force and transferred to Portugal. Now, with no permanent aircraft, and no facilities, the unit found itself back at Brainard Airport again, flying six F-51H on loan.

From 1956 through 1971, as Air Defense members, the Flying Yankees stood 24-hour runway alert flying the F-100 and F-102.

The Guard had a very serious side also, which was tested on 18 Aug 1955 when Hurricane Diane hit Connecticut with a vengeance. It was to become known as "the flood of "55." Bradley became a center for relief efforts. Using 37 borrowed Navy, Army, and Air Force helicopters, the Guard performed evacuations, rescues, food drops, and personnel transport. Medical supplies, and lye brought in on C-46 were dropped where needed. Five thousand guardsmen had been activated, 40,000 pounds of supplies were airlifted each day. The mission was completed by 21 Aug.

The next few years were times of many changes for the Guard. Construction began in Jun 1956 on a new $600,000 operations and training building along Route 75. In 1957 the unit turned in its F-84s for F-94s. By Apr, 1958, they transitioned to the F-86H, then on 1 Oct 1959, they received their first F-100A. This required another runway extension, and runway 6/24 was lengthened. Bradley's runway 6/24 had been extended to 6,825 feet by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1953.

Kaman Aircraft began moving to its new facility in Bloomfield in August of 1953, allowing the Guard to return to Bradley. Then, over one weekend in 1954, fifty F-84Es arrived on the National Guard ramp on the northeast corner of Bradley. These aircraft were war-weary veterans from Korea. They were in poor shape, some with battle damage just taped over. Twenty five were for the Rhode Island Air Guard, but were operated from Bradley as Rhode Island did not have an airport with long enough runways.

One particular accident had a direct effect on the development of Bradley Field. The southern approach to runway 6 was scheduled to be cleared of tall trees to comply with glide slope standards for high performance aircraft. The work had been held up when protesters objected to the cutting down of tall pine trees in the area. On 25 Jul 1964, an F-100F, flown by Cpt Tom Jurgelas and Cpt Wesley Lanz in the back seat, ran out of fuel on the approach. The aircraft hit the tops of the trees, lost a wing, then slid across Route 20 onto the airport. Fortunately the normally packed public observation area was empty that day, but the crash was fatal for both crew members. It was determined that had it not been for the trees, the aircraft would have made the runway. The area was cleared.

On 1 Oct 1959 the 118 Fighter Squadron received the first F-100A. Immediately, Group and Squadron pilots concentrated on transition training into the new aircraft. This schedule continued through 1960 and 1961, to prepare for the use of this plane in Air Defense runway alerts.

On 31 May 1961, LT Sherwood L. Tonkin, a 118 Squadron pilot, was killed on active duty in alert

status in an F-100 when he crashed near Westfield, MA.

On 25 Jul 1964, Cpt Thomas G. Jurgelas and Cpt Wesley Lanz, were killed on approach to the landing strip at Bradley Field, when they ran out of fuel and failed to make the runway.

On 12 May 1965, Cpt Carl E. Beck and 2LT Robert E. Raeder were killed when their aircraft spun in near Marlborough, MA.

In December, 1965 the first TF-102A arrived at Bradley Field, assigned to the CANG.

The beginning of 1966 brought more change. The unit transitioned into the F-102 and moved to the southwest corner of the field when the Air Force Reserve moved to Westover AFB.

If anyone at Bradley Field that day had had a crystal ball, that could mirror the future with the F-102, they would have looked on in horror, broken the ball and resigned from the service. The F-102 soon proved to be a maintenance nightmare. The maintenance situation now called for crash cross-training of personnel into entirely new specialties in order to support the F-102. A F-102 flight simulator was assigned to the squadron for pilot check-out. Maintenance personnel were sent far and wide across the country for cross-training in the new "nightmare."

Gradually, as air and ground crews became proficient in the F-102's this aircraft took over the runway alert commitment, and the F-100A's were finally phased out of the Air Guard picture, and assigned to USAF Depots. But the F-102 still proved tough to maintain and the effectiveness of the CANG suffered in consequence. Actually, it was not until 1968-69, that the unit "mastered the art" of maintaining the F-102, and the squadron returned to its previous training and operational position.

In November, 1970, a US Army aircraft was assigned to the CANG. The twin-engine support aircraft is a military version of the Cessna 310. It carries a crew of two men and three passengers and has a top speed of 240 miles per hour. It was known as "The Blue Canoe," on the line at Bradley Field.

In March, 1972 Mobility Training started for the CANG. In the new Tactical Mission it is required that every unit be mobile to the point that it can load 100,000 pounds of cargo and process 100 troops in a seven hour time span, because if the unit actually was called to instant active duty, it would take with it 500,000 pounds of cargo and a 30-day supply of spare parts besides its complement of officers and airmen. So the Tactical business is a little different than the Air Defense of the United States, because the former, of course, moves out, at the drop of an order, while the defenders, of course, stay home to defend the country.

In April, 1972, notice was received that the C-54 would be replaced by a T-29 and LTC Nicholas Rapitski and T-29: This aircraft is the current administrative and logistical plane in use at Bradley Field by the Connecticut Air National Guard. As its designation implies, the plane is also used for training pilots in navigation problems. It is called the "Leaping Lizard".

MSgt. Robert Holt went to Andrews AFB to be checked out in the bird.

In May, 1972, air guardsmen loaded support equipment on to the C-54 for airlift to Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina, where elements of the 103rd Tactical Fighter Group deployed twice in the 30-days period, for gunnery practice.

In September 1972, the C-54 and U-3A were transferred out of the unit and aT-29 was assigned. Training of crews began and we have five pilots, two copilots and two flight engineers qualified in the aircraft.

15 Sep 1979. The Flying Yankees were the first Air National Guard unit to receive factory brand new A-10As.

As the 1990s began the unit prepared for another aircraft changes, the F-16. But that change would never happen. During the Gulf War the A-10A, proved itself to be a viable airframe and the change to the F-16 was cancelled. All through the nineties as the aircraft were updated; the unit was tasked for combat missions in the post cold war world. Three times deploying to fly missions over Bosnia in '93, '95 and '96.

Operation Iraqi Freedom tested all the nearly 24 years of experience the unit has with the A-10. In addition to flying the traditional close air support missions it was designed for, the A-10s dropped laser guided bombs and scoured the Iraqi countryside in search of ballistic missiles.

Many 103 FW members were deployed to Middle East on 9-11 and returned to prosecute the war in Western Iraq in 2003 with the A-10's. A Bradley A-10 and pilot made air history dropping the first laser-guided bomb from an A-10 in combat during the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The success of the Bradley Airmen earned the deployed unit the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor.

Air Force Lineage and Honors
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