

210th AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

210th Aero Squadron (Service) organized, Dec 1917
Demobilized, Dec 1918

STATIONS

Chanute Field, IL, Dec 1917-10 Feb 1918
Garden City, NY
Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Feb 1918
AEF, Feb 1918
Garden City, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Shortly after Christmas, the War Department ordered the 153rd and the 210th Aero Squadrons

overseas. The order came as a surprise. The 210th squadron had been recruited in mid-December from Champaign County and nearby counties, and since it was only three weeks old, it had expected to stay at Chanute until spring. The unexpected order required a shifting of officers reminiscent of the preparations for the departure of the 10th and the 16th Aero Squadrons in October 1917. The local paper reported that "most of the boys are anxious to be going, realizing that the Kaiser cannot be whipped by them remaining in U.S. camps." In mid-January 1918 the 152nd squadron was also ordered overseas, but before any of the squadrons could leave Chanute, two winter storms paralyzed the area.

A second blizzard hit near the end of the month, compounding the area's problems and once again delayed the departure of the 152nd and the 210th squadrons because the trains could not get through. The two squadrons finally left Rantoul on 10 February 1918, a full six weeks after having been ordered to be ready at a moment's notice. Two days later the 173rd and 174th squadrons also left for Garden City.

The one that hit on 11 January 1918 was the worst blizzard in 22 years with temperatures plummeting to -24 degrees and winds reaching 60 miles per hour. This storm delayed the departure of the 153rd until the evening of 18 January when the 152 men, officers, and members of the medical corps attached to the squadron left Rantoul by special train. A second blizzard hit near the end of the month, compounding the area's problems and once again delayed the departure of the 152nd and the 210th squadrons because the trains could not get through.

Within three months after the opening of Chanute Field, trained squadrons, of about 150 men each, were transferred to depots in the East for overseas assignments. The 10th and 16th Aero Squadrons were the first to leave, followed closely by the 39th. The first two squadrons were shipped overseas; the 39th was sent to Waco, Texas. In December, the 152d, 153d, 173d, and 174th Squadrons reported from Kelly Field, Texas, to fill vacancies in shops, hangars, and classrooms; the 210th Squadron was organized at Chanute Field from local recruits. Classes were conducted daily in every branch of aviation related to the maintenance and repair of airplanes, including specialized training for mechanics, carpenters, riggers, and hangar men.

Between December 15 and April 1, flying ceased at Chanute Field, and all instructors and students were transferred to southern camps to continue training during the winter months. Instruction of ground crews and administrative personnel from various aero squadrons continued as before. The training planes, though unused, were serviced and maintained by student mechanics, riggers, and electricians just as they had been during the busy flying season. Early in January, the 153d and 210th Aero Squadrons received orders to prepare for overseas shipment, and two more squadrons left the Kelly Field depot to train at Rantoul. Before the end of that month, all but the 38th, the headquarters squadron, were alerted for shipment. In spite of the steady drain of units and personnel, the number of men at the field did not fall below 500.

After the 83d, 268th, and 269th Aero Squadrons were organized in February and were followed

to Chanute by the 831st and 832d Squadrons, the field reached its capacity of 1,500 men. In mid-March, the 83d Squadron, composed mostly of local recruits, reported to Langley Field, Virginia, to serve as school squadron; a new unit, the 203d Squadron, was recruited and organized to fill the vacancy. During the wartime program, 19 squadrons received training at the field; of this number, 12 served overseas, 10 in Europe.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.