

278th AERO SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

278th Aero Squadron organized, Feb 1918
Demobilized, Jul 1919

STATIONS

Love Field, TX
Garden City, NY, Jul 1918
Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Aug 1918
AEF, Aug 1918
Mitchel Field, NY,

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

DH-4

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Some squadrons are born late, some acquire lateness, and still others have lateness thrust upon them. The 278th did all but acquire lateness. It was born late at Love Field, Dallas, Texas, but being placed upon the overseas priority list immediately after its birth—February 1st 1918—it had visions of an early trip to the front. Then lateness was thrust upon it and it was not until seven months later that it caught its first glimpse of "sunny" France at Brest.

Most of the intervening time was spent at Love Field, that haven of rest, which was as popular among the white ribboned cadets as Mr. Keeley's well known institute is among the invertebrates. At one time it looked as though there might be a little something for the men to do about the field, but it was not to be, for the Flying Officers from Camp Dick began to blow in under orders to earn their flying-pay and the resulting wreckage precluded the possibility of anyone having to carry much gas or oil. Then just when everyone had established two or three good headquarters in Dallas, orders came and on July 8th serge uniforms and other (non) regulation trinkets were packed and the squadron headed toward Garden City full of vim and determined to be in at the finish if possible. As far as St. Louis the trip was made in day coaches but the kind-hearted Adjutant contracted for standard Sleepers for the remainder of the distance and is still trying to find out whether the berth-rate is five or six dollars. It makes quite a difference where fifty-two lowers and fifty-one uppers are concerned.

Passes were issued freely at Garden City, so New York had a treat until the 18th of August when the lusty warriors were assigned to inside staterooms among the freight and lookup the chase of the elusive rodent for a pastime. All the trinkets and evening clothes collected in the Southland were mysteriously "lost" at the port, much to the chagrin of the would-be Beau Brummels of the outfit. The submarine warfare proved to be a frost, although there was plenty of action aboard ship when the squadron took up the dunt of the festive rodent down in the hold.

Passing lightly over the delights of debarkation at the port of Brest, we skip along to the stops at St. Maixent and Golombey-les-Belles, and then find the squadron digging itself in at Autreville. About eight pilots, four or five observers and eighteen ships drifted in, making the 278th begin to look like a regular aero squadron. It was about this time that the Ordnance Officer consented to take a ride, but it rained the next day and now he goes to bed whenever he feels that way.

Everything was going smoothly except for the orderlies who were caught taking fire-wood now and

then at four-twenty-five per tree. Then came orders to Gondreville and the front at last, but just when everyone had his " In-case-I-do-not-return " letter written the French claimed the field, and possession being nine points of the law, kept it and the 278th once more had lateness thrust upon it. However, rather than be late for the whole show operations were carried on from Autreville and the Squadron received credit for eighteen hours over the lines.

There is some dispute as to who put in this time and the probabilities are that it will be split eighteen ways as a dozen and a half stories will be better than one for home consumption. The day we moved to Toul the ceiling was about two hundred feet, but the pilots were full of navigation and used the compasses over the clouds, with the result that crew chiefs and mechanics listened to "the last shot of the war" all day long after the ships came back. Finally on the 10th of November the 278th moved to the Toul Aerodrome in time for the grand finale and the shouting at the Peace Conference.

After the smoke rolled away the Squadron settled down at Toul and sewed the red and white "2" of the Second Army on its shoulders, and is now amusing itself in various ways while waiting or the last "40 hommes" train-ride.

The Two Hundred Seventy-eighth Aero Squadron was an Army observation squadron. It was assigned to the Seventh Corps Observation Group, Second Army, October 29, 1918. It reached the Front at Toul November 10; this squadron did not function on the Western Front and was finally ordered demobilized May 11, 1919.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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

