

4 AVIATION SCHOOL SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

4 Aviation School Squadron
Organized, May 1917

STATIONS

Chicago, IL
Chanute Field, Jul 1917

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Cpt Joseph C. Morrow

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Included in the first Increment of 1,800 men authorized by the War Department were five Aviation School Squadrons. The 1st Aviation School Squadron was located near San Diego, California, the 2d near Mineola, New York, the 3d near Memphis, Tennessee, the 4th near Chicago, Illinois, and the 5th near Hampton, Virginia, These squadrons were organized in addition to the first seven aero squadrons which had already been formed or were in the process of being formed at the beginning of the war.

For a time, the War Department sought to acquire land adjacent to Ashburn Field in order to enlarge the camp, but the cost was too high. The necessity of transferring training facilities to a larger camp led to the selection of what later became Chanute Field near Rantoul. While construction at this site continued throughout June, the 4th Aviation School Squadron remained in Chicago. Early in July, all personnel and equipment were transferred to the new camp, and the War Department returned Ashburn Field to the Aero Club of Illinois. The following October, the Air Service again took over the field and used it as a temporary camp for advanced training until winter weather sent the instructors and students south.

On October 28, Captain Joseph C. Morrow, commander of the 4th Aviation School Squadron of the Signal Corps, officially opened the new school at Ashburn Field. Lieutenants Arthur R. Christie and W. W. Spain and civilian instructors Theodore C. MacCaulay, J. D. Hill, and A. Livingston Allan took charge of the training of volunteers who enlisted as sergeants in the Signal Corps Reserve to qualify for flight instruction. The school remained in Chicago until mid-January, then moved to Memphis, Tennessee, for the balance of the winter. Before the move, 25 students, selected from nearly 400 applicants, had begun training. Among the military and civilian instructors and twelve civilian-student instructors were many able exhibition pilots who had formerly made their headquarters at Ashburn Field. The civilian-student instructors were not members of the Signal Corps, but they assisted with the training program while at the same time learning military tactics. Those who accompanied the school to winter quarters were: Matty Laird, Elmer Partridge, Lester E. Holt, Charles M. Pond, Fred A. Hoover, Harry Crewdson, Harry Powers, William H. Couch, C. N. Sinclair, Louis Gertson, and Perah Maroney. Joseph Pallissard, another familiar local flyer, accompanied the school as a civilian mechanic, one of four employed to keep the command's nine Curtiss JN-4 training ships in flying condition. Other Chicagoans were included among the students undergoing training. Sergeants Rudolph W. Schroeder and Alexander McLeod were veteran exhibition flyers.

Transfer of the 4th Aviation School Squadron from Chicago was the occasion for the largest movement of men and equipment by air ever attempted in the United States. On July 3. Lieutenant W. W. Spain, accompanied by E. A. Johnson, a senior civilian instructor, flew to the new station to chart an air route in preparation for a mass flight of training planes the following week. On July 9, twenty-three planes left Ashburn Field in groups of three or four en route to Chanute Field. Most of the personnel and heavy equipment moved southward on a special train. Only one plane failed to complete the trip on schedule; Fred A. Hoover and a mechanic in

No. 132 flew off course and finally landed near St. Joseph, Michigan, 65 miles east of Chicago. Charles Pond, flying No. 141, had to make a forced landing for gasoline at Paxton before continuing to Rantoul. Once at the new station, the personnel from Chicago were either absorbed into the 10th Aero Squadron, which had arrived two days earlier, or transferred to other stations. Nearly all the student instructors either went on to other camps, where they served as civilian instructors, or returned to civilian occupations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941. Steven E. Clay. Combat Studies Institute Press. US Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, KS. Nd.