

# 18<sup>th</sup> AIRSHIP COMPANY

## MISSION

### LINEAGE

18<sup>th</sup> Balloon Company, 21 Jan 1918  
Redesignated Airship Company No. 18, 28 Sep 1921  
Redesignated 18<sup>th</sup> Airship Company, 25 Jan 1923  
Inactivated, 15 Jun 1926  
Organized, Jun 1928  
Inactivated, Jun 1932  
Demobilized, 1 Oct 1933

### STATIONS

Fort Omaha, NE  
Camp Morrison, VA, Sep 1918  
Port of Embarkation, Newport News, VA Oct 1918  
Europe, Oct 1918  
Camp Lee, VA, 9 May 1919  
Lee Hall, VA, 16 May 1919  
Phillips Field, MD 10 Aug 1919-1926  
Scott Field, IL, 12 May 1926  
Inactive 1926-1928  
Chicago, IL, 1928-1932  
Inactive 1932-1933

### ASSIGNMENTS

Army Balloon School  
General Headquarters Reserve, 24 Mar 1923  
23<sup>rd</sup> Airship Group, 8 May 1929

### WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Airships: TC-5, 1919-26

### COMMANDERS

1Lt Roland J. Gaupel, 25 Jan 1918  
1LT. E. T. Ferguson, 20 Aug 1918

2LT George W. Adams, 24 Aug 1918  
2LT Leslie Martin, 14 Sep 1918  
1LT Harvey H. Holland, Dec 1920-1 May 1921  
1LT Max F. Moyer, 1 May 1921-18 Apr 1922  
1LT Michael M. McHugo, 18 Apr 1922-May 1922  
Cpt William E. Kepner, Aug 1922-17 Sep 1924  
1LT James F. Powell, 17 Sep 1924-8 Jun 1926  
Inactive, 8 Jun 1926-Jun 1930  
Unknown, Jun 1930-Jun 1932  
Inactive, Jun 1932-1 Oct 1933

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The first seven enlisted men were transferred from the 1<sup>st</sup> Balloon School, same station, January 27, 1918, forming what was called a Skeleton company, until Sunday, March 10, 1918, at which time a detachment of enlisted men, unassigned, Aviation Section, Signal Corps, arrived from Kelly Field, Texas, 161 of which were assigned to the 18th Balloon Company. Although the majority of the enlisted personnel had three months service, they were unseasoned and not thoroughly trained. On March 18, 1918, sixty five men were transferred into various other organizations, and not until April 8, 1918, did the Company receive its full quota of enlisted men, at which time 100 men arrived from Aviation Camp, Waco Texas.

With a full Company, totaling 203 men, work was begun, to speedily train for overseas duty. About April 15th, men were detailed to attend the School for enlisted Specialists, Truck Drivers, Gas Men, Winch men, Telephonists, Machine Gunners, Riggers and Panoramic Draughtsman. Training had begun in the handling of balloons, and a balloon was assigned to the Company permanently, to be flown daily, weather permitting, from 8:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M. The balloon was located about a mile from quarters, and the hours of duty were long. In addition to flying the balloon, the Maneuvering Squad received other training between flights. This resulted in a highly efficient Maneuvering Squad.

The details under training in School for Enlisted Specialists began to graduate May 7, 1918, a number of the men being detailed on Special Duty in the Balloon school, as instructors. The Machine Gunn course included firing at a moving target, the target being a kite, attached to a balloon, and drawn by a winch, at the rate of 20 miles per hour.

On July 25th, the Company moved from Fort Omaha to Florence Field, about a mile distant, where most of the balloons were flown.

On September 5th, the Company moved to the Rifle Range, where a week was spent in rifle and pistol target practice, and the flying and maintenance of a balloon, under field conditions.

Preparations then began for removal to Morrison, Va. In Order to conform with the authorized tables of organization, it was necessary to transfer a number of very efficient Enlisted Specialists out of the Company. They were replaced by men who had been transferred into the Air Service from Camp Dodge, IA.

On September 21st, the Company left for the Aeronautical General Supply Depot and Concentration Camp, Morrison, Va., arriving on September 24th.

During the stay at Morrison, the personnel of the Company underwent a great change, due to the epidemic of Influenza. The first deaths in the organization occurred at this station, all of which were caused by bronco-pneumonia, following influenza. The names of the victims of this plague are as follows: PFC Albert G. Lewis, Chauffeur Charles E. Beaver Private Henry Kleber, Jr. and Private George W. Ridpath, on October 5, 1918. Corporal Homer Lawson and Private Ollie A. Killion, on October 6, 1918. Private Merritt E. Wood on October 9, 1918. Private Alex Meyer and Private Robert Sieg on October 11, 1918. Private Gilbert Ferris on October 12, 1918, and Chauffeur Roy E. Cairns on October 16, 1918. The remains of all were sent to their homes, except Private Gilbert Ferris, who was buried in the National Cemetery, Hampton, Va.

At about this time, the authorized strength of balloon companies was reduced to 170 men. The necessary changes in the personnel of the company were accordingly made and the men who were still in the hospital were replaced, in preparation of an expected move to the Port of Embarkation.

The Company left Morrison, for the Port of Embarkation, Newport News Va., and embarked on the U.S. Army transport Duca d'Aosta, on October 20, 1918, and sailed for A.E.F., October 21st, arriving at Brest, France, on November 3rd. Company encamped at Pontanezen Barracks, Base Section No. 5, S.O.S., Brest, France, until November 9th, at which time Company left for Balloon School, A.E.F., A.P.O. 705, arriving on November 11th.

Arrival in France 3 Nov 1918

Arrival at the front

Days ascensions made in S.O.S

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A  
Total days ascensions made  
Number of ascensions made in S.O.S.  
Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.  
Total number of ascensions made  
Total number of hours in air S.O.S.  
Total number of hours in air Z.O.A.  
Total number of hours in the air  
Artillery adjustments in S.O.S.  
Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A  
Total number or artillery adjustments  
Enemy shells observed  
Enemy aircraft observed  
Enemy balloons observed  
Enemy artillery batteries observed  
Enemy traffic on road and railroad observed  
Smoke, fires and flares observed  
Explosions observed  
Jumps from basket  
Balloons attacked  
Balloons burned  
Balloons destroyed  
Observers killed  
Observers captured

Arrived at the port of Newport News, VA, 4 May 1919 on the U.S.S. Susquehanna as Balloon Company No. 18.

Participated in numerous tests of aerial bombardment weapons with the ordnance center at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Annually entered ships to compete in the National Airship Races in the 1920s.

Allotted to the Third Corps Area on 28 February 1927.

Withdrawn from the Third Corps Area on 14 January 1929 and allotted to the Sixth Corps Area.

Organized by June 1928 with Organized Reserve personnel as a RAI unit at Chicago, IL

Inactivated by June 1932 at Chicago by relief of personnel.

---

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 10 Sep 2011

Updated:

Sources

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