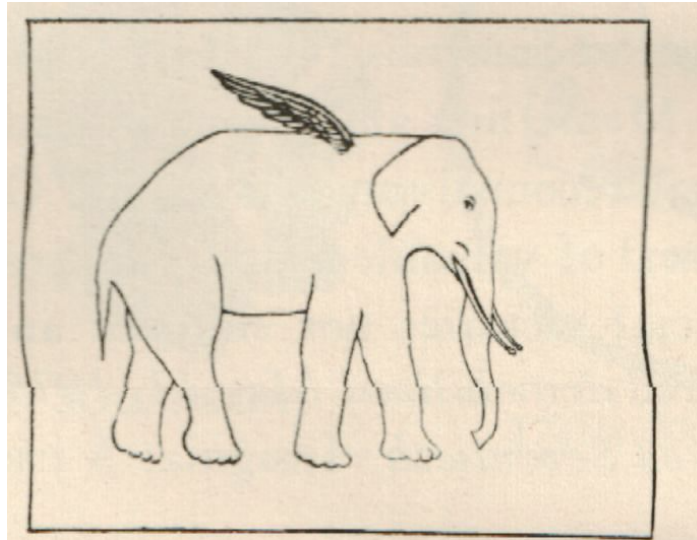


1105 AERO SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

1105 Aero Squadron organized, May 1918
Demobilized, Jun 1919

STATIONS

AEF
Mitchel Field, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

A winged elephant

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The history of the American Air Service in the twenty months prior to the suspension of hostilities on November 11, 1918, presents as varied an aspect, as perhaps, could well be imagined.

The creation of a new fighting element of the magnitude of the Air Service, the solution of problems arising in the fields of production, organization and training has necessitated a multitude of departures from the straight and uneventful path. This is probably the best and biggest reason for the birth of our Air Service Replacement Squadrons.

In this case the subject under consideration is the 1105th Air Service Replacement Squadron. This unit, created out of thin air, as it were, was born on May 26, 1918 under authorization from the Chief of Air Service in a letter dated May 20, 1918. This in turn being authorized by cablegram 839 R, Feb. 27, 1918.

Besides the two pioneer squadrons of the field, there was a smaller Group of even older men, organized from the personnel of a justly famous group of Squadrons brought to France by Major Thomas S. Bowen in August 1917. This group, known as the 7th Aviation Instruction Detachment, consisting of men from the old 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 35th, 36th and 37th Aero Squadrons, had strength of fifty four men when transferred to the new unit.

The Commanding Officer selected for the infant Squadron was he who had himself been but lately one of them. Lieut. William P. Breen, receiving his commission while acting as Post Sergeant Major, was made Assistant Adjutant. In addition to the duties of that office he was made Commanding Officer of the 7th Aviation Instruction Detachment on May 15, 1918, when he relieved 1st Lieut. Cecil G. Sellers. Hence, on the 26th day of the same month he came to command the new 1105th Air Service Replacement Squadron.

In the meantime there had arrived at the Center on May 22, 1918, a group of forty seven men. For some unknown fate had decreed that these men should have been classed as casuals, wherefore they were all privates. From the days of their arrival until the formation of the Replacement Squadron they were carried as unattached casuals, when they swelled the now fast growing squadron to one hundred and one men.

On the same day that all these Changes took place, one of the oldest men from the 7th Aviation Instruction Detachment lost his life in an airplane accident, M.S.E. George W. Martin was performing his duty in riding as passenger on a test flight. Both he and the pilot, 1st Lieut. Sterns, were killed outright. These two men who had died together in their countries service were interred together at the Camp Cemetery.

Two days later, on the 28th day of May, the squadron was swelled to one hundred and

seventy five men when seventy four more casuals were assigned. These, like the other groups of casuals were all privates. The narrative for the next month is uneventful, presenting no unusual aspects until June 22, when our roster increased by thirty five names: thirty three Privates and two Privates 1st Class, Of one of these, Private 1st Class Jackson.

The story of this group is unusually interesting. The June Kelly Field Automatic Unit #1, was formed of men from all walks of army life, i.e. the intermediate stages between rookies and old timers. When on May 22, 1918 the call came from Washington to speed up the Air Service. Kelly Field contributed some three thousand men for immediate overseas duty. Within four days from the receipt of the order, the men had been classified, and equipment had begun. That and intensive training occupied the men until May 15, when these casual units entrained. They arrived in Camp Merritt, NJ, had a five day rest, embarked on May 25 and landed at Bordeaux, their course took them to St. Maixent where they were re-examined and reshipped to various points in need of man power.

So came these men to the 7th Aviation Instruction Center, Where they have come to positions of trust, if not great prominence.

Sergeant Jackson, previously spoken of, is now wearing an observer's brevet. If it be doubted that ability and perseverance gain their reward, Sgt Jackson is at least on affirmative argument. Having demonstrated his ability as an aerial Gunnery Instructor, and his determination to fly, he was finally given his chance. In honor of him and his success the whole group held a reunion banquet with Sgt. Jackson as the guest of honor.

Another name from among the thirty five that will long be remembered is Sergeant McFarlane. An old army man of nine years previous service, he made frequent applications to get back into that part of the army that he knew. He was finally successful, being transferred to the 165th Infantry, at that time in the Argonne sector on the front.

And now we ship again. Circumstances carry us to July 6, 1918, when we found a new signature on our passes.

1st Lieut. Donald Lyle was designated as Commanding Officer of the 1105th Air Service Replacement Squadron per Special Order 136, Headquarters 7th A.I.C., replacing 2Lt William P. Breen who was ordered to St. Maixent as Supply Officer for the 186th Aero Squadron.

It had been the policy of Lieut. Breen to bring the Squadron to a degree of military bearing compatible with the name soldier, and we soon found that Lieut. Lyle had no dearer wish than to accomplish the same affect.

Others from among us who have visible emblems of success are pilots (2nd Lt's.) Murray

L. Kates, William O. Copeland, William Rittman, and our prize of them all, William J. Hughes, as Sgt Observer. Sgt Hughes, formerly of the 491st Aero Construction Squadron was so insistent and withal pertinacious that he now wears a brevet in spite of a lot of grey hair he wasn't born with.

Mention of 2nd Lieut. Albert S. Cutter, Supply Officer of the 96th Aero Bombardment Squadron, formerly a supply sergeant here, brings this narrative to a close but for this pertinent fact that on November 11, 1918, the 1105th Air Service Replacement Squadron carried 232 enlisted men, including five detached for flying training.

If his success in this particular be judged by the reported of inspecting officers it has not been inconsiderable. Indeed, the Squadron has achieved as much prowess as a military organization as the old 7th Aviation Instruction Detachment did as an organization unit.

The same spirit, in fact, applies to the Squadron as a whole as it exists now. We are a Replacement Squadron in two respects only: organization program and name. In other respects we are a service Squadron, having many - very many in fact, of our non-commissioned officers folding the responsible positions of the camp.

In reward for his previous services in the Engineering and Supply Departments and his success with the Squadron, Lieut. Lyle was made captain on October 26, 1918. Unfortunately his Adjutant, 1Lt Robert P. Jones was confined to the hospital at about this time and this saw the end of his active service on this field. He had been assigned to the Squadron in August 1918 and also acted as a sub head in the Engineering Department.

The vacancy caused by Lieut Jones' illness was filled by 1Lt Norman B. Read who was assigned as Adjutant on Oct. 27, 1918. He had as colleagues, at this time, two other officers, 2Lts Alder and Pynn. Both were assigned Oct. 23 but have since been ordered to join the Army of Occupation.

Thus have we accounted for the larger groups that have lost their individuality or rather clannishness, in the larger field of the Squadron. There are others, though who must be considered just as fully. Some, indeed of the most important units of the field are either in or attached to the squadron.

The local branch of the Meteorological Bureau, more popularly known as the "rain makers" came here to fill an urgent local need, and at the same time form another link in the chain of stations, subsidiary to the Weather Forecast Bureau. In rain or shine one may see their hydrogen balloons go sailing over the hangars, and as surely as one does, the photographic unit becomes a very possible mental picture.

They have been very zealous in the taking of pictures for official records, and have views that when properly relieved with explanatory matter should prove a wonderfully valuable history of our progress and accomplishment. In that much at least, they have been more fortunate than the radio detachment.

These latter reached the Post just in time to set up their apparatus, and then tear it down again.

Our personnel, though, has been more fortunate. A goodly percentage of the men whom we have claimed as ours are decided successes. Three of our M.E's are now Engineering Officers: James W. Sawyer, S. B. Hook and J. V. Kootz. Another who came here from Tours has been commissioned and is now the Personnel Adjutant for this Post i.e., David C. Hite.

Of the men who have left the field for flying, some were very prominent as non-commissioned officers here.

M. E. Ben Swartz was senior non-com on the field, in charge of the enlisted personnel, while M E. Ralph W. Jones was in charge of the erection and repair department prior to his control of a section of hangars and all the D.H.4 planes.

Sgt First Class James Kerrigan (now commissioned) was in charge of the clerical force of the Instruction Department and Sgt First Class Gerald Black was senior trouble shooter on the flying field, and so the story runs.

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.