

41 ELECTRONIC COMBAT SQUADRON



MISSION

The unit's combat mission is to support tactical air, ground and naval operations by confusing the enemy's defenses and disrupting its command and control capabilities. Squadron operate the EC-130H aircraft. To execute its unique missions, the aircraft were modified with electronic countermeasures systems, specialized jamming equipment, the capability to aerial refuel, as well as upgraded engines and avionics.

LINEAGE

Company A, 4 Balloon Squadron organized, 13 Nov 1917
Redesignated 9 Balloon Company, 25 Jul 1918
Redesignated 9 Airship Company, 30 Aug 1921
Redesignated 9 Airship Squadron, 26 Oct 1933
Redesignated 1 Observation Squadron, 1 Jun 1937
Redesignated 1 Observation Squadron (Medium), 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 1 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942
Redesignated 1 Reconnaissance Squadron (Special), 25 Jun 1943
Redesignated 41 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, 25 Nov 1944
Redesignated 41 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 24 Jan 1946
Inactivated, 17 Jun 1946
Redesignated 41 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Night-Photographic, 14 Jan 1954
Activated, 18 Mar 1954
Inactivated, 18 May 1959
Redesignated 41 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo-Jet, and activated, 30 Jun 1965
Organized, 1 Oct 1965
Redesignated 41 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 8 Oct 1966
Redesignated 41 Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron, 15 Mar 1967

Inactivated, 31 Oct 1969
Redesignated 41 Electronic Combat Squadron, 17 Jun 1980
Activated, 1 Jul 1980

STATIONS

Ft Omaha, NE, 13 Nov 1917
Camp Morrison, VA, 9 Feb–29 Jun 1918
Camp de Meucon, Morbihan, France, 17 Jul 1918
Raulecourt, France, 14 Aug 1918
Xivray et Marvoisin, France, 12 Sep 1918
St Benoit-en-Woevre, France, 14 Sep 1918
Lamarche-en-Woevre, France, 16 Sep 1918
Thierville, France, 22 Sep 1918
Cumieres, France, 9 Oct 1918
Consenvoye, France, 7 Nov 1918
Fromereville, France, 12 Nov 1918
Damvillers, France, 14 Nov 1918
Ville-sur-Cousances, France, 26 Nov 1918
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 4 Feb 1919
Bordeaux, France, 18 Feb–20 Apr 1919
Camp Stuart, VA, 4 May 1919
Camp Lee, VA, 8 May 1919
Ft Omaha, NE, 18 May 1919
Scott Field, IL, 28 Oct 1921
Marshall Field, KS, 15 Jun 1937–27 Dec 1941
Rio Hato, Panama, 14 Jan 1942
Howard Field, Canal Zone, 19 Jan 1942
David, Panama, 17 Apr 1942
Rio Hato, Panama, 10 May 1942
Howard Field, Canal Zone, 20 Jun 1942–7 May 1944
Pounds Field, TX, 24 May 1944
Muskogee AAFld, OK, 7 Dec 1944–4 Apr 1945
Kualoa Field, TH, 18 Apr–31 May 1945
Northwest Field, Guam, 13 Jun 1945 (detachment at Iwo Jima, 9 Aug–15 Sep 1945)
Isley Field, Saipan, 4 Jan 1946
Northwest Field, Guam, 15 Apr–17 Jun 1946
Shaw AFB, SC, 18 Mar 1954–18 May 1959
Shaw AFB, SC, 1 Oct 1965
Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 20 Oct 1965–31 Oct 1969
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Jul 1980

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Bateen AB, Saudi Arabia, 27 Aug 1990–17 Apr 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 13 Nov 1917–5 Aug 1918
Balloon Wing, IV Army Corps, 5 Aug 1918
Balloon Wing, III Army Corps, 21 Sep 1918
Balloon Group, III Army Corps, 8 Oct 1918
2 Balloon Group, First Army, 20 Nov–Dec 1918
Unkn, Dec 1918–May 1919
Army Balloon School, Ft Omaha, NE, May 1919
Sixth Corps Area, Oct 1921
1 (later, 21) Airship Group, 19 Jul 1922
Sixth Corps Area, 1 Jun 1937
Seventh Corps Area (attached to Cavalry School), 15 Jun 1937
Cavalry School, c. 1939
Second Army, 3 Oct 1940 (two flights attached to Cavalry School to c. Apr 1941; third flight remained assigned to Cavalry School throughout period)
II Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941
72 Observation (later, 72 Reconnaissance) Group, 26 Sep 1941
Sixth Air Force, 1 Nov 1943
II Tactical Air Division, 24 May 1944
III Tactical Air Division, 24 Jun 1944
III Tactical Air Command, 1 Oct 1944
III Tactical Air Division, 4 Dec 1944
7 Fighter Wing, 18 Apr 1945
AAF, Pacific Ocean Area (attached to XXI Bomber Command), 13 Jun 1945
United States Army Forces, Middle Pacific (attached to Twentieth Air Force), 16 Jul 1945
315 Bombardment Wing, 18 Sep 1945
VII Fighter Command (later, 20 Fighter Wing), 4 Jan–17 Jun 1946
432 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 18 Mar 1954
363 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 8 Feb 1958–18 May 1959
Tactical Air Command, 30 Jun 1965
363 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Oct 1965
Thirteenth Air Force, 20 Oct 1965
460 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 18 Feb 1966
432 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 18 Sep 1966
355 Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Aug 1967–31 Oct 1969
552 Airborne Warning and Control Wing (later, 552 Airborne Warning and Control Division), 1 Jul 1980
28 Air Division, 1 Apr 1985
355 Operations Group, 1 May 1992

ATTACHMENTS

Cavalry School to c. Dec 1941
6 Bombardment Group, 10 Apr–Jun 1942
Air Division Provisional, 15, 5 Dec 1990–17 Apr 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Type R observation balloon, 1918–1919, 1919–1921

RN-1 (Zodiac)

Type SST (Mullion)

Type AA (pony blimp)

A-4

D-4

OA-1

AC-1

TA-1

TA-5

TC-1

TC-3

TC-5

TC-6

TC-10

TC-11

TC-14

TE-1

TE-3

TF-1

RS-9

R (later, C-3)

C-6 observation balloon

A-6

A-7

A-8 spherical balloons

O-19

O-19B

O-19C

O-25

O-46

O-47, 1938–1944

O-47A

L-4

B-18, 1942–1944

P-39, 1943–1944

P-39N

YG-1, 1938–1940

YO-51, 1940–1941

YO-50

O-59, 1941

O-49, 1941–1943

CG-4, 1943
A-20, 1944
F-5, 1944-1946
RB-26, 1954-1956
RB-66B, 1956-1959
RB-66C, 1965
EC-130H, 1982

COMMANDERS

1st Lt C. M. Felt
1st Lt George A. Lundberg, May 1919
Capt Allan P. McFarland, 11 Sep 1920
1st Lt James B. Jordan, 16 Apr 1921
Capt Ralph A. Gibson, 1 Sep 1921
Capt William B. Mayer, 1 Jul 1922
Capt Henry C. White, 25 Jan 1923
1st Lt William A. Gray, 14 Apr 1924
Capt Edmund W. Hill, 12 Sep 1924
1st Lt William A. Gray, 9 Dec 1924
1st Lt Benjamin B. Cassiday, 13 Mar 1925
Capt Edmund W. Hill, 4 Jul 1924
Capt William E. Kepner, 10 Aug 1926
1st Lt Elmer J. Bowling, 18 Jul 1927
Capt Edmund W. Hill, 3 Jul 1928
1st Lt George A. Lundberg, 2 Oct 1928
1st Lt Fred A. Ingalls, 22 Jun 1929
1Lt Orin J. Bushey, 17 Jul 1929
Capt Karl S. Axtater, 11 Dec 1929
1st Lt William O. Eareckson, 12 May 1930
1st Lt Elmer J. Bowling, 10 Oct 1930-1 Jun 1934
Maj Neal Creighton, 1 Jun 1934-1 Jun 1937
Capt Elmer T. Rundquist, 1 Mar 1935-17 Jun 1937
Maj Jack Greer, 17 Jun 1937
Maj Arthur G. Hamilton, 21 Aug 1938
Capt Ford L. Fair, Oct 1939
Capt Vernon C. Smith, Apr 1941
Maj William A. Methany, 1 Jul 1941- Jan 1942

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II
Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War I

Lorraine

St Mihiel

Meuse-Argonne

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Vietnam

Vietnam Defensive

Vietnam Air

Vietnam Air Offensive

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III

Vietnam Air/ Ground

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV

TET 69/Counteroffensive

Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citations (Southeast Asia)

18 Feb–18 Sep 1966

11–12 Aug and 24–28 Oct 1967

12 Apr 1968–30 Apr 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

18 Sep 1966–15 Aug 1967

16 Aug 1967–11 Apr 1968

1 Jul–31 Oct 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1982–30 Jun 1984

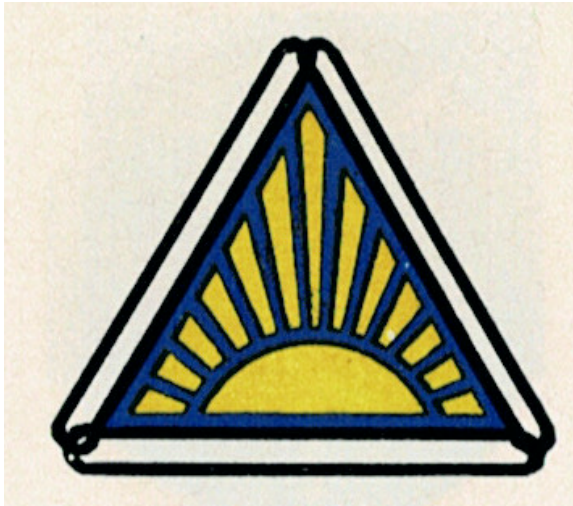
1 Apr 1985–31 Mar 1987

1 Jan 1992–1 Jun 1993

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

18 Feb 1966–31 Oct 1969

EMBLEM



1 Observation Squadron emblem: Three black chain links forming an equilateral triangle enclosing a blue background charged with a rising sun in gold. (Approved, 3 Jan 1933)



41 Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron patch



41 Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron patches: On a Medium Blue disc edged Black a Blue equilateral triangle charged with a Yellow demi-sun emitting thirteen rays, all within a Black band formed by three chain links highlighted White.



41 Electronic Combat Squadron emblem: On a disc Celeste, on an equilateral triangle Sable, inner border on each segment a single chain link Argent, a field Azure, charged with a demi-sun

emitting thirteen rays Or, all within a narrow border Black. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "41 ELECTRONIC COMBAT SQ" in Black letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The rising sun with its rays signifies the unit's electronic attack contribution to overall operations. The three chain links surrounding the sun symbolize the teamwork required to deny, degrade and disrupt enemy communications. (Approved on 28 Oct 1981 and modified in 1994)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Hooray, we are the Ninth Balloon and started to howl on 13 Nov 1917. We hailed from every state in the Union and are represented by every country on the map. We left Omaha, February 7, 1918, where we received our primary instruction in the "art of flying" at a mean temperature of thirty-two, below. We were suddenly given Equipment C and bound for overseas, but on account of scarcity of gas, were forced to land in mud at Morrison, Va.

We were fortunate, as it proved to be an Aero Training Camp. We were given a hearty ovation by all the amateur "Lukes," "Putnams" and "Rickenbackers." They sure made a lasting impression on us in their new uniforms (denims and hip boots). And they seemed highly elated as they received their machines (picks and shovels) for their daily instruction under the watchful tutelage of Captain Price. We must have made wonderful progress while at Fort Omaha, as each of us were entrusted with a machine the following day.

We won the life-long enmity of the Aero Squadrons by refusing to adopt their uniform and by flying their machines into the woods, where many were left unfit for service. After very diligent and laborious training of five months, in which time we evacuated the "Panama" canal, large enough when flooded, to allow our transport easy access from our hangars to the muddy Atlantic. After fond farewells were exchanged with our rivals, we departed from God's country on the 29th of June, 1918.

After a very uneventful trip of five days, we were suddenly aroused out of our lethargy by the alarm "submarines, all on deck." After calmly adjusting our anchors (life preservers) we coolly filed out on deck in time to see the last sub go down. We were very pleased, as it increased the speed of our boat from 3 and half to 5 knots per hour. Except for an air raid on the culinary department, and one of two minor sub attacks, a boat on fire, and numerous rebellions of our stomachs against our chef's menu, the rest of the trip was uneventful.

We landed safely in Brest on the evening of July 13, and were greeted by the urchins of the city with "Hail, Hail, the Gang's all here," as we proceeded to the rest camp, Pontanazen Barracks. After three days hard labor, we departed for Camp Meucon. It was here that we received the advance course in ballooning, and were taught the gentle art of camouflaging, which, by the way, proved superfluous, but nevertheless, was a fine course in physical torture.

It was here, by the order of the A. E. F., that we must have experienced officers at the Front; we drew one, Lieut. C. M. Flett, better known as the daredevil C. O. Being thusly armed with a man of his ability and fame, we successfully corralled three other officers with envious reputations and boldly set forth to battle the fierce Hun in his lair. We secured passage on "40 Hommes, 8 Cheveaux" and after riding five days we reached our destination, where our fifth mess sergeant prepared us a sumptuous repast of "corned william" and army biscuits, and after a slight delay of about ten hours, we set out at dusk for our objective.

Owing to visibility being poor, we readily discovered that our chauffeurs were not owls, by getting on the wrong roads. We would probably have reached the future objective then and there, had we not been brought to an abrupt halt by the guards of the third-line trenches. After being informed as to our whereabouts, we proceeded to Gerard Sas, where we arrived at midnight, August 3, 1918.

The following morning, we were informed that the enemy was only three kilometers north of us. As our officers were anxious to ascertain their location, batteries or any other impediments of war that might prove detrimental to the advance of our doughboys, the balloon was soon inflated and we began our series of observations that proved so disastrous to the Fritz in the St. Mihiel Sector. Incidentally it was here we lost our first balloon, but by skillful maneuvering, the enemy was led into the range of our machine gunners, who riddled the wings with bullets, causing him to drop into No Man's Land. Owing to the arrival of Allied planes, we were deprived of a justly earned citation. As the balloon was descending in a mass of flames, amidst the clatter of machine guns and the bursting of shrapnel, bur company was saved from impending danger by our brave Sergeant Perick, who, casting aside all thoughts of his own safety, fearlessly exposed his head from beneath the winch and shouted "To the trenches, men, the shrapnel are falling."

The 9th Balloon Company arrived at Raulecourt (Meurthe et Moselle) August 14, 1918 with one hundred and sixty-eight men and six officers, of whom 1st Lieut. C. M. Flett, was Company Commander, 1st Lieut. Roland T. Ingels, Maneuvering officer, 1st Lieut. Sheldon V. Clark and 2nd Lieut. Samuel E. White, observers and 1st Lieut. Rea Murphy, and 2nd Lieut. John S. Holloran, Jr., student observers.

Ascensions were made every day when weather permitted, from August 16th until September 11, 1918, in order that the observers could familiarize themselves with the sector and the company to familiarize with the balloon on the front. During this time on August 28, 1918, balloon 145 was attacked and burned by a German Airman; 1st Lieut. Sheldon V. Clark, A.S. and Corporal Lionel S. Bailey jumped from burning balloon in parachutes and landed safely.

On the morning of September 12, 1918, the beginning of the St. Mihiel offensive, the balloon ascended at 4:50 AM in a high wind, registering 45 miles per hour, with Lieut. S.V. Clark and 2nd Lieut. Samuel E. White, as observers. The telephone connections were broken by high wind and balloon forced to descend at 5:40 A.M. Balloon ascended at 7:00 A.M., 400 meters, with 1st

Lieut. C.M. Flett and 2nd Lieut. S.E. White, as observers. Several reports were phoned from balloon as to movement of enemy troops, enemy artillery, etc. Balloon was attacked at 7:45 by enemy plane but our machine gun fire kept him from burning balloon. Regulated our artillery fire on Mount Sec until 8:50 A.M. when balloon descended on account of low clouds and poor visibility. Left Raulecourt (Meurthe et Moselle) the 14th hour on Sept. 12, 1918, with Company enroute to Xivray (Marvoisin) arriving at 20 o'clock with balloon. Coordinates of point of ascension were 356.070-232.250. No ascension was made in A.M. on account of wind, rain and low clouds. Telephone connections were made to Artillery Central at Richcourt, giving 1st Division advance P. C. G-2 and G-3. Left Xivray (Marvoisin) September 13th at 15th hour enroute to St. Benoit (Meurthe et Moselle) and owing to strong wind, anchors were torn from the ground, allowing balloon to rise and was badly torn and damaged. Arrived at St. Benoit (Meurthe et Moselle) September 14th and 15th hour. Obtained billets, secured hydrogen from Raulecourt and made forward balloon bed. Inflated balloon at 18th hour. Just as balloon was inflated an enemy plane flew over, at high altitude, getting the location of our position. That night our balloon was badly damaged by enemy fire. Owing to poor visibility and low clouds, we advanced to Xivray (Marvoisin) with the balloon still in the air. Here we lost our second balloon. With the Germans in full retreat, and not being able to immediately inflate a new balloon, we advanced to St. Benoit, arriving there during the afternoon of September 14.

Owing to the close proximity of the enemy's lines, and our extremely advanced position, our third balloon was easy prey for the enemy shrapnel and the machine gun fire, and was destroyed before it was ever removed from its bed.

But let us add that right here events of more than active nature -occurred, for instance, while waiting for supper, numerous whiz-bangs began to drop in our immediate vicinity, one of them landing in the coffee can. The most disagreeable feature was the fact that we went supperless as we used our mess kits to protect the soft spots of our domes. A more than interesting aerial battle was staged during the first evening, in which five Huns were attacked by one Yank. Owing to the superior ability of our Yank, he succeeded in downing two of the Boche planes, and driving the other three across the lines. We were heavily shelled that night, and all of us moved out behind the natural breastworks, to wit, an old railroad embankment.

Our two lieutenants, Murphy and Clarke, insisted in pulling off our-blankets and keeping us awake for company, as it appeared that they were unable to sleep. In the meantime, Lieutenant White, who is sportsmanly inclined, had gone out to inspect the under part of the bowling alley, which he found so interesting that he remained there for the rest of the night. In the wee small hours of the morning, the enemy shot over some gas and when it became light enough, we found Sergeant Houser with his head in the bushes, hopelessly demented, and was spirited away to the hospital as a shell-shocked victim.

We received orders to move to La Marche and had hardly traversed three kilometers, when we could see the buildings that we had just vacated being leveled to the ground by enemy artillery fire. We were wondering why Sergeant Pearse had been going around in such a deep study but were soon enlightened on our arrival at La Marche, September 16. It proved that he was

studying out a new type of balloon bed, with a Pearse patented camouflaged top that would prevent enemy planes from locating the position of the balloon. After a week of successful operation, and bomb dodging, during which time our observers increased their already enviable record, we departed for Verdun.

On the Verdun front, our route was strewn with abandoned wagons, caissons, heaps of ammunition dumps, millions of strands of barbed wire entanglements, rusted from four years of the greatest struggle in the history of the world. Trees that once raised their heads to shade the scenic highways leading into Verdun were mere stumps. Looking across the lowlands as far as eye could see were millions of craters and shell holes devastating a country that was once a fertile and productive valley, but is now, probably, beyond redemption.

The villages that surround Verdun are uninhabitable, and seem sepulchers. Either side of the road where once were comfortable and habitable dwellings is now in a state of quintessence and nothingness. Nowhere in the American sector have we seen one living inhabitant. Verdun, of which we read so much while we were at home, is a beautiful city entirely surrounded by massive walls and amply protected from invasion by twenty-one ramparts. It is better known as the Underground City of France.

Passing through Verdun, we arrived and camped at Thierville on the 22d day of September, where we made many flights, obtaining much valuable information in regard to the movements of fee enemy troops, and defects of our own artillery fire, which we soon-rectified. A major portion of our time was devoted to preparing maps and photographs for the new offensive.

On the first day of the drive, we were attacked by two enemy planes, burning our balloon and also that of the Third Company. The enemy being routed, we inflated a new balloon, and began our advance to Cumiere. On arrival at Marre, our balloon was attacked by an enemy plane, while riding above a low hanging cloud. By skillful maneuvering of the balloon, the enemy was led into the fog, and losing momentary sight of the balloon, and not realizing his altitude, he crashed into the barbed wire entanglements, thereby losing his life and completely destroying the plane.

We continued our advance to Dead Man's Hill, arriving at dusk. We looked with awe upon the hill that had once been the most hotly contested hill on the Western Front, the vast amount of dugouts, the system of trenches, and barbed wire entanglements protecting it from every angle of attack. It would be impossible to traverse three feet without the way being barred by huge craters and holes measuring from twenty to fifty feet across. The remnants of both Allied and enemy planes littered the hillside in all directions. Graves that once contained the bodies of combatants of 1914 were now re-opened in this, the final drive.

One of the most spectacular and awe-inspiring events we ever witnessed was when 350 Allied planes in battle formation passed immediately over us in time to check a great enemy counter attack. From that day on, the enemy had more respect for the "little army of Yanks." The balloon was in the air constantly when weather and visibility permitted. Several attempts were

made, by the enemy to locate our position, but to no avail as the enemy night bombing planes proved, by missing their objective entirely. One of the most bitter but successful battles occurred in the Bois de Argonne, conceded by military authorities to be the bloodiest battle in the annals of history.

The balloons moved to this front from the St. Mihiel sector on the night of 20 Sep. The number of American balloons on the Verdun front increased from one to thirteen within twelve hours. The balloons were assigned as follows

Between H hour on 26 Sep 1918 and 11:00 am on 11 Nov 1918, American balloons in the Meuse offensive made an aggregate advance of 45 kilometers. This estimate is computed by measurement in a direct line from original position to ultimate position. The actual road miles practically doubles the mileage. Much of the transport was conducted by hand; the balloon being taken over open field, through country riddled by shell holes and strewn with barbed wire. In several instances, the balloon was transported without a winch for distances of ten kilometers at a time. It is known that the balloons, in a few cases were within 12 hours behind the infantry in crossing No Man's Land.

26 Sep 1918 1Lt S.V. Clarke and 2Lt S. E. White jumped; balloon 228 burned

On 9 Oct at 0433 balloon ascended and moved to Cumieres (Meuse) by order of the commander of Army Balloons, 1st Army. From 9 Oct to 7 Nov, the balloon ascended 20 times with 26 hours and 30 minutes of observation, made 7 reglages, observed 6 enemy batteries, 7 enemy balloons and observed 16 enemy planes fall and 7 allied planes fall and 3 allied balloons burned.

By this victory, we were enabled to advance to Consonvoie, where we bedded our balloon in Death Valley, November 7. 'Twas here that rumor reached us that Austria had severed relations with Germany, and, that Germany had begged for peace at any price. We obtained some valuable information at this point. Artillery barrages at this time were something terrible, but our doughboys continued to advance. We were greatly surprised when we received news that hostilities were to cease at 11 o'clock November 11, there being no doubt in our mind as to the outcome, but we wished to achieve further honor by being the first balloon company on German soil, as this had been our ambition from the beginning of the St. Mihiel drive. For this reason, if you wished to locate the Ninth Balloon Company, you would always find them a little in advance of any company on the Front.

Arrival in France 12 Jul 1918

Arrival at the front 16 Aug 1918

Days ascensions made in S.O.S 8

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A 43

Total days ascensions made 51

Number of ascensions made in S.O.S. 36

Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A. 107

Total number of ascensions made 143
Total number of hours in air S.O.S. 42.48
Total number of hours in air Z.O.A. 164.22
Total number of hours in the air 207.10
Artillery adjustments in S.O.S. 4
Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A 27
Total number or artillery adjustments 31
Enemy shells observed 1764
Enemy aircraft observed 676
Enemy balloons observed 144
Enemy artillery batteries observed 19
Enemy traffic on road and railroad observed 125
Smoke, fires and flares observed 89
Explosions observed 13
Jumps from basket 4
Balloons attacked 2
Balloons burned 2
Balloons destroyed 2
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. 9. Transferred to Fort Omaha, NE, and stationed there as of June 1919. Redesignated as the 9th Airship Squadron on 1 October 1933. Functioned as the school and demonstration unit for the U. S. Army Balloon and Airship School. As such, the unit was responsible for training Organized Reserve and RAI balloon and airship units from across the United States. Frequently entered ships to compete in the annual National Airship Races in the 1920s. Participated in airship research and development projects and experiments with the U.S. Weather Bureau and the U. S. Bureau of Mines in the 1920s and 30s. Supported the National Geographic Society's stratospheric balloon flights in 1934 and 1935. Participated in flood relief operations in southern Illinois during January-February 1937.

Airships, semirigid and nonrigid, were the center of activity at Scott Field during the 1920's. During those years, the 8th, 9th, and 12th Airship Companies, each with as many as six airships; the 21st Balloon Group Headquarters, the 24th Airship Service Company, and a balloon and airship school carried out extensive training programs, making the field one of the busiest airship ports in the country.

Air defense for Panama Canal, Jan 1942–May 1944, with occasional antisubmarine patrols over the Caribbean and Pacific, especially during May and Jun 1942; deployed to Western Pacific in Jun 1945, but never entered combat.

Combat in Southeast Asia, Nov 1965–31 Oct 1969.

Command, control, and communications countermeasures, 1982.

Electronic countermeasures in Southwest Asia, 27 Aug 1990–17 Apr 1991.

EC-130H Compass Call electronic attack aircraft recently surpassed 40,000 combat flying hours over 13 years of continuous deployment supporting US and allied forces in Afghanistan. "The EC-130 is the only airborne electronic attack asset not only in Afghanistan, but also the Air Force," 41 Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Karl Weinbrech. "Without the EC-130H capability, you lose a lot of the things special operations forces and other tactical units have come to rely on," he added. The EC-130Hs, deployed from Davis Monthan AFB, Ariz., have flown some 6,900 combat sorties since 2002, eavesdropping on insurgent chatter, collecting battlefield intelligence, and jamming tactical communications. "We make it easier for our forces to do their job; we give them the security of knowing that what we're doing is making it safer for them to do their operations," Compass Call Crew Supervisor SSGT. Scott Berry said. 2015

All around the dimly-lit tent are enduring symbols of a constant presence. A name scrawled across a wooden wall, a lengthy list of deployment dates written underneath, updated year after year. A library stacked with books and games to pass the time. A built-in couch labeled "Snooze Town." All the things people do to make a place feel like home are apparent in this place where its inhabitants often spend half their time each year. The 41 Electronic Combat Squadron and the 755th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, based out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, have been continuously deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and now the Resolute Support Mission, since 2002. They've called Bagram Airfield their deployed home since 2004. They are the longest continuously deployed Air Force unit in Afghanistan.

The unit operates the EC-130H Compass Call, a modified version of the C-130H Hercules airframe. It serves as an airborne weapons system capable of disrupting enemy command and control communications and limiting adversary coordination essential for enemy force management. This capability is known colloquially as "jamming" and ensures that when a U.S. or coalition unit goes on a mission, the enemy is unable to communicate with one another. The effect is an indispensable asset to ground forces and has led to 2,193 terrorists removed from the battlefield since 2014.

"The special forces guys will come by after a mission we supported and say thanks," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Meredith, a 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron expeditor. Many of their maintainers have been with the unit since the beginning. The members of the 455th EAMXS's EC-130 Compass Call aircraft maintenance unit currently deployed to Bagram Airfield have 146 deployments among them. "I've been on 13 deployments, nine of them here (at Bagram) and all of them have been with this unit," Meredith said. These numbers are not unusual, and individuals throughout the unit often have deployments in the double digits, with months out of each year spent away from home. "His kid just started walking and he shows us videos all the time – but he doesn't get to see it," said Senior Airman Richard Marshall, an Aircraft Electrical and Environmental Systems journeyman with the 455th EAMXS, about a fellow squadron member. For those with families back home, they say the key is to make the

most of the time they have. Tech. Sgt. Tony Rivera, a 455th EAMXS crew chief, has two sons and said he spends the time he has with his boys participating in their lives and making every moment count. Despite the strain of an undeniably high operations tempo, the mood in the unit remains positive. When they're not working out on the flightline, they play sports or video games together and work out in their "prison gym" in front of a vividly painted "Muscle Beach" sign."

To date, 41 ECS crews have flown over 39,000 hours during 6,800 combat sorties in these operations. The unit has broken the monthly flying records for three consecutive months since October 2016– something that has never been done before. The unit's mission capable rate, the maintenance term for the number of functioning aircraft, hit a 27-month record high in November 2016– 96.5%. This has led to the 455th EAMXS winning the 2016 Air Combat Command Maintenance Effectiveness Award. 2017

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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