

68th BALLOON COMPANY

MISSION

LINEAGE

68th Balloon Company

Organized, Aug 1918

Demobilized, Jun 1919

STATIONS

Camp John Wise, TX

Brooks Field, TX, May 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On August 23rd the 68th Balloon Companies was organized as home training company. Training in observation, which had been carried on since February, was discontinued the latter part of August.

SPECIAL orders issued at Camp Headquarters on August 23rd, 1918, assigned Lieutenant Jerald J. Bruce to command the 68th Company and ordered him "to proceed at once with the organization and training of the company." The 68th Balloon Company was designed to carry only men who were either en duty in balloon departments or else under instruction in those departments.

Private 1st Class Richardson and Private Crosier transferred from the 54th Balloon Company were the first two enlisted men to join the new organization. They were followed by Corporal Breuning, Privates David, Lynch from the 55th Company, Privates McCormick, Coates, Kieke, Nackerman, and Lanciault from the 56th Balloon Company, Sergeants 1st Class Frank, Nance, Neville, Eergeants Batten, Daugherty, Newell, Phelps, Corporals Chatten, Palmer, Ramos, Privates 1st Class Brumbach, Christenson, Collison, Sterzing, Watson, Wright, Privates, Colson, Martin, Plake, Skrdla, Soupal, Zelle from 57th Balloon Company, Private Emiser from the Recruit Detachment, Private Cassas from 57th Company, giving a total strength of 35 men at the close of the first day.

Sergeant Nance was the first acting First Sergeant of the 68th Company. He continued in this capacity until October 18, 1918, when his duties were taken up by Private P. D. Bertram, transferred into the Company as Acting First Sergeant, from the Recruit Detachment. From the date of organization, the Company steadily grew in size, reaching a strength of 100 men and 1 officer September 26th, 1918. It continued to gradually increase and reached its maximum strength of 200 men and 2 officers October C, 1918. However this strength was short lived and the total gradually decreased, after fluctuations caused by a series of transfers, to a minimum of 94 men and 4 officers, January 14th, 1919. From this point the total began to again ascend and after a few minor fluctuations has settled to a total of 166 men and 7 officers, the present strength.

During the influenza epidemic, it was necessary for the Company to give up its barracks, in order to provide quarters for the flu victims. The company was moved over to recruit lines, and quartered in tents as it was when it was first formed. After the comforts of living in barracks the change was not a pleasant one, but both men and officers accepted the order cheerfully and once fairly established, made the best of dirt floors, leaky tents and the baths, which but rarely boasted of having water in them even passably warm. This cheerful acceptance of rather unpleasant living conditions spoke well of the morale of the men.

Lieutenant J. J. Bruce, A. S. A., was relieved from command of the Company October 17, 1918, and assigned to command and organized the 80th Company. He was replaced by Lieutenant J. S. Batt, A. S., S. C., who continued as Commanding Officer until February 21st, 1910, when he was relieved by Captain J. J. Kingsbury, A. S. M. A., the present Commanding Officer.

Lieutenant H. R. Rafferty, A. S., A., who acted as Supply Officer under Lieutenant Bruce, continued

in this capacity after Lieutenant Batt assumed command and up to the time he was discharged in January. Assigned to the Company with Lieutenant Batt on the same Special Order were Lieutenant M. L. Wright, A. S. M. A., and Lieutenant B. A. Braasch, A. S., A. Until discharged in January, Lieutenant Braasch was the executive officer of the Company, and Lieutenant Wright was the Officer in Charge of Entertainment and Instruction.

Lieutenant H. B. Lillie, A. S., A., assumed Lieutenant Rafferty's duties as Company Supply Officer and has continued in that capacity to date. Lieutenant McLafferty, A. S. A., took up Lieutenant Wright's duties as Balloon Officer.

After demobilization was practically completed in camp, the 77th, attached to the 68th Company for duty, rations and quarters and their Company Commanders were at 80th, and 93rd Companies were attached to the 68th Company for duty, making a total of seven officers, four assigned and three attached.

Captain Kingsbury received orders to go to Garden City on March 6, 1919, and Lieutenant Batt again assumed command of the Company.

Air Force Order of Battle
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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.