

370th AERO SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

370th Aero Squadron

Organized, Jan 1918

Demobilized, Jun 1919

STATIONS

Waco, TX

Hazelhurst Field, NY, Jan 1918

Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Feb 1918

AEF, Feb 1918

Mitchel Field, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

A triangle with a star in the center

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

TO THE delight of the prospective personnel and despair of the Kaiser, the 370th Aero Squadron was organized and emerged from the chaos of sand, cactus, wind, and materials of war at Waco, Texas, on January 15, 1918.

Exactly eight days from this date our C. O., Lt. James Hale, announced at reveille, in his customary cool manner: "You will entrain tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock. This will give you ample time in which to prepare for this trip. Be clean shaven, look neat, and have your hair cut short." Little did we realize at that time the full significance of that order, as it was the beginning of a series of eventful travels. On January 24th, we left Waco with the usual gossip of going to San Diego, New York, or a dozen other places. Well, after five days of pleasant touring on real Pullmans, and of great applause received all along the line, we landed at Mineola, Long Island. Nothing unusual occurred on this trip except a peculiar accident experienced by Silvie A. (Red) Barto, who later became famous as a leading mess sergeant in the A. E. F. Just ask Red if he ever found the fellow with the poor aim.

After training, we were hiked a short distance through a foot of snow to Hazelhurst Field No. 1. At this place we were assigned to comfortable steam-heated barracks, equipped with electric lights and shower-baths. Considering the extremely cold weather and our previous homes at Kelley Field and Waco, the new quarters were not hard to take. We were quarantined for the greater part of our stay at Hazelhurst Field and spent most of our time putting on weight, doing bunk fatigue and shooting craps. There were numerous verbal battles waged during this time, often culminating in a battle royal, in which hob-nail shoes, mess-kits, and other articles of equipment would come

into play. During one of these battles, Wylie "Sister" Akenson, was heard to exclaim: "Heavings! but this war is a rough game." You know Wylie was tough like that.

At this post Lt. James F. McLaughlin was assigned to the organization as supply officer. Following him came a number of men from the 23rd Aero Squadron, and then orders for immediate overseas shipment. It was time to go, for the 370th had the reputation of remaining only three weeks at any camp. At 4:30 a. m. February 25th, we were awakened and ordered to hitch up to a pack and barrack bag, which we lugged to a ferry boat, thence to Hoboken, where we boarded His Majesty's ship "Olympic," the finest and second largest ship afloat. The next morning we were towed out of the harbor and were on our way for "Over There." Many troops peered through the port holes as New York City and the Statue of Liberty gradually faded from view.

The voyage was very pleasant, with little sickness, due to a calm sea. Hammocks were poor excuses for beds, especially for Alvin Todahl, the giant from the North. Also using the dining tables as ladders to our bed rooms overhead did not conform to our ideas of perfect comfort. Officers and nurses gave a fair exhibition of Tango and other dances, while the enlisted men were interested spectators. Music was furnished by the 121st Field Artillery band. The 370th had its regular turn at drill on the promenade deck, and quite often Harvey Layton was noticed as being the only person in step. Near the end of the voyage depth bombs were dropped and several shots fired from on board, giving rise to some weird submarine tales and interesting news for the family and friends back home. On March 5th, 9 o'clock in the morning, land was sighted. Some said that it was the Irish coast, others thought it to be France, but it finally proved to be the northwestern coast of Wales. On the afternoon of the same day we landed at Liverpool, and were entertained by the sea-gulls and "Limies" scrambling for tobacco thrown overboard by American soldiers.

At 10 o'clock on the following morning we debarked and boarded a train with small and peculiar-looking coaches, drawn by a tiny locomotive having a shrill whistle resembling that on a peanut-roaster. After an interesting ride through some picturesque country, we arrived at Romsey, noted for its rest camp and hard cheese. As at all English camps, we were quartered in tents which shed water like a sieve.

On March 16, we evacuated Romsey and went to Thetford, Norfolk, about 90 miles north of London. We were met by "lorries," which transported us to Snarehill Camp, where we trained for five months with the British Royal Flying Corps. Aside from a few daily arguments or quarrels, we agreed fairly well with our English cousins. Most men have sweet memories of Australian goat, old rabbit, orange-marmalade, and duff pudding as an invariable ration while in Blighty.

Early in August the squadron was temporarily divided into sections, one going to Nottingham, a popular city among those who were fortunate enough to be sent there, the other two to Lake Down and Old Sarum, while the headquarters section remained at Snarehill. On August 30th the men were assembled at Flower Down, several miles from Winchester. It was at this camp that Lt. Jeff D. Gautier, who later became our C. O., was transferred to our squadron. Here we were told that the outfit was going to the front, and everybody hollered "Hurrah !" After several field inspections, we were ranked as the best organization on the field, and with an envious record in England, the 370th left for Southampton.

An old side-wheeler was already awaiting to convey us over the English Channel, noted for its high winds and rough seas. The old scow pulled out late in the afternoon in order that we would pass over the most dangerous part of the Channel at night. Oh, Boy, what a night! The boat tossed about like a canoe in the Bay of Biscay, and as a result the most unpleasant night in the history of 370 was spent in feeding the fish during a hard storm. LaHavre was reached early the following morning, September 13th, and the squadron was sent to a nearby rest camp to recover from the ill effects of the Channel.

During this short rest practically all supplies except those actually used at the front, were left behind, and so once more we had faint dreams of soon seeing the Boche. But again, we were disappointed when several hard-boiled R. T. O.'s put forty of us in a French side-door Pullman containing a supply

of corned willy, hard tack, jam and baked beans. These cars were marked "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8," meaning sufficient space for forty men or eight horses. After two days of slow traveling, we were unloaded at St. Maixent, one more rest camp to our credit.

Here we acquired 2nd Lt. George T. Mathewson as engineer officer, who later left us at Chatillon-sur-Seine. We were now proclaimed an Observation Squadron, supposed to be going right out to the battlefield. After being issued gas masks, rifles and what not, we were taken out for instruction in the Manual of Arms and gas drill. Right here "Red" Barto, of Smoky Pittsburgh, Pa., became mess sergeant and has since kept the organization in excellent physical condition by the great quantity and quality of food which he serves.

On September 26th the 370th Aero Squadron, with complete equipment, piled into a troop train for the front, but the front proved to be Chatillon-sur-Seine, where the troops immediately became engineers with the pick and shovel, the emblem of the Aviation Corps.

Upon arrival at this camp, 2nd Lt. Samuel E. Rogers was assigned to our organization as armament officer. We regret very much the order which later made it necessary for . Lt. Rogers and Lt. Mathewson to leave us to depart for the States. It was also at this field that we lost, through illness, our highly esteemed and thoroughly capable commanding officer, Lt. James Hale. We were indeed fortunate in having such an officer as Lt. Jeff D. Gautier to take command at this critical time, as the troops were becoming impatient, restless and anxious to get home. Lt. Gautier has the interests of his men at heart at all times and has already won the admiration and respect of all men in the organization.

We arrived at this field along with the 157th Aero Squadron, just in time to fall into the major work of construction. When we look at the good roads, power house, steel hangars, Y. M. C. A., bath-house, technical buildings and our own good barracks, which have all been built since our arrival, it is with a just feeling of pride that we think of our part in making the 2nd Corps Aeronautical School the thoroughly efficient institution that it is today.

The inevitable victory of November 11th found the 370th actively engaged, and represented in practically every branch of progressive work on this field, many of the men filling technical positions and following the line of work for which they were trained.

In conclusion, it can be sincerely said that the 370th met all trials and disappointments with the same never-say-die spirit, and if this organization of willing workers, possessing such a happy fighting spirit, had ever reached its goal there is no doubt concerning the record it would have made.

Stark Smith died of spinal meningitis at Mineola, Long Island, on February 12, 1918. Deceased was sent to his home at Rutland, Vermont, for burial.

Arthur Francis Taylor lost his life while boating on the Winsum River at Norwich, England, on July 17, 1918. He was buried with full military honors at Euston cemetery two days later.

The greatest sacrifice that we have made in this world-struggle is the loss of the comradeship and companionship of two of our most beloved brothers.

It will ever remain our pleasure to have known the splendid character of these men, and to cherish the memory of them as soldiers and friends.

The following officers were assigned to staff: 1st Lt. Harry C. Drayton, A. S., as officer in charge of flying; Capt. Mervyn F. Falk, A. S., engineering officer; 1st Lt. Theodore P. Davis, A. S., supply officer; 1st Lt. Edwin H. Fort, A. S., as photographic officer; 1st Lt. James W. Watts, Jr., A. S., as gunnery and armament officer, and 1st Lt. Howard J. Meyer, A. S., as radio and electrical officer. A headquarters detachment of officers was regularly established, and 1Lt. Frank B. Tidwell, F. A., a graduate observer, was placed temporarily in charge, with an office established for the carrying on of the administrative work in connection with that organization. All student officers were assigned to this, as were the pilots formerly assigned to the 89th Squadron. A post office was established in one end of an empty hut, and 2nd Lt. Leo G. McKinley, A. S., was placed in charge. Capt. Lester H. Spalding, A. S., reported September 17th, to superintend the new construction work, and the new building project was begun in earnest on September 30th, two days after the arrival of the 157th and 370th Aero Observation Squadrons. 1st Lt. W. F. Cunningham, A. S., and 1st Lt. James Hale, A. S., respectively commanding.

The remaining commissioned personnel of these two squadrons comprised the following officers: 1st Lt. E. J. Rowland, M. C., surgeon; 2nd Lts. Fred T. Cerney, A. S., supply officer; H. E. Bradford, A. S., engineering officer, and Fred C. Gatje, ord.; assigned to the 157th Aero Squadron. 1st Lt. Jeremiah A. Klotz, M. C.; 1st Lt. Jeff D. Gautier, A. S., supply officer; 2nd Lt. George T. Mathewson, A. S., engineering officer, and S. E. Rogers, ord.; armament officers of the 370th Aero Squadrons. These officers were assigned to the various departments of the school for duty, 2nd Lt. Bradford, A. S., taking over the work of transportation officer Lt. Klotz was relieved from duty at this school, October 18th, 1918.

Due to moving forward so rapidly we had out-grown our limited quarters, this was coupled with the fact that the 20th Co., 4th Regt, Motor Mechanics, the 157th and 370th Aero Squadrons were rushed from the reserve to our support in the Z. of A. Maj. Bowen and Lt. Falk then decided that to successfully wage a winning fight our field-of-endeavors should be enlarged immediately. Thanks to the willingness of the last three units to arrive in this sector, the necessary fortifications were erected and the Huns retreated; vive le C. A. S.

THE BATTLE OP AHMISTICE NOVEMBER 11. In this battle there was no preliminary fire by the cork artillery, usually headed by 370, 157 and 639 with a heavy barrage support from 89th Aero and 20th Company, but rather a spontaneous mass attack on the village intrenchments by the entire post. The news came at 9 o'clock and at one minute past nine the attack was launched. It was a hard-fought affair and all day long, far into the night, hostilities were carried to the very heart of the town. Men staggered here and there, wounded temporarily by the overwhelming strength of the enemy, but still carrying on the fight. With a stoutness of heart deserving of better success, they fought on and on, with never a thought of the final reckoning.

This battle proved conclusively what hundreds of minor engagements failed to teach the fact that there could be no victory over the alcoholic and diabolical forces of wine, women and more wine. Also, that a negotiated peace was out of the question. Lt. Bradford stated the matter exactly in his famous speech after the battle. He said: "Boys, it's a tough old war but we gotta go on."

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.