

432 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

89 Aero Squadron organized, 19 Aug 1917

Demobilized, 19 May 1919

89 Observation Squadron (Long Range, Light Bombardment) constituted, 1 Mar 1935

89 Aero Squadron reconstituted and consolidated with 89 Observation Squadron (Long Range, Light Bombardment), 1936

Redesignated 89 Reconnaissance Squadron, 24 Oct 1936

Redesignated 89 Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium Range), 22 Dec 1939

Activated, 1 Feb 1940

Redesignated 89 Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium), 20 Nov 1940

Redesignated 432 Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 22 Apr 1942

Inactivated, 26 Nov 1945

Redesignated 432 Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, and converted to provisional status, 16 Jan 2002

Withdrawn from provisional status, and redesignated 432 Bomb Squadron, 16 Feb 2007

Redesignated 432 Attack Squadron, 1 Sep 2011

Activated, 1 Oct 2011

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 19 Aug 1917
Garden City, NY, 6-27 Oct 1917
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 16 Nov 1917
Chatillon-sur-Seine, France, 17 Feb 1918 St
Nazaire, France, 14 Jan 1919-unkn
Garden City, NY, 25 Mar-19 May 1919 March
Field, CA, 1 Feb 1940
McChord Field, WA, 26 Jun 1940
Pendleton, OR, 29 Jun 1941
McChord Field, WA, 30 Dec 1941
Pendleton, OR, 24 Jan 1942
Lexington County Aprt, SC, 15 Feb 1942
Barksdale Field, LA, 22 Jun-18 Nov 1942
Telergma, Algeria, 22 Dec 1942
Sedrata, Algeria, 13 May 1943
Djedeida, Tunisia, 25 Jun 1943
Villacidro, Sardinia, 5 Nov 1943
Poretta, Corsica, 21 Sep 1944
Dijon, France, 22 Nov 1944
Linz, Austria, 18 Jun 1945
Zell-am-See, Austria, 4 Jul 1945
Clastres, France, 3 Oct-17 Nov 1945
Camp Myles Standish, MA, 25-26 Nov 1945
Ellsworth AFB, SD, 1 Oct 2011

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 19 Aug-Nov 1917
1 Air Depot, Nov 1917
2 Corps Aeronautical School, Feb 1918-Jan 1919
Unkn, Jan-19 May 1919
17 Bombardment Group: attached, 1 Feb 1940, assigned, 25 Feb 1942-26 Nov 1945
Pacific Air Forces to activate or inactivate at any time between 16 Jan 2002-16 Feb 2007
28 Operations Group, 1 Oct 2011

WEAPON SYSTEMS

AR and other type aircraft for training observers, 1918
Brequet 14 when preparing for combat, 1918
B-18, 1940
B-23, 1940

B-25, 1941

B-26, 1942

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 19 Aug 1917-11 Feb 1918

Maj Joseph T. McNarney, 12 Feb 1918-unkn

Unkn, 1 Feb 1940-unkn

Maj Robert T. Cronau, 1 Feb 1940

Capt John Hilger, 20 Mar 1941

Maj Donald F. Lehnard, unkn-5 Feb 1943

Maj Thomas F. Vickers, 6 Feb 1943

Maj Clayton C. Hill, 25 Jul 1943

Maj Alfred D. Belsma, 15 Oct 1943

Maj Joseph R. Buchert, 11 Dec 1943

Capt Henry E. Williams, 4 Mar 1944

Maj Robert B. Hughes, 31 Aug 1944

Lt Col Joseph F. Loftus, 17 Mar 1945

Maj Charles L. Miller, 20 Apr 1945

Maj Joseph T. McNarney

Lt Radcliffe Cheston, Jr.

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War I: Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Italy, 13 Jan 1944

Schweinfurt, Germany, 10 Apr 1945

French Croix de Guerre with Palm

Apr, May, and Jun 1944

EMBLEM

The front view of an American eagle in full flight



89 Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium Range): On a blue disc with golden orange border Mercury's helmet with exaggerated wings of golden orange and with decorative hat band and feathers of white. (Approved, 30 Jan 1940)

432 Attack Squadron: On a disc Azure, Mercury's helmet with exaggerated wings Tenné, highlighted Argent, detailed Sable, hatband of lozenges of the third, fimbriated of the fourth, all within a narrow border Orange. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Orange border and inscribed "432D ATTACK SQUADRON" in Orange letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue is one of the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. The helmet of Mercury signifies a courier and herald of news dispatched with great speed. The overall design is a symbol of the warrior using the special colors of the Air Corps.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Constructed facilities, maintained aircraft, and trained observers in Zone of Advance, 1917-1919; prepared for combat as observation unit in Ju11918, but never went to front. Antisubmarine patrols, 12 Dec 1941-c. Mar 1942. Combat in MTO and ETO, 31 Dec 1942-1 May 1945. German disarmament, Jun-Sep 1945.

Constructed facilities, maintained aircraft, and trained observers in Zone of Advance in France, 1917-1919; prepared for combat as observation unit in Jul 1918; but never went to the front. Antisubmarine patrols, 12 Dec 1941-c. Mar 1942. Combat in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO) and the European Theater of Operations (ETO), 31 Dec 1942-1 May 1945. Awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations (DUCs) for action in Europe: on 13 Jan 1944 for action over Ciampino, Italy and on 10 Apr 1945 for action over Schweinfurt, Germany. Participated in German disarmament, Jun-Sep 1945.

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Ever zealous to ascertain who had the nerve to call it "Sunny France," they arrived at Chatillon, in the rain, snow and hail on the night of 17 Feb 1918, after spending three months in the mud erecting the 1st Air Depot at Colombey-les-Belles.

At that time the school seemed one of those dreary, wild projects for which no one claimed responsibility, and for which no one apparently cared. The men were quartered about four kilometers from town in an old farmhouse, and for two months indulged in the pastime of removing rocks from the slush and mud on what was to be a future flying field.

After weeks of anxious waiting, five of those beautiful, justly celebrated, English "Nisson" hospital (tin) huts, noted for being the coldest proposition in winter and the most unbelievably hot structures in summer, were secured and with these and the addition of two "Adrain" barracks and four "Besseneau" hangars, which arrived complete except for the canvas covering, the necessary nuts to put them together, and most of the wall framework, the present 2nd Corps Aeronautical School started.

The engineering crew began operation on one of these queer-looking flying animals, consisting of a questionable fuselage perched perilously on a couple of knee braces, with stove bolts as fasteners, called an "A.R."

The first pilots to arrive were assigned to the 89 and they had the entire school to themselves until the arrival of additional squadrons in June. This was a thing that both men and officers

had been looking forward to, for the new units were to release the now experienced and wellorganized 89 for services at the front. This idea was fostered until the fall of 1918, when, sorely disappointed, the men, dug in, so to speak, for the winter with a definite idea of making this their permanent home.

And so they stuck it out at the "Battle of Chatillon" for the remainder of the war and were then rewarded by the director of the school by being chosen as the first to leave for the States, thereby adding another "first" to their already long list.

The activity of the squadron officers, past and present, forms considerable of the history of this battle. The commanding officer on the arrival was Maj. Joseph T. McNarney, who directed things in general until April, or practically until the arrival of the 639th. Lt. (Captain) Radcliffe Cheston, Jr., who brought the squadron overseas, was Post Adjutant until August, 1918, and he was the squadron boss until October, when he was taken sick and was relieved of command in January, 1919.

With the squadron from Colombey came Lts. Davis, A. S., and Miller, M. C. Lt. Davis as squadron supply officer, got his hand in on the greater duties of post supply officer, described elsewhere, and Lt. Miller furnished the "CC's" and the iodine for the squadron and later for the whole camp in his office of post medical officer. Lt. (Captain) Merwyn W. Falk, as engineering officer, was originally assigned to the 89. Always a great favorite with the men, his departure in October was a great loss.

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As stated, the original pilots were assigned to the squadron on the assumption that they were to serve with it at the front. Upon their reassignment to post staff duties they presented to the squadron a bronze tablet as illustrated herewith.

To Lt. McKinley, formerly of the 639th, and known about camp as information officer and post censor, was given the privilege and distinction of leading the boys of the 89 on their triumphant march home, on what was probably the second biggest day in their lives, January 12, 1919.

Constituted in the Regular Army on 1 March 1935 as the 89 Observation Squadron, assigned to the 15th Observation Group, and allotted to the Ninth Corps Area. Relieved from the Ninth Corps Area on 1 June 1936 and allotted to the Seventh Corps Area. Consolidated in October 1936 with the 89 Aero Squadron (a WWI unit organized on 19 August 1917 at Kelly Field, TX; demobilized on 19 May 1919 at Garden City, NY; reconstituted in October 1936). Redesignated as the 89 Observation Squadron (Long Range, Light Bombardment) on 24 October 1936 and assigned to the 1st Wing. Redesignated as the 89 Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium Range) on 22 December 1939. Activated on 1 February 1940 at March Field, CA, and attached to the 17th

Bombardment Group. Transferred on 26 June 1940 to McChord Field, WA. Transferred on 29 June 1941 to Pendleton, OR.

"THE BATTLE OF CHATILLON"

THE month of February, 1918, saw the transfer of the 89 Aero Squadron from Colom-bey les Belles, in the Toul sector, to the Chatillon sector, and unobserved by the Huns, they quietly took possession of their new billets. The next few weeks were spent in getting ready for the coming battle.

The zero hour was set for seven o'clock on the morning of March 28th. Lt. Falk took command, M. E. Buettner and his grease hounds holding the pivot; Sgt. Peterson and his chauifeurs hauling up ammunition, supplies and slum. Sgt. Dupy, in charge of the Motor Overhaul platoon, was working his men overtime on the "barkers of the air," in the form of rejuvenated Renault motors, while Sgt. "Slim" Barnes' platoon of screwdrivers and rip-saws afforded splendid support on both flanks. Not an aileron broke.

The battle raged, and in order to man the incoming Sops, G. H. Q. ordered more men; whereupon the 63Qth arrived in full battle array from the Toul battle sector, camouflaged with French dust. They were immediately assigned to the support of the 89 in the A. R. division. Boiler, Phoebus and Fraser were placed on the line, in liaison with Buettner, Morgan and Robbins of the 89.

Murphy and his gasoline eaters re-enforced Peterson, while Knutson, Quinn and Holz rendered invaluable aid to Dupy and his Motor Overhaul platoon. "Slim" Barnes sent in a call for aid, and Reifert, Pilgrim, Jessup and Demmon were immediately dispatched to the scene of action. In less than two weeks' time both squadrons were fighting side by side.

The increase in the size of the field called for a larger staff. Lt. Hanley went in as assistant to Lt. Falk, while Lt. Alliason took charge of the Motor Overhaul; Lt. Scovel took over Sgt. Barnes and his platoon; Lt. Larer created—for himself—the position of Property Officer and Lt. Cort was installed as Instrument Officer and Fire Marshal.

The condition on the field at this time was anything but pleasant, due to lack of supplies, particularly spare parts. This state of affairs was overcome only by the American spirit, "In union there is strength," and the boys were gluttons for work. Week-end sick leave was granted.

As a result of this cooperation, the battle progressed, with the 2nd C. A. S. well advanced in all departments, fulfilling all confidences placed in it. Owing to the increased number of transportation vehicles, Lt. Bradford, a Croix de Guerre winner, was placed in charge of Murphy and his gear-strippers, and the battle rolled merrily on, much to the embarrassment of those valiant ink-slingers, Byrne and Norton.

Due to moving forward so rapidly we had outgrown 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.

At this point of the war the chief of the air service saw fit to transfer Maj. Bowen and Lt. (now Captain) Falk. Good luck to them both. However, as much as they were missed, they were replaced by two splendid leaders, Lt.-Col. Charles C. Benedict, post commander, and Capt. Alexander McLeod, engineering officer.

Col. Benedict, although young in years, is an old hand at the war game and a flyer of no mean ability. It was a source of great joy to the men of the 63.9th to have their old C. O. at the head of the organization to lead them on once more. In the person of Capt. McLeod, we became possessed of a man who knows the engineering game forwards and backwards. Capt. McLeod came to this sector from the 7th A. I. C., where he established an enviable reputation. He has also seen service at the front all the way from Flanders to Toul.

In the month of October, D. H. 4 planes, equipped with Liberty motors, were assigned to this sector. From this date until November 11, 1918, when the Hun was brought to his knees, the "Yankee" spirit never lagged. The battle ceased in a blaze of glory and as the sun went down beyond the hills of Chatillon on the never-to-be-forgotten day, all trials and tribulations were salvaged.

The work accomplished by the men of this department entitles them to a Croix de Guerre, if not a pair of French hobnails. In view of the fact that the casualty list during this battle was less than one and one-half per cent, we humbly submit our petition for a U. S. D. S. C., we to furnish the ribbon.

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Ever zealous to ascertain who had the nerve to call it "Sunny France," they arrived at Chatillon, in the rain, snow and hail on the night of February 17, 1918, after spending three months in the mud erecting the 1st Air Depot at Colombey-les-Belles.

At that time the school seemed one of those dreary, wild projects for which no one claimed responsibility, and for which no one apparently cared. The men were quartered about four kilometers from town in an old farmhouse, and for two months indulged in the pastime of removing rocks from the slush and mud on what was to be a future flying field. After weeks of anxious waiting, five

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THE 2nd Corps Aeronautical School, authorized by the General Staff., February 8th, 1918, to provide for the training of aerial observers and, with their cooperation, the training of units of line troops in liaison between ground and air, is located on the outskirts of Chatillon-sur-Seine, a town 227 kilometers southeast of Paris in the Department Cote d'Or. Work on the flying field was begun by the 89 Aero Squadron. Maj. J. T. McNarney, A. S., commanding, the day following their arrival in Chatillon on February 17th. The squadron was quartered in a large farm some distance from the field, and it was a month after the field had been prepared before a few hangars were erected and accommodations provided for the comparatively small personnel needed to operate the school as it was then authorized. One barrack and a mess hall for student officers, two barracks and a mess hall for enlisted men, a small hospital, machine and blacksmith shops, a barrack for supplies, one for the armory and lecture room, a small radio station, a headquarters building and three hangars comprised the school when the first class of eleven student observers reported on May 18th. Staff officers, including pilots and instructors, were billeted in Chatillon.

Flight officer, 1st Lt. Harry C. Drayton, A. S., was taken seriously ill with pneumonia in October, and was not able to again resume his duties, being returned to the States. The early part of January, 1919, 1st Lt. John T. Fancher, A. S., assumed charge of flying, and on December 30th, was detailed as officer in charge of flying and assigned to the staff. Capt. Radcliff'e Cheston, Jr., A. S., of the 89 Aero Squadron, was also taken dangerously ill in October, and was relieved of further duty at the school for return to the States on January 13th, 1919, after an extended sick leave.

As a reward for their past excellent and long service with the A. E. F., amounting to one year and two months, Lt. Col. C. C. Benedict released the 89 Squadron from further duty and they departed for the port of embarkation on the 12th of January, under the command of Lt. McKinley, formerly of the 639th Squadron, who was placed in command on December 30th, 1918. With the squadron, Lts. Miller, Rogers and Butcher departed. 1st Lt. Omer O. Gain, M. C., who reported to the school as post surgeon on June 24th, was placed in charge of the infirmary. Two days before the declaration of the Armistice a fatal accident in Sopwith 63 caused the instant deaths of 2nd Lt. J. W. Buckley, pilot, and 1st Lt. H. E. Clark, observer, near Veuxhalles. A forced landing of a Liberty plane, on January 24th, 1919, caused the death of pilot, 2nd Lt. Charles O'Neill, A. S. In a collision with a Salmson over Le Tracy February 20th, 1919, 1st Lt. C. L. Gustafson and 1st Lt. R. B. Messer, were instantly killed. The order making Lt. Gustafson a captain was published the next day.

The history of flying on this field is a very interesting one. Planes began to arrive at this field on April 1, 1918, at which time the 89 Squadron had erected three hangars and the engineering building, besides their barracks and the few necessary additional supply and headquarters buildings. Eighteen pilots came a few days later and on the morning of April 17th they began the preliminary flying on this field. Daily flights were carried on over the country, locating the main points for future operations, picking out distinctive landmarks and comparing the map with the actual conditions in this territory. The pilots had had but a few hours in the air at that time and no experience with the A. R. type of planes, so these flights gave opportunity for training and the days were spent practicing landings, formations, spirals and other manoeuvring necessary in the game of flying.

The increase in the size of the field called for a larger staff. Lt. Hanlcy went in as assistant to Lt. Falk, while Lt. Alliason took charge of the Motor Overhaul; Lt. Scovel took over Sgt. Barnes and his platoon; Lt. Larer created—for himself—the position of Property Officer and Lt. Cort was installed as Instrument Officer and Fire Marshal.

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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 89 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."

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USAF UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.