

2nd BALLOON SQUADRON

LINEAGE

Company B, 2nd Balloon Squadron organized, 25 Sep 1917

Redesignated 2nd Balloon Company, 19 Jun 1918

Redesignated Balloon School Detachment, 30 Aug 1921

Demobilized, 15 Aug 1922

2nd Balloon Company constituted, 18 Oct 1927

Activated on 20 May 1930

Balloon School Detachment and 2nd Balloon Company consolidated, 6 Aug 1930

Redesignated 2nd Balloon Squadron, 1 Oct 1933

Disbanded, 3 Feb 1942

STATIONS

Ft Omaha, NE, 25 Sep 1917

Garden City, NY, 30 Nov-7 Dec 1917

Camp de Coetquidan, Morbihan, France, 3 Jan 1918

Camp de l'Ermitage (near Menil-la-Tour), France, 26 Feb 1918

Villiers-sur-Marne, Aisne, France, 30 Jun 1918

La Goneterie Ferme (near Bouresches), France, 22 Jul 1918

Trugny (near Epieds), France, 25 Jul 1918

Beuvarde, France, 28 Jul 1918

Seringes-et-Nesles, France, 3 Aug 1918

Chery-Chartreuve, France, 4 Aug 1918

Courcelles-sur-Vesle, France, 12 Aug 1918

La Queue de Theinard (near Domevre-en-Haye), France, 23 Aug 1918

Bois de Remenauvaux (near Griscourt), France, 29 Aug 1918

Bois de la Lampe (near Mamey), France, 12 Sep 1918

St Pierre Ferme (near Fey-en-Haye), France, 15 Sep 1918

Locheres, France, 22 Sep 1918

Varennes-en-Argonne, France, 28 Sep 1918

Cheppy, France, 2 Oct 1918

Charpentry, France, 10 Oct 1918
Apremont, France, 15 Oct 1918
Chatel-Chehery, France, 25 Oct 1918
Sommerance, France, 2 Nov 1918
St Juvin, France, 3 Nov 1918
Buzancy, France, 4 Nov 1918
Sommauthe, France, 6 Nov 1918
Authe, France, 7 Nov 1918
Les Petites Armoises, France, 8 Nov 1918
Auzeville-en-Argonne, France, 11 Nov 1918
Mercy-le-Haut, France, 21 Nov 1918
Euren, Germany, 8 Dec 1918
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 20 May 1919
Mitchel Field, NY, 23 Jun 1919
Ross Field, CA, Aug 1919
Scott Field, IL, 3 Jul-15 Aug 1922
Scott Field, IL, 20 May 1930
Ft Bragg, NC, 19 Jun 1930
Pope Field, NC, 1933-3 Feb 1942

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 25 Sep 1917-Jul 1918
Balloon Wing, I Army Corps, Jul 1918
Balloon Group, I Army Corps, 8 Oct 1918
Balloon Group, IV Army Corps, 20 Nov 1918
Balloon Group, VII Army Corps, 27 Apr-11 May 1919
Unkn, 11 May-Aug 1919
Balloon School, Ross Field, CA (later Air Service Balloon Observers School), Aug 1919-15 Aug 1922
Sixth Corps Area, 20 May 1930
First Army, 30 Dec 1940
I Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941-3 Feb 1942

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Type R observation balloon, 1918-1919
C-3 observation balloon, 1930-1939
C-6 observation balloon, 1938
A-6
A-7 spherical balloons

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

Maj Max C. Fleischmann
LT Allan P. McFarland, 9 Jan 1918
Cpt William O. Butler, 1 Mar 1918
LT Allan P. McFarland, 1 Jun 1918
1LT Ira R. Koenig 11 Aug 1918
Cpt George F. Parris, Dec 1919-15 Jan 1921
1LT Bruce N. Martin, 24 Jan 1921
Cpt Warner B. Gates, 25 Jul 1921-31 May 1922
1LT William R. Turnbull, 20 May 1930
Cpt Alfred I. Puryear, 26 Jun 1930
1LT William R. Turnbull, 2 Aug 1930
Cpt Alfred I. Puryear, 16 Sep 1930
1LT Joseph W. Benson, 12 Aug 1933
Maj Joseph W. Benson, 1 Oct 1933
Cpt Robert R. Selway, 21 Dec 1937
Cpt Sheldon B. Edwards, 1 Jul 1938
Maj Neal Creighton, 25 Sep 1938
Maj Joseph W. Benson, 15 Dec 1939

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Lorraine
Ile-de-France
Champagne-Marne
Aisne-Marne
Champagne
St. Mihiel
Meuse-Argonne

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

None

EMBLEM

None

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The history of this company, like that of many other balloon companies, began at Fort Omaha, NE. All of the men had had several months' training prior to 12 Sep 1917, when we were officially organized as Company B of the Second Balloon Squadron under the command of Major Max C. Fleischmann. During the following two months, our company was brought up to a high standard of efficiency, through the concerted efforts of our Commander and LT John H. Jouett.

With the other companies of the Second Squadron, we left Fort Omaha, NE, 27 Nov 1917, for the concentration camp at Garden City, having as our officers, Maj Fleischmann, Commanding, and LT Allan P. McFarland, LT Stuart W. Kellogg, LT Ira R. Koenig and LT Frederic J. Grant. The command was taken by trolley to 16th and Howard Sts. Where a band from Fort Crook led the way to the Great Western Railroad Station and at 1600 the squadron was entrained. The balloon and transportation equipment was to follow the command. The stay at Garden City was a very short one much to our desire, for we left there by train 7 Dec 1917, and journeyed to St. John, N. B., Canada, arriving 10 Dec 1917. Immediately upon our arrival, we embarked on the S. S. Tunisian for Halifax, Nova Scotia, where we steamed into the harbor on 12 Dec 1917, five days after the explosion which destroyed a part of that city.

After lying inside for three days we commenced an uneventful voyage that finally landed us in Liverpool Harbor, Christmas morning. From Liverpool, we took the train to Southampton, spending a cold, miserable night at that place, sleeping on the ground with only a tent for shelter. 27 Dec again saw us on board boat which took us across the Channel for a safe but wild ride, landing us at Le Havre, France, early the next morning.

Our stay at this French port lasted only four days and then on 1 Jan 1918, the company entrained for Camp de Coetquidan in Southwestern France, which was an American Artillery Training Camp, where we arrived 3 Jan 1918. Company getting settled in quarters, infantry drills, simulated balloon drills. Officers receiving instructions in French Systems or maps and observation at the Artillery School of Instruction.

9 Jan Balloon and equipment arrives. Major Max C. Fleischman departs. Lt Allan McFarland now CO

9-23 Jan Balloon Co engaged on work of building balloon bed and road into balloon field, construction of barracks for riggers, guard, etc.

On 23 Jan 1918, we got into the air for the first time on French soil. Trail ascent in ballast, altitude of 100 meters made to test rigging. This marked the first American balloon ascension in the American Expeditionary Forces. From this date until we left for the front, we were under French instructors and were constantly training with our artillery. Work seriously hampered by lack of motor transportation, lack of materials and by unfavorable weather.

The first companies to arrive were distributed as follows Co A and D of 2nd Squadron to camp Souge. Co B to camp Coetquidan. Company C to Cuperly (Marne) for the established of the balloon school. The squadron HQ Maj John a Paegelow commanding was located at Camp Souge with the two Companies. Companies A and B inflated their balloon and had them in ascension on the same day, 23 Jan 1918 dividing the honors of having the first American military balloon in ascension in France. The time required for initial inflation of the balloons after arrival of companies at their stations was due

entirely to railway congestion delaying the shipment of compressed hydrogen

28 Jan Ascent at 0951 Lt Seville, French Army and Lt McBrayne, 102 Reg, FA, Observers ranged 17 shots for Battery A, 102 Regiment, Field Artillery. 16 Shots for Battery B, 102 Regiment, Field Artillery, 9 shots for Battery D, 102 Regiment, Field Artillery, 12 shots for Battery F, 102 Regiment, 32 shots for Battery E, 102 Regiment, Field Artillery, 10 shots for Battery C, 102 Regiment Field Artillery, Descent at 1307 firing finished.

It was not long before the instructors felt that we were ready for active service. So on 23 Feb, we began a three-day ride that ended at the Toul Front.

On 26 Feb 1918, the 2nd Balloon Company moved into position near Royamieux, northwest of Toul, relieving a French Company. It was assigned to the 1st Division, 1st Corps, for work. Upon arrival of the 2nd Balloon Company at the front, it was inspected by the assistants of the Chief of Air Service, 1st Army Corps resulting in unfavorable reports. These consisting principally of the following: company strength below 170 prescribed by Tables of Organization; no machine guns, no machine gunners trained, lookouts untrained, and officers of the company without previous experience at the front. These deficiencies were well known to the officers in charge, Balloon section when the company was reported as ready for transfer from Camp Coetquidan to the Zone of the Armies and provision had been made in advance which would properly correct all of these deficiencies. The request for orders transferring this company contemplated that it would be sent to a quiet sector for battle training under general supervision of LTC Lahm and the particular supervision of the officers and NCOs of a French balloon company, complete arrangements for which had been made in advance by the balloon office, Z of A. Unfortunately, when the travel order was issued, the company commander was directed to report to the commanding general, 1st Corps for duty thereby placing the company under the chief of Air Service, 1st Corps instead of under direction of Air Service Z of A for battle training.

Specialists from French units remained with our balloon companies until the men had become sufficiently adept, which ordinarily required but a short time. After our own companies had been thus trained they themselves undertook the training of newly arriving American balloon units. The mission of these balloon companies was to regulate artillery fire, to locate targets, to report all activity within the enemy lines by day and, when possible, by night.

20 Feb, No ascension in the morning on account of very poor visibility. Ascent in the afternoon for the purpose of dropping parachute, first one dropped from altitude of 250 meters, tension 360, wind velocity 6 meters per sec. Parachute functioned properly but landed in a tree and was damaged. Second one dropped from altitude on 350 meters tension 280, wind velocity 9 meters per second. Parachute functioned properly and made a successful landing.

5 Mar, Balloon ascended in morning at 0835, Cpt W O Butler and Lt Miller observers, visibility limited. Balloon descended at 0922 account poor visibility. At 1407 balloon ascended Capt Butler and Lt Sedgwick observers. Enemy balloon observed. Two enemy aeroplanes in the north. Artillery adjustment impossible. Balloon ascended 1457. One and half hour class in aeroplane spotting.

8 Mar Observation suspended in the morning account of poor visibility and low hanging clouds. Observers Cpt Butler and Lt Miller. Aeroplane spotting class held for one and half hours.

13 Mar No balloon ascensions in the morning of heavy fog. Machine gunners taken to Toul for practice in firing in the morning. Liaison with 34th Balloon Company by CO and with artillery HQ by Lt Sedgwick. A meeting of Division Intelligence officers attended by Lt Sedgwick. Balloon ascended 1315 observers cpt Butler and Lt Eaton. Visibility good. Balloon descended 1422 changed observers to LT Oddou and Lt Miller. Balloon descended at 1519.

18 Mar, Company held at field ready for ascension but heavy mist prevented balloon operation, in morning. Basket parachute tested out at 1210 with very successful results. Balloon ascended at 1442, Observers Cpt Butler and Lt Miller. Visibility poor. Observers changed at 1504. Maj Paegelow and Lt Miller. Ascension made by Mr. Larned of Air Service Investigating Committee with Cpt Butler. Trips also taken by officers accompanying him. Balloon descended at 1718. Night ascension, balloon ascended 2115, observer Lt McFarland. Visibility mediocre. Balloon descended 2234. Liaison made with Battalion McCormick by the CO. Liaison with Artillery HQ by the Intel officer

28 Mar, Machine gunners gave instructions in morning by expert from ordnance department. Balloon ascended 1235 observers Lt McFarland and Sedgwick. Visibility 7 kilometers. Balloon forced down 3 times by enemy planes. Enemy balloon seen in ascension from ground. Regulation with battery D-34 at 1545. Balloon forced down at 1556 by enemy plane in north. Balloon ascended 1605 and continued adjustment. Regulation finished at 1615. Balloon descended 1710. Small balloon bearing propaganda for the enemy sent up at intervals during the day. No Liaison.

At the time of our arrival on the Front, the line was held by the First Division to whom we were assigned. During the few weeks that they were there, we worked at every opportunity with the artillery. Then on 3 Apr they were relieved by the 26th Division with whom we worked until 26 Jun. At no time did the Front get real lively, as the sector was mainly used for training purposes, although the battles of Foret de Apremont, Seicheprey and Xivray took place. The enemy planes bothered us but very little while enemy artillery disturbed our work only in a few instances.

5 Apr, Balloon taken from bed at 0618 observers Lt Sedgwick. Altitude 1375 meters. Many enemy balloons observed. Balloon forced down by enemy planes at 0906, 0950, 1142 and 1230. Balloon placed in bed at 1235. Balloon ascended 1349 observer Cpt Butler. Operations of enemy balloon observed. Balloon descended 1712. No Liaison. Lt Miller Wagner and Eaton depart for Artillery Instruction School.

On 1 Jun LT McFarland again took command of the company, relieving Captain Butler.

Then again came the rapid events that took place at Chateau-Thierry, but not until 26 Jun were we started for that sector with our friends, the 26th Division. However, we arrived there a week or so before the rest of the division, and consequently set to work with the Second Division then holding the line west of Chateau-Thierry. Our position was at Villers-sur-Marne, exactly four kilometers from the front line at the time of our arrival, but the attack upon Vaux, 1 Jul took the line one kilometer farther away.

We were unable during the attack on Vaux to put the balloon into the air on account of orders, still an American observer and several of our men were sent to a French balloon company then in that sector

in order to assist our artillery in the attack.

27 Jun, No ascensions account of poor visibility. Equipment being packed preparatory to change of station. Balloon not deflated, being exchanged for a balloon already deflated with the relieving company: Co, D, 2nd Balloon Squadron. Left Camp de l'Ermitage near menil le Tour at 1900 Jun 27 for Villiers sur Marne per verbal orders CO, 2nd Balloon Sq. Liaison None. Change of station being overland in trucks.

28 Jun En route to Lilliers Sur Marne, Stopped about 0600 for breakfast and short rest. Started again about 1000 and traveled all day Camping at night in a small wood near Sezanne.

29 Jun, Broke camp at 0600. Arrived Courcelles about 1030. Pitched camp near Courcelles remaining there balance of day while final arrangement were being made for the company to move up to the front.

30 Jun, Remained in Camp at Courcelles until 1200 when company broke camp and started for Villiers sur Marne, arriving at latter place with all equipment about 1700.

1 Jul, Getting company located in new quarters and unpacking equipment.

2 Jul Balloon inflated and made trial flight under ballast. No Ascension for observation made. 144 tubes of gas used.

3 Jul, Balloon inflated previous day deflated account leaking badly and another balloon inflated making trial flight under ballast in the afternoon. No flights for observation made account poor visibility. 42 extra tubes of gas used in inflating second balloon. Liaison with G-2 and G-3 Division HQ 17th Field Artillery, 3rd Battalion 17th Field Artillery and Chief Signal Officer, 2nd Division by the Commanding Officer and Intelligence Officer.

6 Jul, Balloon ascended 0947 observers Lt Murphy and Sedgwick visibility poor. Balloon descended 1020 balloon ascended 1137 same observers visibility 8 kilometers for observance only. Balloon attacked 1240 by enemy plane. Both observers jumped and landed safely. Balloon set on fire and burned by bullets from machine gun of enemy plane. New balloon secured from French Park inflated and made trial flight under ballast at 2145 same day. Two ascensions, no adjustment, no Liaison, 148 tubes of gas used for new balloon. LT Leo M. Murphy and LT Malcolm A. Sedgwick were the observers on that occasion and both made successful jumps. Balloon 74 burned.

Then on 15 Jul an unusual incident occurred. Late in the afternoon five French Spad planes flew slowly in the direction of our balloon. Because of the fact that they were clearly identified as Allied planes, no one paid any particular attention to them. In fact our observers, when the planes came close enough to the balloon, waved to the pilots in the planes. In answer all five planes opened fire in order as they circled the balloon, barely giving the observers a chance to escape. Either the pilots of the planes had become lost or else they were German pilots using French planes that had been captured in the German advance. Balloon 1211 burned. Balloon ascended 0601, observer Lt Phelps. Balloon descended 0607, low clouds. Balloon ascended 0915 observers Lts Patterson and Phelps. 1130 began adjusting Battery Walk A-32 on Target 77.59-61.80 began adjusting Battery Walk A-32 on target

77.59-61.80 completed 1200, 20 shots all observed. 1305 began adjusting Battery Walk A-31 on target 77.59-61.80, complete 1343, 11 shots 8 observed. Adjustment discontinued at 1343 account enemy plane towards balloon causing observers to jump both landing safely. Balloon ascended 1545 observers Lt Patterson and Phelps. 1620 began adjusting Battery Walk K-3. Completed 15, 35, 18 shots all observed. 3 ascension, 5 adjustments. Liaison with Army corps intelligence by intelligence officer and division intelligence by observer 3 tubes of gas added to balloon.

16 Jul Balloon ascended 1516 observers Lt Henry and Dungan visibility good. At 1600 Spads Planes sighted in the northeast coming directly toward the balloon. They were fired upon and returned toward the German lines.

The 2nd Balloon Company took active part in the operations north of Chateau—Thierry during the latter part of Jul 1918, while serving with the 1st Army Corps. Both these companies kept up with the advance at all times, the 2nd Company building six different balloon sheds within 10 days.

All through the weeks preceding the Marne counter-offensive, we worked continually with our artillery. The noise, the increase in work, and the atmosphere that goes with a new sector seemed to put life into the men, making us ready and fit for what was to follow.

Yet things did not begin in real earnest until the Marne counter-offensive got under full swing after 18 Jul The company first advanced to Gonetre Farm, where we operated for three days. At first telephone connections were impossible so until they were established we controlled artillery fire by means of a courier going from our position to the batteries. From then on we pressed forward, keeping always in close touch with the artillery of both the 26th and 42d Divisions and also that of the Corps. Throughout the entire advance the balloon was kept in the air without the loss of a single one. At no time were the roads perfect while often we were forced to repair them by filling in shell holes and constructing temporary bridges. In all, we traveled sixty-five kilometers or about forty miles, passing through Boiresches, Epieds, Beuvarde, Villers-sur-Fere, Fere-en-Tardenois, and to La Cruaus Farm which is one kilometer southwest of Chery-Chartreuve.

1 Aug, Balloon ascended 0511 observer LT Henry balloon descended 0529 poor visibility. Balloon ascended 0652, observer Lt Henry. Balloon descended 0729 poor visibility, Balloon ascended 1050 observer Lt Henry. Balloon descended 1101 and ascended again at 1142 same observer. Balloon attacked by enemy plane at 1408 but driven off by machine gun fire balloon descended 1415 and ascended again at 1423 same observer. 1503 began adjusting Battery D-148C. A. on target southwest corner of Lee Bons Hommes Farm. First two shots fired were lost account other batteries firing on same target and discontinued.

7 Aug, Balloon ascended 1124 observers Lt Phelps visibility poor. Balloon descended 1147 balloon ascended 1354 observers Lt Phelps and Montgomery. Balloon descended 1431 account approach of a fleet of enemy planes. Balloon ascended 1505 observers Lt Phelps and Montgomery. Balloon attacked by 12 enemy planes and burned at 1630 both observers jumped and landed safely. 1Lt G. Phelps and 2Lt H. E. Montgomery jumped balloon 134 burned. New Balloon secured and ready for inflation.

Time and time again during the fight, we had trouble with enemy planes. Instead of coming at us singly, the planes came in groups numbering from three to twelve planes. On 10 Aug seven enemy

planes attacked us at once and after a desperate battle with our machine gunners they decided to withdraw. Again, only a few hours later, twelve came over the line at us in a ladder formation, the lowest plane making the attack on the balloon while the remaining eleven planes directed their fire against the company in general and the machine gun posts in particular. At the same time the company was under shell fire which was escaped by skillful maneuvering of the balloon. The planes finally, after several attempts, succeeded in setting the bag on fire. Observation balloon work during the Chateau-Thierry advance was exceedingly difficult and dangerous owing to the fact that the German planes practically controlled the air

The drive by 12 Aug had quieted, down, so with the rest of the First Army. For about a week we lay at Courcelles and then took trucks for the Toul Sector arriving at position held by the Sixth Balloon Company, 24 Aug There we stayed under cover of the woods until the night of 28 Aug when we journeyed over to the Seventh Balloon Company's position near Griscourt, relieving them the following morning.

The 2nd Balloon Company, stationed at Bois de Remenauville, was given a special mission, as advance surveillance balloon. It was ordered to maneuver to a point within four kilometers of the line, the night before the attack. Its duties were to report directly to the First Army Corps, message center, the progress of operations on the whole Corps front. It was to spot all enemy batteries and report the activity of the enemy artillery. It was also ordered to follow closely the progress of our infantry and tanks.

3 Sep 1918 2Lt Frank Henry and Sgt S. C. Burham jumped balloon not burned.

The Second Companies were in ascension throughout the day, making excellent reports on enemy activity and shell fire, but no adjustment of artillery was possible. An allied plane, flying at a low altitude, hit the cable of the Second Balloon Co. a short distance below the warning cone, and crashed to the ground not far from the winch position, killing both pilot and observer.

This new sector proved to be the quietest one we had ever been on. Hardly a sound was heard from the artillery, day or night. The quietness, however, we soon found out was not to be for long, for on the night of 12 Sep reduction of the St. Mihiel salient began. Everything went through on schedule time so that the drive proved an easy one—really just a push for occupation. Yet in the few days that we were in that sector the usual work of adjusting, watching enemy batteries and troops and reporting to Headquarters information of importance was kept up as far as weather conditions would permit. In order that an efficient liaison might be continually maintained between the balloons and the divisional artillery with which they were working, an observer was sent from each company to the divisional artillery headquarters, and kept on continuous duty there during the hours of daylight. The Balloon Wing Commander ordered the companies to ascend at dawn the morning of the attack, and to remain in the air during the hours of daylight, weather and visibility permitting. Unfortunately visibility was so poor on the morning of September 12th that observation was impossible. The same was true of the following day, although late in the afternoon of the 13th the Second Balloon Co. ascended and observed on our artillery fire.

14 Sep, Balloon ascended 0920, observer Lt Dungan visibility good. At 1045 Salmson plane no 17 ran into our cable at 325 meters altitude short distance below the warning cone. Plane fell killing both

pilot and observer. Cable damaged no damaged to balloon. Balloon descended.

On 15 Sep all the companies of the Wing were in ascension, giving lengthy reports on general observations, covering enemy movements, hostile and friendly fire. Balloon descended 0648 to change observers. Balloon ascended 0705 observers Lt Dungan. 0947 enemy balloon burned. 1115 began adjusting battery C-60th CAC on target 368.9-245.35, 20 shots, completed 1215, all observed. Balloon attacked and burned by enemy plane, at noon, 2Lt H. E. Dugan jumped balloon 264 burned. Changed station to 371.700-324.800 and prepared to inflate balloon. One ascension one adjustment no liaison. No gas used.

The first position allotted to us was close up to the "jump-off" line for the infantry, in fact it was only a little more than, a thousand meters from the closest point of the German front line trenches. The advance to this point was made during the early part of the night of the attack, in order to be in position when the infantry went over the top early in the morning. Throughout the maneuvering a heavy storm was in progress with a high wind and a steady downpour of rain. This, together with the extreme darkness and traffic conditions, and the villages through which we had to pass, with their numerous overhead wires, made the maneuvering of the balloon to this advanced position one of the most difficult tasks we encountered while in service at the Front. The day after we reached that position we lost our fourth balloon. Then we made the only other advance that was necessary during the drive and that was close to Pont-a-Mousson which was practically the pivoting point of the drive. During the early part of the fight we worked with the Fifth Division and then later with the Artillery of the 78th Division.

The weather during the first two days of the attack prohibited the regulation of artillery fire. The balloons, on subsequent days, however, conducted important and successful adjustments. On 16 Sep the 2nd Company regulated 157 shots for batteries of 155s.

19 Sep brought us new orders, so we packed up late in the evening, finally getting under way about midnight for our new station near Clermont-en-Argonne, where we arrived the evening of the next day. There we lay under cover until the 26th, carrying out no operations whatsoever. Then on the morning of 26 Sep began the Argonne-Meuse drive which was a fight for our troops from beginning to end. Weather conditions throughout the entire drive were against us, for it was only a couple of days at a time that we were able to use the balloon. Nevertheless we worked on the good days to the very limit of the time allotted us by the weather man. At first we were attached to the 35th Division and then to the First, 42d, 82d, 77th and 80th as the drive progressed.

From 26 Sep to Nov we lived under the most trying conditions, without any relief. Weeks passed when we were working and sleeping in mud six inches deep. During those trying days it was seldom that we were dry. Two French balloon companies and one American company were put out of action on account of sickness, but we managed, probably through luck, to stick it out.

26 Sep, Balloon inflated and ascended at 0715 Lt Moe and Dungan, General offensive along considerable portion of front has started and progressing favorable. Balloon descended 1332 to change observers an ascended with Lt Fox and Henry observing. 1418 two American balloons to our right burned burning balloon falling on one parachute, observer killed. 1535 enemy plane burned two more allied balloons on our right. Balloon descended 1805. Two ascension, no adjustment. Mission, general

surveillance, 152 tubes of gas used to inflate new balloon and added during day.

Maneuvering was often very difficult as the traffic on account of road conditions was very congested. One night is well remembered by the men. We began a new move forward late in the afternoon but as traffic was jammed, we succeeded in covering only about one-half the distance to our position. For several hours we waited for an opening in the traffic but none came. By this time darkness had settled, a strong wind had come up, yet the old bag sailed steadily in the upper currents. Still we waited while the wind changed from, the steady kind to a very gusty one. Immediately trouble began for us. In the first place-there were only some forty or fifty men there to handle the balloon, as the rest had gone on earlier to make ready the new position. It was finally decided to try to get the bag to the ground and bed her down with what men were present. In turning around, it took all the men that could, be placed on one side of the winch to straighten it out on the road and keep it from being dragged sideways into the ditch. Credit must be given to the winch crew that night for it was their careful playing of the cable that finally got the balloon in a fair condition down within reach of the men. From then on it was a fight for the men to bed her. Yet, somehow it was accomplished, but even then we could not leave the balloon to the wind which was trying its best to rip her loose from her moorings. All night long, we watched every rope, standing in the rain and wind, only to find when the dawn had broken that the old bag had seen her last, for rope after rope was broken, seams were strained and the gas through the night had diminished to about half. The only thing possible was done, so we deflated and turned in the remains for salvage. About two weeks later we lost our fifth balloon.

23 Oct, Balloon ascended 0636, observers Lt Henry and Sgt Burnham, visibility poor. Balloon descended 0655 Balloon ascended 0953, Observers Lt Henry and Sgt Burham 1145 began adjusting Battery F-59 with 2 shots both observed. 1150 began adjusting Battery B-319th Field Artillery on target in conjunction with Battery F-59th CAC 10 shots for F. Battery, all observed, 6 shots observed for Battery B, completed 1232. Third balloon on our right burned by enemy plane, 1240 began adjusting battery F-59th on center of town of St George, 10 shots, all observed. Balloon descended to change observers. Balloon ascended 1336 observers Lt Batten and Sgt Pollard visibility 9 kilometers for adjustments. 1425 began adjusting Battery C-59th CAC on target 304.5-289.1, 4 shots all observed. 1503 began adjusting Battery C-59th CAC on target, 8 shots, 8 observed. Balloon descended 1610 to change observers. Balloon ascended 1619, observers Lt Batten, Passengers Maj Wallace. Balloon burned 1635 by enemy plane both observer and passenger jumped and landed safely. Three ascensions, 5 adjustments. 6 Tubes of gas used. Liaison with balloon group HQ by CO, G-2, G-3, 82nd Division, 157th Artillery Brigade, HQ and 319th Field Artillery headquarters by intelligence officer.

29 Oct, Balloon ascended 1457, observers Lt Gweeny and Sgt Burnham visibility poor and balloon descended 1520. One ascension no adjustment 8 French tubes of gas used. Liaison with CO and artillery liaison officers of 164th Infantry Brigade, 82nd Division HQ. 157th Artillery Brigade HQ Communications officer of 152nd Artillery Brigade of 77th Division Co 305th Field Artillery of 77th Division and AIS 1st Corps by Intelligence Officer, PFC Oscar M. Parry slightly wounded by machine gun fire from enemy plane, sent to hospital.

After 2 Nov 2 the infantry made such rapid progress, that every other branch of service had great difficulty in keeping up. Balloons were no exception, nevertheless, our company kept on the road of advance just as much as conditions would allow. We passed through, during this advance, Varennes, Charpentry, Apremont, Chatele Chehery, Somerance, St. Juvin, Buzancy, Authe, and to Saummuthe

where we received instructions to proceed to Yonoq via Les Petite Armoises on account of blocked traffic and mined roads. On arriving at the latter place we received notice to wait there until further orders. These came on 10 Nov and by the time the Armistice went into effect next morning we were well on our way to Auzeville just southeast of Clermont-en-Argonne.

12 Nov, Company in camp Auzeville, France, The following is a routine of work and calls while in camp: All motor transportation including trailers will be put into the best condition possible. All balloon equipment will be checked and cleaned into the supply park.

This relief from the Front on account of the cessation of hostilities was the first permanent relief from active service in nearly nine months. The last five months on the Front, except in just a few instances, the men never slept under any shelter but that of "pup tents."

Although our stay at Auzeville was short, it proved long enough for the men to clean up and put themselves in the best of condition for whatever might be required of them. On 21 Nov as a part of the Fourth Army Corps of the Third Army, we commenced our advance into Germany, finally taking up our station at Trier, Germany, on 8 Dec 1918.

Arrival in France Dec. 28, 1917

Arrival at the front Feb. 26, 1918

Days ascensions made in S.O.S 19

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A 154

Total days ascensions made 173

Number of ascensions made in S.O.S. 55

Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A. 316

Total number of ascensions made 371

Total number of hours in air S.O.S. 47.46

Total number of hours in air Z.O.A. 529.00

Total number of hours in the air 576.46

Artillery adjustments in S.O.S. 18

Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A 106

Total number or artillery adjustments 124

Enemy shells observed 518

Enemy aircraft observed 2211

Enemy balloons observed 371

Enemy artillery batteries observed 121

Enemy traffic on road and railroad observed 165

Smoke, fires and flares observed 182

Explosions observed 318

Jumps from basket 12

Balloons attacked 8

Balloons burned 4

Balloons destroyed

Observers killed

Observers captured

Arrived at the port of New York, NY, on 22 June 1919 on the U.S.S. Patria as Balloon Company No. 2. Transferred to Garden City, NY, and arrived there on the same day. Transferred on 11 August 1919 to Ross Field, Arcadia, CA, and assigned to the Army Balloon School.

Participated in surveillance of forested area in southern California for purpose of spotting fires, Aug-Nov 1919.

Reorganized on 1 October 1921 and redesignated as the Air Service Balloon School. Further redesignated as the Air Service Balloon School Detachment 19 December 1921. Demobilized on 31 May 1922 at Ross Field.

Constituted in the Regular Army on 18 October 1927 as the 2nd Balloon Company, allotted to the Eighth Corps Area, and assigned to the 26th Balloon Group. Fort Sam Houston, TX, designated as headquarters on organization, but the unit was never organized at that location.

Withdrawn from the Eighth Corps Area on 1 September 1928 and allotted to the Sixth Corps Area. Organized on 20 May 1930 at Pope Field, Fort Bragg, NC, and attached to Headquarters, Fourth Corps Area.

Supported activities of the Coast Artillery Barrage Balloon Training Center at Camp Davis, NC, 1940-1941.

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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.