

14th BALLOON COMPANY

LINEAGE

Balloon Company No. 14 organized Jan 1918
14th Balloon Company
Redesignated Balloon Company No. 14 (Coast Defense), 13 Sep 1921
Inactivated, 13 Oct 1921
Redesignated 14th Balloon Company, 12 Feb 1923
Organized, Jun 1930
Inactivated, Jun 1932
Demobilized, 1 Oct 1933

STATIONS

Fort Omaha Ne
Camp Morrison, VA, Jul 1918
Port of Embarkation, Jul 1918
Europe, Jul 1918
Mitchel Field, NY, Aug 1919
Garden City, NY, 1919
Fort Omaha, NE, 8 Sep 1919-20
Crissey Field, CA, 14 Apr 1920-21
Camp Lewis, WA, 6 May 1921
Inactive 1921-30
Chicago, IL, 1930-32
Inactive 1932-33

ASSIGNMENTS

Sixth Army Corps, 21 Nov 1918
25th Balloon Group, 8 May 1929

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

1LT Aiden J. Gorman, 21 Jan 1918
1LT John J. Dillon, 1 Mar 1918
2LT Joseph A. Physioc, Jan 1920
1LT Wallace C. Burns, 10 Apr 1920-7 May 1921
Cpt George S. Warren, 7 May 1921-13 Oct 1921
Inactive, 13 Oct 1921-Jun 1930
Unknown, Jun 1930-Jun 1932
Inactive, Jun 1932-1 Oct 1933

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The men in this company were recruited from Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. They were concentrated at Fort Thomas KY. On 13 Nov 1917, they were transferred to Fort Omaha, NE and assigned to Co B, 4th Balloon Sq.

1Lt Ray W. Thompson was assigned to the CO as commander 13 Nov 1917. At this time the company was quartered in Post Garage #1, Fort Omaha and was engaged in recruit drill. On 27 Nov 1917 1Lt Herbert W. Ryan was attached to and assumed command of the company. The company moved from its quarters in the garage to squad tents located in South Field just east of the post hospital. Cpt F. W. Goodale was assigned to and assumed command of the company 6 Dec 1917. 1Lt Glen Phelps was assigned to assumed command of the company on 17 Dec 1917. During this time the company was engaged in flying the balloon at position 11 in South Field, Fort Omaha and while the balloon was in the air the recruits were given close order drill.

On 19 Jan 1918 85 enlisted men were transferred from the company to the 1st Balloon Squadron, leaving the company an enlisted force of 5 sergeants, and one private.

There are hot springs, iron springs, bed springs, coiled springs, cantilever springs and even the panther springs, but we, Oh Woe, are off-springs—off-springs of company "D" of the 4th squadron. We made that leap on January 21st, 1918.

The company remained in garrison at Fort Omaha during the month of Feb the enlisted personnel assisting in instructing the flying cadets in maneuvering the balloons. The continual change in the personnel of the officers and the many transfers to and from the company of the enlisted personnel did much to retard the men in their training.

One hundred and ninety privates after having their typhoid inoculations and vaccination records verified were assigned to the 14th Balloon Company on 11 March 1918. The enlisted strength of the company was further increased when one private was transferred from the 1st Balloon School Squadron, four privates from 17th Balloon Co and 8 privates from the 18th Balloon Co. The Medical Detachment was brought up to full strength on the same date by the assignment of one corporal and three privates to the company. The training of the men in balloon work as well as in recruit drill began immediately on their arrival at Fort Omaha. The men had never seen a balloon before their arrival at Fort Omaha and they were curious and anxious to get a chance to handle one and see exactly what it was like. What they lacked in experience they made up in the quickness with which they jumped for the ropes and the zeal which they hauled down on the

ropes.

On account of having so many new men and having to fly the balloon in addition to the regular drill it was quite a job to instruct the men how to look and act in a military manner. However, this instruction was carried on while the balloon was in the air the instruction including recruit drill military courtesy squad drill and later company and battalion drill. One of the chief aids in this instruction was the assistance given by the men in the company that had former military experience either in the National Guard or at a military school. These men were immediately made acting noncommissioned officers and placed in charge of squads. This not only helped to teach the men the elementary squad movements but developed good material for NCO most of whom have since made good with the company.

During this period the men were still quartered in squad tents in south field east of the Post Hospital each tent being in charge of an acting NCO Sgt Horace I. Seeley was appointed acting First Sergeant and privates Shoulty and Corll were acting sergeants in charge on the balloon. The duties of the company consisted in handling the balloon for flights of one hour duration and in the mean time constructing balloon beds or engage in close order drill. As soon as the company was sufficiently organized to select the proper men for the various details the following daily schedule of instruction was carried on:

0545 Reveille
0615 Breakfast
0645 Police
0715 Fatigue call
0720 Sick Call
0730 Balloon detail—also schools for special details, winch, chauffeurs, hydrogen, telephone, wireless, clerks, rigging, and fabric, machine gun school
1100 Recall dinner for balloon relief
1130 Dinner for balloon detail
1230 Fatigue call balloon detail
1300 special details for school
1430 Recall
1730 Supper for balloon relief
1800 Supper for balloon detail
1830 Retreat
2030 Last balloon down to be put away
2100 Call to quarters
2300 Taps

Although this schedule was very strenuous and kept the men busy from six in the morning until nine and nine-thirty each night, the men were kept in good physical condition, due largely to the good sanitary conditions at Fort Omaha and the good food which they were served. This schedule was continued with slight moderations until the outfit departed for overseas. Occasionally, when the officers returned to the post after a strenuous session of tea dances, we flew the balloon.

The first promotions made among the enlisted men of the company were made on April 9, 1918, when Privates Rube D, Corll, Alvin J. Nash and Charles E, Shoulty were made sergeants .The same day nineteen privates were promoted to corporals.

The first death in the company occurred on 12 Apr 1918 when the company clerk, Sgt William M. Smith died in the post hospital of pneumonia. The company sent flowers the money for which was taken from the company fund. A detail of eight men escorted the body to the train and Sgt Horace I. Sealey escorted the body to New Albany, Indiana the home of the deceased.

On or about April 17, 1918, a campaign was started for the purpose of raising money for the company fund by giving dances, entertainments, etc., which fund amounted to over \$4,000 before the unit left for overseas.

During this period the company was worked very hard. They were quartered at Fort Omaha and were engaged in flying a balloon at position #31 in Florence Field a distance of about one half mile from their quarters. The days work consisted in flying the balloon until 2030 for a series of one hour flights in the meantime they were engaged in digging balloon beds. At first the work of digging balloon beds was done in shifts but finally the commanding officer issued an order that instead of working in shifts all of the men should work all of the time. This was hardest period for both men and officers. Nearly every day the men would not come in for the supper until between 2100 and 2300 The hard work of digging all day together with the long hours they were required to be on duty and the nature of the duty performed took all the spirit out of the men. All day long their uniform consisted of blues both literally and figuratively. The only time they had an opportunity to dress and feel like soldiers was when they were on parade or on pass. However the health of the men on continued excellent and as the mess sergeant with the aid of a large company fund furnished them with food and wholesome mess, this period was passed thru without any desertions.

On 2 May 1918 at about 2015 while the company under the command of 2LT Lawrence J. Simpson, maneuvering officer and sergeant Charles E. Shoulty, balloon commander were engaged in deflating the balloon on bed #31 at Florence Field, the balloon exploded, killing two men and injuring or burning 26 others. The balloon at the time was in the hanger and some of the me helping to deflate the balloon were in their stocking feet with woolen socks on. It is assumed that the gas in the balloon was very poor and that the explosive mixture was set off by a static spark. The explosion was terrific, blowing two men out thru the hanger and stunning others. The light of the explosion lily up the country for a great distance and caused much excitement in the neighbourhood so that when the injured men were being moved to the hospital for treatment it was almost impossible to pass thru the mob congregated on thirtieth street from the fort to the gate at Florence field. The two men killed were Pvt Vincent L. Beall and Pvt John L. Davis. Two days after the explosion another balloon was given to the company and was immediately inflated and flown from position #11 South Field until a new bed was dug near old position #31.

The company was moved from its quarters at Fort Omaha to new quarters in Florence Field on 9 May 1918. This was quite an improvement not only in the quarters themselves which were more roomy buy also because it did away with having to march to and from Florence Field each a

morning and night. Tents were put up, cinder paths were laid around the camp, wire fences were put up the camp drained and flowers were planted around the orderly tent and mess hall. The Recreation hall was fixed up with pool table, play piano two victrolas and a jazz band and orchestra was organized in the company. The men had a YMCA building in the company area. Company stationery was printed and was placed in the recreation room for use of everyone. These quarters and the open surrounding were much better than the old quarters at the fort and the men were more satisfied. The esprit de corps of the outfit was increased remarkably.

On 31 May 1918 the balloon detail in charge of Sgt Charles E. Shoulty were working at the new balloon bed at position #31. On account of very high winds the balloon was not allowed to ascent until 1030 at which time it was put up for the purpose of ascertaining the velocity of the wind. It was equipped with a new basket containing a large anemometer and carried 15 bags of sand as ballast. The balloon used an old Cacquot type M. At 1200 feet it encountered a strong current which increased steadily until its velocity was about 55 MPH. The balloon being the old type and not as able to withstand the high wind, was tossed about and yawed and dived until finally the right fin was ripped off. Then with a maximum tension of 3000 pounds it completely raised the rear wheels of the winch off of the ground, dragging it backward about 100 yards until finally the rigging connected to the cable was torn off and the balloon broke away. The winch driver, Richard C. Riley displayed a cool head and struck to his post as calmly as if nothing had happened and endeavored to keep the fore wheels of the winch steered in the direction that the balloon was pulling. The balloon landed about 150 miles away in Iowa.

On May 2, 1918, while the company, under the command of 2d Lieut. Lawrence C. Simpson Maneuvering Officer, and Sgt. Charles E. Shoulty, balloon commander, were engaged in deflating the balloon in hangar on position No. 31 at Florence Field, the balloon exploded, killing two men, and injuring or burning twenty-six others. It is assumed that the gas in the balloon was very poor, and that the explosive mixture was set off by a static spark. The two men killed were Pvt. Vincent L. Beall and Pvt. John L. Davis. Flowers were sent to the funeral of these men, and a military escort was furnished.

The company was moved from its quarters at Fort Omaha to new quarters in Florence Field on May 9, 1918, The recreation hall was fixed up with pool table, player piano, two victrolas, and a jazz band and orchestra was organized in the company. Company stationery was printed and was placed in the recreation room for the use of everyone. These quarters and the open surroundings were much better than the old quarters at the fort and the men were more satisfied.

The first desertion from the company occurred on 4 Jun 1918, when Pvt Patrick J. Walsh deserted. This man was later apprehended at Camp Morrison, VA and returned to Fort Omaha, Ne for trial. He never rejoined the company after the date of his desertion.

The instruction of the special details as well as the training of the men was continued at Florence Field in accordance with the same schedule of instruction in force at Fort Omaha. Passes to the city of Omaha were issued so that each could be absent from the company twice a week from 0700 until 1230. When a man abused this privilege by returning late or leaving with a pass his uniform was taken from him and he was required to wear the fatigue uniform in order to prevent him from slipping into the city. In spite of this 3 of the men slipped thru the guard and visited the

city. On their return they were halted by Pvt Henry then on guard, but instead of halting they took a chance and beat it for their tent unmindful of the fact that they were fired at. The next day all of the uniforms in the company were taken up except the fatigue blues and the company were required to wear them at all times. That evening the company took matters in their own hands, visited the tents of the 3 culprits and took them and gave a good thrashing.

While the company was attired in their blues the Joan of Arc club of Omaha gave a dance in the Knights of Columbus hall in Florence Field for the soldiers. The men of the 14th could not attend on account of not having any uniforms. However they gathered on the bank just outside of the hall and watched the dance until they could stand it no longer. So they trooped off to the Recreation Hall where they amused themselves for a while with the Jazz band. Finally the novelty of this wore off and a snake dance led by the band and the cooks in their white aprons was put on in front of the mess hall. The dance eventually wended its way down to pass the Knight of Columbus Hall singing "Hail Hail the gang's all here." The girls naturally wanted to see what the excitement was and the dance was completely broken up until the officer of the day appeared on the scene placed the cooks under arrest and the rest of the company dived for their bunks. A threat the officer of the day to place the first man that left his tent under arrest quelled the spirits of the company. This incident brought out the fact that the company was beginning to get together as an organization at last.

By this time the company had finished their period of preliminary training in the states and were ready for over seas training. ON 5 July immediately after the big 4 July dinner and the ceremony of burying the Pick and Shovel the company left Florence Field. Although the men were anxious to go overseas, they were very sorry to have to leave Omaha as the people of the city had been so nice to them in every manner possible. The men are still hoping to be stationed once more at Fort Omaha before being mustered out. 5 Jul the company left for Camp Morrison at 1030. They entrained at the station in Omaha leaving on the Great Western railroad at 1515. The strength of the company was four officers and 200 enlisted men not including one medical officer and four enlisted in the medical detachment which accompanied the 14th. The Red Cross women were at the train and served candy, cigarette, gum and other similar gifts to the men before the train left the station. The men were in hilarious spirits, as they had been longing for the past several months to get a chance to go across. The troop train arrived in Chicago on 6 Jul at 1030, and here also the Red Cross women et the train and gave the men candy, gum, cigarettes and post cards to be forwarded to their families. The men were detrained at Peru Indiana, the same day at 1630 for exercise. After marching thru the town led by the band, they were extrained at 1830 and left the station at 1900 on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. All during the trip GI Cans filled with lemonade were stationed in each car. The Company again detrained on 7 Jul at White Sulfer Springs, WV. At 1745 and after a mile and half hike were entrained left the station at 1905. They arrived at Camp Morrison at 0900 on 8 Jul. The company was quartered in warehouse #20 on 9 Jul and remained in quarters there during the period occupied in verifying their physical condition for overseas service and securing the necessary equipment for extended field service. The sanitary conditions as well as the general living conditions were very poor at this station. 24 men were transferred from the company on account of their being physically unfit for overseas service but they were immediately replaced by men transferred to the 14th from the 27th balloon company.

This marked the ending of the period of training in the states. During the entire period the men had been giving actual experience in flying the balloon, as well the necessary military training to make a soldier a soldier. The physical conditions of the men during the whole of this period was excellent in spite of the hard work and long hours they were on duty at Fort Omaha. There was not a single venereal case in the company from the time that it was organized until it departed for overseas. There were only cases of absent without leave these being pvt John Burns and pvt Alfred J. Johnson who were absent without leave from 17 Jun 1918 to 21 Jun 1918 There was one desertion from the company, pvt Patrick J. Walsh who deserted on 4 Jun 1918.

The company was marched to the port of embarkation, Newport News, VA on 17 Jul 1918, leaving Camp Morrison about noon in a slight drizzling rain. However, the rain could not dampen the enthusiasm of the men who were anxious to get started. They boarded the USS Pastores about 1430 on 17 Jul 1918. Lt Dillon was made troop commander of the ship. There were 1760 troops on board not including a crew of 300 men. The ship which was formerly a fruit steamer in the employ of the United Fruit Line and was armed with two guns fore and two guns aft. The ship layed in port all night and left Newport News at 1030 on 18 Jul after having been joined by 5 other transports. The convoy consisted of one battle cruiser and two torpedo boats. Two hydroplanes accompanied the convoy about 100 miles out to sea and then turned back. The route was along the coast as far as New York, where the convoy was delayed by missing another convoy that was to join them. On 19 Jul at about 2000 they met this convoy and then headed straight across. There were now 12 transports, one battle cruiser and two torpedo boat destroyers in the convoy. The trip across was fairly good with the exception of a very rough sea about 5 days out, which caused a great deal of sea-sickness. There was no excitement on board except the several times that the battleship and other members of the convoy fired at supposed submarines. In order to while away the time and provide entertainment for the other troops, several boxing bouts were staged on deck in which the 14th company made a good showing Private Red Gestner knocking out the supposed champion of the ship and Henry also of the 14th knocking out Cosgrove of the 11th Prov Inf the champion heavy weight of Camp Lee.

The 14th and 15th Balloon Companies were the only regular army troops on board the remainder being draft men from the concentration camp being sent over as replacement unit. Hence as they were untrained and undisciplined the balloon companies had to do all the guard and lookout duty.

The worst part of the whole trip across was having to wear the life belt at all times, having to keep water in the canteens and having to sleep with all clothing on; not to mention not being able to smoke on deck after dark. The ordinary daily routine and ship drills were as following

0630 Reveille

0700 Breakfast

0730 Abandon ship drill

0830 Calisthenics-sick call

1130 dinner

Lights out at dusk

The usual routine was followed and nothing unusual happened until 1730 on 28 Jul when torpedo boats met us and the battle cruiser turned around and started back for the states. The next

morning three more torpedo boats joined the convoy. Then all but three transports and eight torpedo destroyers took a different route and soon disappeared over the horizon. About 100 miles out, two allied hydroplanes came out to meet the convoy and escort them in. The Pastores docked on the harbor of St Nazaire, France at 2000 on 30 Jul 1918. However, the troops were not unloaded until the next morning at 0630. The company was then marched to camp No 1 base section 1, as soon as it debarked, and was located here until Tuesday, 6 Aug. During this time the men had an opportunity to become acquainted with the difference in the habits and manners of the French. The thing that made the biggest impression on the men was that while they were in swimming at St Nazaire, the women passed to and fro and did not seem to think anything of the men being naked.

The Company embarked from Newport News, Va., on July 18, 1918, on the U. S. S. Pastures along with the 15th Balloon Company and six infantry replacement companies, Lieut. J. J. Dillon, Commanding Officer, was made troop commander of the ship.

The company left St. Nazaire, August 6, 1918, for Valdahon (Doubs). The men rode in second-class coaches, eight men to a compartment, which was quite an improvement over *hommes 40, chevaux 8*. The company reached Etalans, Doubs, August 9, 1918, where it stayed over night, then hiked to Guyans Durnes, where it stayed until September 2, 1918, when it moved to Etalans, Doubs, to take the place of the 42d Balloon Company which had just gone to the Front.

On 4 Aug, 30 men were transferred from the company to the 101st Balloon Replacement Camp leaving the company with an enlisted personnel of 170 men. While here nothing was done in the way of training other than enough close order drill and calisthenics to keep the men in good physical condition and remind them they were soldiers.

The Officers had quite a time keeping the French railway from splitting the train up and sending some the men to one part of France and the others to another part of France. On Wednesday, the 7th the train stopped in Tours for several hours to get hot coffee. On the 8th the company spent also on the train, which had an annoying habit of stopping every few minutes for presumably no reason whatever. The company reached Etalans, Doubs at 1000 9 Aug and pitched tents while the officers went in search of billets. It was necessary to stay overnight in the pup tents at Etalans on account of lack of billets due to the fact the town was full of Wild Cats of the 81st Division who were quartered in town. The next day after a hike of 7 kilometers, the company reached the town of Guyan-Durnes, Doubs, where after establishing headquarters in the city hall, the men were billeted in the village. The men had considerable trouble with the pronunciation of the town so it was unofficially dubbed Gosh Durn and later shortened to Durn

On 10 Aug the day the company went into its new billets, and ordered the balloon to be put in the air next day. So at 0830, 11 Aug the company put up the balloon for the first time since arriving in France. Lt Simpson made the first trip from 0830 to 0930 and then Lt Dillon made a short flight on ½ hour. On the same day the company received the first mail from the states, which was a memorable day for the lucky ones to receive letters.

Immediately after reaching Guyans-Durnes, the company got to work and policed up all the barns and streets in the town which had not been cleaned since the beginning of the war,

according to appearances. On 14 Aug the company canteen was opened in order to give the men such little things that could not be purchased from the French stores. The men now had an opportunity to get in close touch with the French people and judging from the actions of the people of the town when the company moved away the men of the 14th made a good impression by their actions and bearing as few of them could talk French. While stationed here, the company was engaged in flying the balloon. And doing the necessary police and fatigue duty to keep the quarters in good conditions.

During this period the instruction of the men was being carried out according to regular schedule. The special detail men were engaged in becoming efficient in their work, including the telephone men, the wireless men, the chauffeurs, the machine gunners, the chart room detail, and other detail work. The company was flying the balloon every day that the weather permitted, special attention being paid to maneuvering. At the same time they were being instructed in gas, close order drill, extended-order drill and military courtesy.

On 2 Sep the company moved from Guyanes-Drnes Doubs to Etalans, Doubs to take the place of the 42nd Balloon Co which had been ordered to the front Six men from the 14th were attached to the 42nd Company as look-outs.

1LT John J. Dillon relieved of command and on detached service at US Balloon School, Souge, Gironde. 1LT J. C. Bryan transferred to company 4 Sep and assumed command.

During this period, the instruction of the men was being carried out according to a regular schedule. The special detail men were engaged in becoming efficient in their work including the telephone men, the wireless men, the chauffeurs, the machine gunners, the chart room detail and other detail work. The company was flying the balloon every day that the weather permitted special attention being paid to maneuvering. At the same time they were being instructed in gas, close order drill, extended order drill and military courtesy. The general condition and health of the men continued excellent. The quarters were fairly good and the mess was very good. The men were in excellent spirits which was shown by the pride they took in their work. There was revival of interest in athletics due to the fact that the men were not being overworked as they had been previously. Several games of base ball and foot ball were played between "the bucks" and "the non-coms" and also with the teams from the "Wild Cats" the 14th always managed to come out the winner in a great majority of these contests. The period of preliminary training at Etalans was enjoyed by everyone. Besides the few wine shops at Etalans, the Commanding officer allowed as many men as possible to visit the city of Besancon about 35 kilometers distant, whenever a truck had to make a trip to this city for supplies or provisions.

The company had been following the schedule given below in the training at Guyans-Durnes and Etalans, Doubs:

0530 Reveille

0545 Breakfast

0630 Policing quarters

0700 Band practice—fatigue drill

0730 Balloon Drill, maneuvering, infantry drill, gas mask drill, etc.

0730 Sick Call

1030 Recall
1100 Dinner
1200 Fatigue call
1200 Balloon Drill, maneuvering, infantry drill, military courtesy, etc.
1630 Recall- mess call
1700 Guard mount
1715 Retreat
2030 Cal to quarters
2100 Taps

On the morning of 11 Nov at 0900 the company received word that the 58th Company that was coming to relieve them was at Besancon and would arrive that day. The 14th Company had orders to move to Toul as soon as they were relieved by the 58th and this was the news that the company had been eagerly awaiting for some days. Everything was in a bustle and uproar getting ready to move that afternoon. However even this important news was thrust into the background when at 1100 the church bells began to ring and the few Frenchmen remaining in the town began to shout. Eventually it was ascertained that Germany had signed the armistice as laid down by the allied commanders and that the armistice would go into effect at 100 on 11 Nov 1918. The men immediately formed a long single line armed with rakes, shovels, spades, axes, and tin pans and lead by the band and Sgt Hassell they proceeded to initiate the French into the mysteries of a snake dance. The armistice was further and more appropriately celebrated that night in the various little wine shops in Etalans, preferably “Marcelle’s”

The 58th Company did not arrive at Etalans until 1100 on 12 Nov and that afternoon at 1730 the company was lined up and marched down to the train. There was some dispute about using the passenger coaches between the railroad official and the company commander, but that matter was quickly settled by entraining the company ordering them to stay on the train and then telling the Chef De Gare that we refused to get off. After appeasing him with a few drinks with a few drinks of cognac however he not only said that the company could use the coaches but that they could go on through to Toul in them. The company was moved by order of telegraphic instructions from the Commanding General SOS.

The train pulled out of the station at 2030 and the company was at last on its way to the front even though it was one day late for the fighting. The student observers were left at Etalans with the 58th Balloon Company and the total strength of the outfit was then twelve officers and 168 enlisted men.

The troop train arrived at Besancon, Doubs at 2300 on 12 Nov and stayed over until 0730 when it left for Toul. The entire trip was made without having to change cars. The men were detrained at Vesoul at noon on 13 Nov. While here the men were not allowed to go into town but were furnished ample amusement and exercise by a football game between two picked teams from the company which was played in a large field near the train. Later about 1700 just before leaving Vesoul, the band played several selections which caused all the railroad employees as well as all the civilians in the immediate vicinity to quit their work and gather around. An impromptu dance was staged in which several French girls participated. At 1730 the train left Vesoul and after an all night ride reached Nancy the next morning. After a short stop here the journey was continued

and at noon 14 Nov the men were detrained at Toul. Here considerable trouble was encountered in trying to secure transportation to move the company to their new station near Jezainville, Meurthe-et-Moselle. At 2200 the necessary transportation had arrived being five trucks, 3 trailers and a winch which had been brought along with the company from Etalans. The company reached their new quarters just west of Jezainville in the edge of the forest de Puvenelle about 1400 and spent the rest of the night trying to keep from freezing. They were quartered in old wooden barracks, that were very weather beaten and thru which the wind could easily pass.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, which was served at 1030 the entire company was moved from this barracks to the St Martin Fontaine farm house. Here, the men were crowded a little, the quarters were much more comfortable.

It was very hard to keep the men from traveling all over the front for the purpose of gathering a few duds and hand grenades for souvenirs. They were repeatedly told not to touch anything that looked at all suspicious, particularly wires, duds, hand grenades and particularly not to go around abandoned ammunition dumps. However, the men did not realize the importance of these precautions until a few days later three men from the 44th Balloon company were seriously injured by the explosion of a hand grenade which they were investigating.

After several days policing the quarters were in good condition, and the company was again prepared to go back to the old routine. The company had not been furnished with a balloon as yet and so it was necessary to take up the close order drill in order to keep the men in good condition. This work was very monotonous for the men but the monotony was relieved somewhat by allowing the men in charge of an officer to make little excursions into the front lines for the purpose of getting a chance to see what they actually were. At first everyone wanted to take back all the abandoned, machine guns, trench mortars, and ammunitions as souvenirs, but after a little experience they began to collect buttons from the Boche uniforms as more suitable souvenirs. The Football team was again organized and several scrub games were played with other teams in the company.

3 Dec was spent in preparing a balloon bed and on 4 Dec the company was marched over the balloon bed of the 10th Balloon Co in order to take over the equipment from the 10th which was under orders to leave this sector. At 0945 the balloon was put to a height of 125 meters and then maneuvered over to the bed of the 14th Company at St Martin Fontaine a distance of about 3 kilometers. This was the first time that the company had handled their balloon on the front.

Soon after the company reached the front the armistice had been signed a period of training was started that was included everything that the company had been previously instructed in the beginning with the school of the soldier. This work was carried on, in addition to flying. At first it was very tiresome and it seemed so useless to the men to have to go thru the simple movements but this spirit wore off when they began to see the benefits derived from it and the men took more interest in the work.

Arrival in France 31 Jul 1918

Arrival at the front 14 Nov 1918

Days ascensions made in S.O.S 35

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A
Total days ascensions made 35
Number of ascensions made in S.O.S. 226
Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.
Total number of ascensions made 226
Total number of hours in air S.O.S. 164.55
Total number of hours in air Z.O.A.
Total number of hours in the air 164.55
Artillery adjustments in S.O.S. 6
Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A
Total number or artillery adjustments 6
Enemy shells observed
Enemy aircraft observed
Enemy balloons observed
Enemy artillery batteries observed
Enemy traffic on road and railroad observed
Smoke, fires and flares observed
Explosions observed
Jumps from basket
Balloons attacked
Balloons burned
Balloons destroyed
Observers killed
Observers captured

Arrived at the port of New York, NY, on 8 May 1919 on the S.S. Julia Luckenbach as Balloon Company No. 14. Transferred to Garden City, NY, on the same day. Transferred on 8 September 1919 to Fort Omaha, NE. Transferred on 14 April 1920 to Crissey Field, CA. Served at numerous locations for short periods over the next twelve months to include Fort Funston, CA, Fort Casey, WA, Camp Lewis, WA, Fort Winfield Scott, CA, and Fort Miley, CA, for the purposes of conducting aerial spotter tests with various coast defense commands.

Transferred on 6 May 1921 to Camp Lewis, WA. Redesignated as Balloon Company No. 14 (Coast Defense) on 13 September 1921. Inactivated on 13 October 1921 at Camp Lewis and the 1st Balloon Company designated Active Associate. The 9th Airship Company made Active Associate 6 September 1922 in lieu of 1st Balloon Company.

Allotted to the Sixth Corps Area on 5 September 1928. Assigned to the 25th Balloon Group on 8 May 1929. Organized by June 1930 with Organized Reserve personnel as a RAI unit at Chicago, IL.

Inactivated by June 1932 at Chicago by relief of personnel.

Updated:

Sources

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