

1103 AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

1103 Aero Squadron organized, May 1918

Demobilized, May 1919

STATIONS

AEF

Mitchel Field, NY, Apr 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 1103d Aero Squadron then designated as a Replacement Squadron was formed May 9th, 1918, from the Headquarters Detachment of the 2nd AIC together with various other casualties, by General Order No. 4, end AIC., which quoted authority from a letter sent out from the Chief of Air Service.

The following extracts from a memorandum received from the Chief of Air Service, dated April 1st 1918, states the functions of a Replacement Squadron: In order to make it possible to

maintain a full complement of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men, with Air Service Organizations at all times, a system of replacements will be instituted as herein set forth.

Officers and men admitted to hospital, otherwise incapacitated or missing will be transferred to Replacement Squadrons. The vacancies thus formed will be filled by transfers from Replacement Squadrons.

Men transferred from Replacement Squadrons and vice-versa will retain their respective grades.

The original organization of Replacement Squadrons will not exceed the number of Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Chauffeurs, Cooks and Privates first-class authorized for Supply Squadrons in the tables of Organization approved January 15th, 1918.

The maximum number of privates is unlimited

The above applies to the original organization only. Since then the number of non-commissioned officers, chauffeurs, etc., has exceeded the table of organization for a supply Squadron. The complement of officers, however, has always been below the number allowed a Supply Squadron.

Commanding Officers

1Lt John Stone, May 9th, 1918-July 9th, 1918

1Lt Hugh Hartshorne Jr. July 9th, 1918-Present date

The enlisted personnel is now about 220 men who are assigned to the various departments of the field, such as hangars, machine shops, School of Aerial Gunnery, Transportation Department, etc.

As a great number of the men were among the first Air Service troops to come to France, some of them indeed being among General Pershing's first "Hundred Thousand" two service stripes are very commonly seen in the Squadron and in December 1918, some will be entitled to wear their third. Most of the men have taken advantage of the seven days furloughs granted for four months service overseas and have seen quite a bit of the country. Some of them speak French almost as well as the natives, and have formed valuable acquaintances among the families in the vicinity of Tours. A few have married French girls, whom they are going to take back to the States with them.

As the 1103 has no history dating back to Kelly Field or other Texas Aviation Camps like most of the Squadrons, having been organized in France, a short history of the men from whom the Squadron was formed, will not be out of place.

On the 23d of September, 1917, thirty-six men who were later to form the nucleus of the 1103rd Aero Squadron, arrived at the 2nd AIC. These men were detached from the eight "Allied

Squadrons" and had 1st Lt Theodore Knight as Commanding Officer, and "Bill" (Now Lt.) Ryan as Top Sergeant. The field was then in the hands of the French Government and everything about it was French. Soon after they arrived, a quarantine was imposed on the field which lasted eight weeks.

On December 1st 1917, the field was officially taken over by the American Government, Major Christie being the first Commanding Officer. The detachment was joined by twenty men from Lyon, and a week later by a like number from the same place and some from Paris. These men were then formed into what was known as the Headquarters Detachment, with Lt. P. N. Hollowell as Commanding Officer.

Before the field was taken over by the Americans, some of the members of the USA Foreign Legion received their training here. A number of the cadets were flying Triangle at the time. That is they were given a map and made a three cornered trip, from Tours to Pont-le-vey, thence to Chateaudun. Hence the term "Triangle". This was to accustom them to follow a map in the air. These cadets ran an aerial postal and express service for the men on the three fields. Thus, if one at this field wanted to write to a friend at Port-le-voy or Chateaudun, he would hand the letter to one of the cadets. They alone carried cigarettes and other things that were lacking at one field, and could be obtained at one of the others.

To the men of the 1103 should go a great deal of credit for developing the motor mechanics of the field. Practically the only men experienced in foreign motors, they have formed the nucleus around which the present efficient standard of the 2nd A I C has been developed. Some of the N C O's taught classes of the newly arrived mechanics the workings of French, motors, as most of them when they arrived had only a knowledge of Curtis Aeroplane motors.

1st Lt. John Store, who was the first Commanding Officer of the Squadron, had been associated with the men for a long time as a cadet, consequently he knew them all personally and was able to provide for their needs and comforts.

The N C O's of the squadron have done much to assist in practically every development of the field, which is now second only to Issoudun as an Aviation Instruction Center, and is the largest training school for Aerial Observer in the A E F.

The Squadron has only lost two of its members by death, both being in line of duty. Corp Singleton, buried with Military Honors in the early spring of 1918, and M.S.E. Applegate in Nov 1918. Applegate, one of the several men taking flying training was almost ready to receive his commission as a pilot. He was killed when the motor of the machine he was flying "pooped" and he side-slipped to the ground. The men were both buried in the American Cemetery at Tours.

I dare say that a larger percentage of enlisted men from this organization have won their way to a commission than from any other squadron on the field. I believe that the same statement applies to the number of men who have taken flying training and won their "brevets".

Just now every man in the organization, with the knowledge that he has done whatever duties which have been asked of him to the best of his ability, is awaiting the order to make up his pack and "stand by", ready for the trip back to the State.

Air Force Unit Histories

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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.