

# **23<sup>rd</sup> BALLOON COMPANY**

## **LINEAGE**

Organized Feb 1918

Demobilized Jan 1919

Reorganized, Jun 1919

Demobilized, Aug 1919

Reorganized, Sep 1919

## **STATIONS**

Waco, TX

Camp Morrison, VA, Mar 1918

Lee Hall, VA, Jul 1918

Camp Morrison, VA, Oct 1918

Port of Embarkation, Newport News, VA, Oct 1918

Europe, Oct 1918

Camp Devens, MA, Jan 1919

Ross Field, CA, Jun 1919

Post Field, OK, Sep 1919

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

## **COMMANDERS**

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**

## **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The Twenty-Third Balloon Company was organized Feb. 16th, 1916, by Aorta Headquarters, Station Swap, Waco, TX. The officers of the company consisted of Second Lieutenants, Gail E. Bardwell, Orin J. Bushey, Clyde A4 Kuntz, and Kenneth O. Ovitt, all graduates of the United States Balloon School, Omaha, Neb., and all members of the Signal Reserve Corps. The enlisted personnel of the company, came from the recruits of the 1st Provisional Regiment, about twenty-five percent being drafted men, the balance, volunteer enlistments. The company had a representative from nearly every state in the Union, and practically all trades and professions, in civil life.

The Company was organized with Start. Benton as 1st Lieutenant, and a 2nd Lieutenant, the other non-commissioned officers being filled by men who had been serving in those particular capacities in their respective Provisional Squadrons. Lieut. Bardwell, by reason of rank, took command, and it is to be known that he was to be a strong supporter of Lieut. Mac, as the boys came to call him among themselves. Lieut. Bushey took care of the company paper work; Lieut. Kuntz, Lieuts. Bardwell and Ovitt, drill work.

It is to be noted inasmuch as there was no available Balloon equipment at this station, the training of the company, immediately following organization, was confined to drill at the School of the Soldier, Squad, and Company. Under the direction of Lieuts. Bardwell and Ovitt, the men soon were required a good knowledge of close infantry drill. This was evidenced in the first Regimental review, in which they took part as a company, the company commander being complimented upon the showing made. The company also took part in a march made to the downtown Palace to attend a program furnished by the Y.M.C.A. At another time they attended a Field Meet, held by the entire Aviation Corps, and in which, the regiment took first place. The Company Fund was started during the first month of organization, by a dance given at Waco, Texas, which proved a great success personally supervised the arrangements and backed the affair. Kelley Field and it too had grown monotonous to the men, and cheers greeted the orders to pack preparatory to leaving.

We were keenly disappointed to part with Lieuts. Bardwell and Ovitt, who were transferred out at this time. But they wished us luck, and left us with the words, "We'll beat you Over".

On February 14, 1918, the company entrained with the 27th Balloon Company for Morrison, Va., with Lieut. Bardwell as train commander and merchandise were made at Texarkana, Jonesboro, and Hillmore, Ark., Louisville, Ky., and Hinton, W. Va. The trip was made without sickness, accidents, or losses of any men. The 1st Lieutenant (who more than anyone else was complimented upon the condition of the men and train. Arriving at the Aeronautical General Supply Depot and

Concentration Camp, Liorrisee, Ve the company took up quarters in Warehouse li18. Again we were handicapped by not having balloon equipment, but we went ee the fatigue work mad Guard enthusiastically, for we were soon to move, and sail Overseas. Signal practice in Semaphore and International Uode, was taken up and many of the men became expert. Again and again we were aroused by the reports that we were to be sent Over

But just as often, the joy was taken out of life, when a shipment would leave and we were still left "holding the eecku. dithout a dWobt we came to aymeathize With the enive-hueter. With the tends acquired from dances held at Newport Hews, we organized and equipped a ball team, which was entered in the Claes B Balloon League, said won the velment. Ilowever we were brought to our knees, in the contest with the 27th balloon eoeelee ball-team, for the obampionship Of the oaup. Our company experienced several shape-ups due to transfers. elan. at this station Lieuts. eadden end Ferguson of the Fourth Balloon Sque4ron were assigned to the company. Later lieut. hateher was assigned to the oeleeny, filling tee ieeency caused by the transfer of eleut. Yedden. Lieut. Kwtz was appointed on the ccurt I4ertial board, serving until the transfer of the organization. One of the enjoyable events experienced by the company was a trip to Suffolk, Va., with Lieuts. Kuetz.eed Ferguson in charge, the company being the guests of the euffolk eweercial Olub.

he one but e Taill in the Service, can eeereoiate what a change means, and even being sent to the mush talked of mulberry Island, Was cheerful news. On July 12th, 1918, the company hiked to The United states Arm ello= School, Lee Hell, Vu. Ity the aid of guides w discovered our future home. Leah talk was heard abOuta tranfer from the Air Service to the Lectern Woodmen. Surely there was need for modern woodmen bore. With characteristic exareee and pap, Lieut. ho Lilitll offered the services of the company to the Ooaeanding Officer of the poet, for Guard duty, and frmi that day the Wrđ was preatioaily the headquarters Oomeeny of the post. whenever a mon Was eehted for a position, the could furnish that an.

Bit hood too. up the work of trump Bergeet Lajor and was still uerrying on the work when the oceteetaey left 'that post. Deeepointment of the Owe Oomeander lAeut. hehiflin aterted a course in Balloon work, choosing as his assistant, Sgt. Earl M. Benton. Sgt. Szsiders was appointee irirV Trualonaster, later being replaced by Sgt. Long, both of the 2:ird. Several clerks were furnished for the lieedquarters, from the ceui)sny. UpL oreefield, carried on the work of Provost tierdeant, and handled a difficult position In a very eorgnendable lawhler. During the latter part of August, was detailed on temporary duty with the air service2nrtler.'t at Wasnreton, rin his absence Lieut. Eints took c emend of the company. ,hieut was appointed Assistant Adjutant, hatcher, Assistant Personnel djutant, both being transferred out of the organization later.

By this time the ezuli had underdone a great change and balloons wore flying; regularly; Incin from the company had taken the course of im tr tler of ferA for S'llers uad general Balloon viork, and were work of instruction. tfoleitehe men hod

manenverind detail receiving ixactieal ez.perienoes In a word the eoDvany was red for Overseas. Durin.d the latter part of Septembr, Lieut. heLium returned to the o(zvany, and soon after his return received hie t as First Lieutenant. bore iu oensiderable doubtwee nore pleased, the

Covering dates from Nov. 11, 1918 to Jan. 10, 1919.

Nothing of special interest took place during the remainder of the month of November, the company flying the balloon whenever weather permitted, the Observers doing observation work, and making adjustments for the Artillery companies on the range. Work in Machine Gun class and pistol practice was also kept up.

On Nov. 28, 1918, twenty-two enlisted men, made up of the various branches of balloon work, with Lieut. Yerguson in charge, left for Camp Souge, A.P.O. 705, Bordeaux, France, for School work there.

By this time the company mail had begun coming in regularly. Various opinions were expressed as to the probable time of our departure for the United States, ranging from one to ten months. Rumors were often heard of troops of the Air Service Department being sent home.

On Dec. 12, 1918, Lieut. Joseph S. Jablonski, assumed command and made a very favorable impression with the men. This has since ripened into a wholesome friendship and respect. Several promotions were made at this time in the company, among them being the appointment of four sergeants to the grade of Sergeant First class. About this time four of our men were given furloughs; to visit Lime. Now we fluted them as they started off on their vacation, with a chance to see gay Parse. However, we contented ourselves with the thought that everybody being agreeable, perhaps someday we might see the famous village, without the direction of an I.P.

A few days before Christmas, Lieut. William h. Sohooley, F.A., arrived for assignment to the company. He has been accepted as the company Christmas present, for we gathered from his orders that the company was soon to embark for the U.S. on Sunday, Dec. 22, 1918 orders were received to prepare the Air Service property for shipment, overland and it was a peppy bunch that escorted the Delahayes along the muddy roads that Sunday night, nearly as proud as the day they first took their girls home from church. On the 23rd. they started overland with the trucks, Ninohes, and other property for Hamorantin, seven enlisted men with Lieut. Own in charge the rest of the time here the company spent in getting ready to move. We were very sorry to have to leave two of our number in the Hospital, on Dec. 29, 1918, when we finally got orders to proceed to Brest for shipment to the U.S.

Arriving at Brest, about 5:00 A.M. Dec. 30, 1918, we marched out to Camp Pontanezen, where we were quartered in tents. It was a long tiresa march, but every man made the trip with the company, and by 8 o'clock we settled. Guards were posted and general details looked after.

Every day we looked forward to dope concerning our leaving. When one ge started home, it is mighty hard to put on the brakes, and stop for gasoline. On Jan. 3, 1919 we moved into barracks in billeting section, 3, Camp Pontanezen, and the following day we were inspected for short equipment. rilings were in good shape and the company passed a creditably inspection. After this came several days of watchful waiting, and detail worked for the Y X.O.A., Knights of Columbus, and vartaus other Asa until the night of Jan. 9, 1919. when the order came out saying that the 23rd. was due to sail on the Big Pond. And now it is time to start up the gang plank on

that long trail that leads to somewhere in the good Old U.S.L., and with a Goodbye Fralcaise, Maio Little Old Home crown, we close. The nENTY-THIRD BALLOON CU ANY, of the Air Service, Branch of the United States Army, today discontinues its members in the anerioan E.F.

Arrival in France

Arrival at the front 3 Nov 1918

Days ascensions made in S.O.S

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A

Total days ascensions made

Number of ascensions made in S.O.S.

Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.

Total number of ascensions made

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

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

Total number of hours in the air

Artillery adjustments in S.O.S.

Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A

Total number or artillery adjustments

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

23rd Balloon Company (22nd Balloon Group)

HQ-Post Field, OK, 1919-22

Inactive 1923-30

Chicago, IL, 1930-32

Inactive 1932-33

Arrived at the port of Boston, MA, on 21 January 1919 on the S.S. Canada as Balloon Company No. 23. Transferred to Camp Devens, MA, and arrived there the same day. Demobilized on 29 January 1919 at Camp Devens. Reconstituted and organized 16 June 1919 at Ross Field, Arcadia, CA. Demobilized on 31 August 1919 at Ross Field. Reconstituted and organized 25 September 1919 at Post Field, OK, as the 23rd Balloon Company. Reactivated with personnel

from the inactivated 39th Balloon Company. Redesignated as Balloon Company No. 23 on 13 September 1921. Demobilized on 26 June 1922 at Post Field. Reconstituted in the Regular Army as the 23rd Balloon Company on 24 March 1923 and 19th Airship Company made Active Associate. Allotted to the Sixth Corps Area on 5 September 1928. Assigned to the 22nd 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. Designated mobilization training station was Scott Field 1923-33. Demobilized on 1 October 1933.

Organization Day: 25 September. Chosen to commemorate the company's reorganization at Fort Sill, OK, on 25 September 1919.

#### Commanders, 23rd Balloon Company

1st Lt. Carlton F. Bond

25 Sep 19-Oct 20

Inactive

26 Jun 22-ao Jun 30

Capt. Roger S. McCullough

Oct 20-27 Jan 22

Unknown\*\*

ao Jun 30-Jun 32

Capt. William B. Mayer

27 Jan 22-26 Jun 22

Inactive

Jun 32-1 Oct 33

\*\* RAI commanders: Organized Reserve officers.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources