

25th BALLOON COMPANY

LINEAGE

Organized Feb 1918

STATIONS

Post Field, OK

Camp Morrison, VA, Mar 1918

Port of Embarkation, Newport News, VA, Jun 1918

Europe, Jun 1918

Mitchel Field, NY, Jun 1919

Ross Field, CA, Jul 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 25th Balloon Company was organized on February 16, 1918, in accordance with the telegraphic instructions from the Chief Signal Officer of the Army and in compliance with par.-2, S- O. 10, Hq. First Balloon Squadron, Post Field, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, dated February 16, 1918. Its commissioned personnel was made up of six officers, who had for the past six months been with Co. A, First Balloon Squadron These were: 1st Lieut. William W. Crehore, Jr., 1st Lieut. Wiley D. Allen, 1st Lieut. Henry P. Hare, 1st Lieut. James W. Lavers, 1st Lieut. Theodore A. Straw and 2d Lieut. Harvey H. Holland.

Old Company A," as it was called, was the first balloon company to be organized in the United States Army and received its training at Fort Omaha, Nebr., leaving there for Fort Sill on September 22, 1917. This company was dissolved on February 16, 1918, to form the 25th and 26th Balloon Companies.

The enlisted personnel of the 25th Balloon Company was made up of forty-five men of "Old Company A" with the addition of one hundred and fifty-five recruits who had arrived at Fort Sill from Kelley Field, San Antonio, Texas, during the first week of January, 1918. Most of the "old Company A men were non-commissioned officers so that the first few weeks of the 25th Company's existence were spent to good advantage in the instruction of the new men, the old men forming an excellent nucleus with which to work. The first sergeant of the 25th Company was M. E. John H. McCullough, who had also been the first sergeant of Company A and had previously served nine years in the Signal Corps.

The commanding officer of the 25th Company was 1st Lieut. William W. Crehore, Jr., who had previously been the commanding officer of old Balloon Company A. The development of the company was very rapid indeed and it was fully equipped and trained for overseas service when the orders to proceed to the port of embarkation came on March 10, 1918.

The company proceeded to the Aeronautical General Supply Depot and Concentration Camp, Morrison, Va, on March 12, 1918. It-arrived at Morrison, Va., on March 16. The stay there was somewhat longer than had been anticipated, the time was taken up with classes for enlisted specialists, infantry drill and frequent inspections of trie overseas equipment. While at Morrison there were a few changes among the enlisted personnel and also among the officers. Lieutenant Crehore left the company on March 27 to take command of the 27th Balloon Company which was also stationed at Morrison. Lieutenant Allen was in command for eight days and was succeeded by Lieutenant Griffin. On May 7 Lieutenant Crehore was transferred back to the company and assumed command again.

The company left Morrison, June 29, 1918, in compliance with par. I, Confidential Order No. 5, Hq. Aeronautical General Supply Depot and Concentration Camp and proceeded to Newport News where it embarked for overseas aboard the U. S. transport America.

The 25th Balloon Company arrived at Brest, France, on July 12, 1918. On the morning of the thirteenth the ship was unloaded and the men lightered into port, The first impressions of France were varied and assorted but the first question everywhere was "Where is the war?" If you ever have been to Brest, you know where the Pontanezen Barracks or the so-called "rest camp" is located. That was the next layover and it lasted twelve days, the company going from there to La

Courtine, Creuse, in the central part of France to take the finishing touches on the training to do battle with the Huns. We arrived there on the evening of the fifth day out from Brest. Ordinarily the same trip would take about two days and a night on a slow American local.

Upon arrival we relieved the 8th Company and started our work. Our training was hardly the sort that we expected but we were there until the day the Armistice was signed, when we left for the St. Mihiel Sector. The stay of the company at La Courtine, while not the sort of work the men were expecting, was extremely valuable for the development of all departments of the company and ideal weather enabled the company to do some excellent work .in liaison with the artillery units stationed there. While there the company adjusted fire on the La Courtine range for the 58th, 63rd and 65th Regiments, C. A. C, 310th , 311th, 312th, 349th, 350th and 351st Regiments, F. A. Maneuvers, of two and three days were frequent occurrences during the last few weeks at La Courtine.

We were destined to be relieved by the 30th Balloon Company about the first of October but their presence was not heralded until the first week of November. We received orders to send transportation to the Balloon Depot for equipment of that company. M. E. McCullough was selected to convey this equipment to the 25th Balloon Company from the depot and was on the return journey when a suspension bridge over the Allier River at Mars gave way under the heavily loaded truck, pinning McCullough under the steering wheel and gear shift, inflicting injuries from which he died two hours later while in the wreckage.

The chauffeur, Chauffeur Greene, while assisting McCullough was forced to lie in the icy water the greater part of two hours, the exposure causing an attack of pneumonia from which he recovered after an illness of about six weeks. In the death of McCullough the company lost a master electrician and first sergeant that could not be replaced, a man that was well liked by everyone that knew him. The Army lost a man who was a credit to any organization to which he might belong and a credit to the Army for the efficiency that was manifest in him. This was the only casualty that the company has ever suffered either as Co, A, 1st Balloon Squadron, or the 25th Company. It was about this time that Lieutenant Crehore, the Commanding Officer, received his promotion to captaincy while attending Balloon School Camp De Souge.

When the company left La Courtine they were moved to a camp three kilometers west of Hattonchattel. This camp was an old German camp partly intact but soon rebuilt with salvage material of the St. Mihiel Sector. The company was attached to the 28th Division and while with them made possibly the longest maneuver against time in the history of American balloons. This maneuver was thirty-two kilometers in length over entanglements, trenches, through woods and shelled villages and the balloon was bedded in four hours and thirty minutes from the time of the start of the maneuver.

The stay of -the company at this camp was comparatively short, the destination being a billeting town, Villiers-le-Sec (Meuse), being assigned to the Ninth Army Corps and attached to the 88th Division. Division, brigade and regimental maneuvers are many and the 25th Balloon Company is always on time and playing the part of balloon of command.

But even at that we have the decided advantage over the men that are by now back in the states

in an old soldiers home at Fort Omaha, Arcadia, or if you like it better, at Post Field. We are conducting a primary balloon school and graduating six officers every two weeks. Not that it doesn't take a little hard work to keep up the company and turn out this many officers, but this company has its first proposition to be up against that it cannot go through in premier form. When you hear from us again we will still be batting out .900 and growling that they don't come thick enough to bat them out faster. Captain Crehore has been relieved of the command of this company, having gone back to the States with many other Air' Service officers to become civilians again. His successor, 1st Lieut. R. S. Miesse, a cavalry officer (Det. to A. S.), of the Regular Army, who has been everything in the army below the rank of captain and who, we hope, will be everything above.

When this history goes to press, the 25th Balloon Company will still be at our present position, striving to their utmost to finish the duty that our lot may be, happy and contented even though we see the other companies go home, though we cannot. "Charitable—that's us all over, Mabel."

Arrival in France 12 Jul 1918
Arrival at the front 18 Nov 1918
Days ascensions made in S.O.S 54
Days ascensions made in Z.O.A
Total days ascensions made 54
Number of ascensions made in S.O.S. 180
Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.
Total number of ascensions made 180
Total number of hours in air S.O.S. 218.03
Total number of hours in air Z.O.A.
Total number of hours in the air 218.03
Artillery adjustments in S.O.S. 104
Artillery adjustments in Z.O.A
Total number or artillery adjustments 104
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

doubtless you remember having heard a peculiarly busy buzzing of the wires between Washington and Fort Sill along about the sixteenth of February, 1918. Yes? Well, here's the secret. That day special, general and a dozen other different varieties of orders were flying about like waste paper in a wind storm. The result was that before evening Uncle Sam was the proud father of a brand new sparkling balloon company, the twenty-fifth.

We've been going strong ever since, a regular whirlwind, except for the fact that about nine months out of the twelve of our gay young life have been spent at waiting to get from one place to the other. We've fought—oh yes— sandstorms and taxi drivers at home, cooties here in France, but nary a whack at the Hun.

We joined the army to do something or other with a balloon. But we know what we're fated for now all right, and believe me, we've had some training at it too. So, when we get home, if any of you happen to be still alive, and you should go out to dine some night, when the old greybearded flat-foot with the napkin over his arm tells you "The fish is extra fine tonight, sir"—well, look him over. The chances are that he used to be one of the old twenty-fifth balloon waiters.

Let us pass quietly by the first chapter of our history, the terrific strain of intensive training, the squads east and westing, the pick and shoveling. Let us only mention in passing the slight delay at the port of embarkation, a mere matter of waiting of one hundred and six days till they found a ship for us, while we dramatized the I. D. R.

We will leave it up to you to draw your own conclusions about our internment in the Rest Camp when we arrived at Brest. I took us a week to escape. Then we burned the air at an average speed of nearly three kilometers every few hours behind a large brass bound French locomotive.

We got as far as a place named La Courtine, and the engineer went off some place to pick daisies, the conductor lay down under a large shade tree for his afternoon snooze and the locomotive expired with a plaintive sigh. So, there we stuck and stuck and stuck. That was in July, 1918, as nearly as anyone can remember.

July passed, August came. The Yanks were getting into action all along the line now. It would only be a matter of a few days till we too would be up where the fighting was. Meanwhile, we did liaison work with eight or ten artillery units as they came, completed their training and left for the great war. August passed, still we stayed. September came. Restez ici. September passed. Toujours la meme chose. October came.—We were beginning to forget almost, that there was a war, except for what we saw in the papers.

October passed and November came. The blooming war ended. Then, we began to get some action.

We moved to Hattonchatel, up in the old St. Mihiel sector. Here we settled down on the nearest thing to the front that could be found, an old German camp. Incidentally, while here, we hung up a new A. E. F. record, i. e. while doing a maneuver with the 28th division, we moved the balloon over thirty two kilometers of trenches, wire entanglements, woods and shelled villages, bedded her down and were ready for action in four hours and thirty minutes.

Later we moved to Villers-le-Sec. Now we are back at our old job of running a balloon school, hoping that they won't be a hundred and six days finding our boat again.

On 25 Jul the company entrained for LaCourtine, Creuse where it arrived on 27 Jul. The 25th Company relieved the 8th Balloon Co in LaCourtine, this enabling the 8th Company to go to the front.

On 11 Nov the company received orders to go to Toul for assignment to the Second Army. It entrained on 15 Nov and arrived in Toul on 19 Nov. The company was assigned to the Balloon Wing 2nd Army Reserve and was stationed about three kilometers west of Hattonchattel in the St Mihiel Sector. Inclement weather prevented many ascensions while here but the company did participate in one maneuver of the 28th Division.

On 15 Dec in compliance with verbal orders from Chief Air Service, 2nd Army the company moved to the village of Villers-le-sec where it is now billeted taking part in the maneuvers of the 88th Division.

There was only one death suffered by the company and that was the accidental death of master electrician John H. McCullough he was killed when on the company trucks fell through a bridge over the Allier river near Mars-sur-allier on 6 Nov 1918

25th Balloon Company

HQ-Ross Field, CA, 1919-20

Post Field, OK, 1920-21

Inactive 1921-22

Active at Ross Field, Arcadia, CA, as of June 1919 as Balloon Company No. 25. Transferred about December 1920 to Post Field, OK. Inactivated in 1 October 1921 at Post Field and 13th Balloon Company made Active Associate. Demobilized on 6 September 1922.

Commanders, 25th Balloon Company

1st Lt. Loren D. Schiff

ao Jun 20-Jul 20

Capt. Charles P. Clark

3 Jan 21-25 Apr 21

Capt. Charles P. Clark

Jul 20-18 Dec 20

Capt. George D. Watts

25 Apr 21-25 Jul 21

1st Lt. Harry G. Montgomery

18 Dec 20-3 Jan 21

Capt. Lester T. Miller

25 Jul 21-1 Oct 21

Inactive
1 Oct 21-6 Sep 22

Air Force Order of Battle
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Sources