

45 BALLOON COMPANY

MISSION

LINEAGE

45 Balloon Company

Activated, 23 Mar 1918

Demobilized, Apr 1919

STATIONS

Camp John Wise, TX

Camp Morrison, VA, Aug 1918

Port of Embarkation, Newport News, VA, Sep 1918

Europe, Sep 1918

France, 14 Oct 1918

Mitchel Field, NY, Apr 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

2Lt H. J. Von Leer

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

On 23 Mar 1918, the 45th Balloon Company under command of Lt Hunter J. von Lear was organized at Camp John Wise, TX. The first batch of recruits, sixty-three in number being drawn from the 5th Casual Detachment, in the quarantine section of Camp John Wise. During the first few days of its organization and while still in quarantine, the company drilled hard and performed other camp duties construction work being the chief of these.

On 11 Apr the company was moved to the main camp, where it first operated a balloon.

On 25 Apr the company left Camp John Wise from where it moved to the Missouri Aeronautical Society Grounds, San Antonio, TX. Here usual camp duties were performed the greater part of the work consisting of infantry drill and balloon maneuvering.

On 7 May the company left MAS and moved to a site near Camp Bullis, TX. Immediately upon arrival, the Co took charge of the balloon placed for it and an ascension was made within the first hour. Brush had to be cleared away tents were erected forming two streets while a road bed was laid down the main road to the camp. A balloon bed was also laid out and constructed and a brush hanger built.

On 13 May, the Co returned to Camp John Wise. Here it resumed balloon work, while competitive drill between all the companies in the Post. As well as athletics was started. Baseball teams track and tug of war teams were organized in the Co. Of these, the tug of war team proved most successful as it won every contest in which it engaged. A glee club was also formed. In July this glee club carried first prize in the Stunts Night program at the camp YMCA, the prize being a pennant made of balloon fabric. Boxing and wrestling also figured largely in the general sports.

On 30 Jul the Co moved from Camp John Wise and entrained at 1600 for Aeronautical General Supply Depot and Concentration Camp, Camp Morrison, VA arriving 3 Aug at 1300. Here for 31 days the company took entire charge of Camp guard at the end of which time it was relieved and placed on general fatigue duties. Again athletics were entered into and at a field meet held in Smithfield, VA by the camp the company carried the honors of the day against the entire field.

1 Oct the company embarked on the SS Dante Alighieri enroute to Brest France and had an uneventful trip.

13 Oct reached Brest Harbour docking at 1030 remained on board the transport all night debarking at 1300 14 Oct. Marched from Brest Docs to Plat no 594 B.S. #5 Pontanezen Barracks, a distance of six miles.

At 0300 on the morning of 23 Oct the company marched from Pontanezen Barracks to Brest and entrained at 0800 for la Teste, De Buch Gironde. Reached La Teste at 1000 on 24 Oct and the Co marched to the balloon field a distance of about two miles.

While at La Teste a new Barracks, HQ and supply houses, latrines, balloon bed and hanger and all the varied necessity of closer observing for the artillery at Le Corneau, the company had to remove all overhead power and telephone lines obstructing the free maneuvering of the balloon by laying underground conduits across the streets at various junction points.

A short time after arrival at the field the 45th Balloon Company drew its balloon from the Balloon School, Camp Souge, Constructed the balloon bed, put the balloon in operation 31 Oct 1918.

In accordance with AEF orders reducing the enlisted strength of balloon companies to 170 men, 24 men of 45th balloon company were transferred to the 101st Balloon Replacement Company, Camp Souge. **14 Nov 1918**

Arrival in France 13 Oct 1918

Arrival at the front

Days ascensions made in S.O.S 6

Days ascensions made in Z.O.A

Total days ascensions made 6

Number of ascensions made in S.O.S. 18

Number of ascensions made in Z.O.A.

Total number of ascensions made 18

Total number of hours in air S.O.S. 17.50

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

Total number of hours in the air 17.50

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

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Steven E. Clay. *US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941*. Combat Studies Institute Press. US Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Nd.