

8 AIRDROME SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

8 Airdrome Squadron, 26 Nov 1943
Inactivated, 16 Feb 1946

STATIONS

Chatham Field, Georgia
Baer Field, Fort Wayne Indiana
Lake Charles AAF, LA
Lalmanir Hat, India
Yang Tong Air Base, Kweilin, China
Hsingching, China
Peishiyi, China, 26 Nov 1945

ASSIGNMENTS

5308 Air Service Area Command
315 Air Service Group
Northern Sub-Depot

COMMANDERS

Capt Harry A. Garvin, 23 Jul 1943
Maj Edmund P. Coyne, 18 Sep 1943
Capt Hartland Woodhouse

Capt Walter A. Keffer, 23 Mar 1943

Capt P. S. Fancner

Capt Lange

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 8th Airdrome Squadron was activated at Baer Field, Fort Wayne Indiana on November 26, 1943. Personnel came into the organization and on February 3, 1943 it was ordered to proceed to Lake Charles, Army Air Base, Lake Charles, Louisiana, a permanent change of station. At this time the organization has no ordnance or medical section.

Captain Walter A. Keffer assumed command on March 23, 1943 and the organization was brought to full strength. This was accomplished by June 10, 1943. At Lake Charles the 8th Airdrome Squadron assisted the 326th Bomb (M) Group in servicing and maintenance of aircraft. Also set up Communications and did armament and ordnance work.

Upon departure of the 326th Bomb (M) Group in the middle of June 1943, the Squadron took basic training and overseas conditioning. On June 18th the Squadron was taken off the alert and approximately two weeks later the engineering section, the clerks, and the communications section with the exception of the teletype men, making a total of 162 EM and two Officers, left the Squadron on July 2, 1943 for an overseas destination. This left the organization with 117 EM and no Officers as prior to this movement, the other eight officers had left the organization.

Until July 24th, this personnel did various odd jobs such as policing, guard duty, planting shrubbery and building walks on the base.

On July 24th the organization received orders to move to Chatham Field, Georgia, a permanent change of station. The 117 EM and no officers entrained and were alerted, enroute, for overseas movement.

On July 27th, replacements of officers and enlisted men began in order to bring the Squadron up to full T. O. strength, with Captain Harry A. Garvin having assumed command as of July 23, 1943. This was accomplished by August 15th, 1943 with the exception of the medical and statistical officers and some EM in the medical section.

On August 15th the organization moved by truck convoy to Columbia Army Base, South Carolina on temporary change of station which was to last thirty days. While there the Squadron was attached to the 309th Bomb Group (M) and was under the jurisdiction of the Third Bomber Command. In the ensuing time the opportunity was had for intensive training in maintenance of aircraft. Our work was so highly regarded by the 309th Bomb Group (M) that a letter was sent by them through channels requesting that the 8th Airdrome Squadron be permanently attached to their organization.

Men of the organization successfully completed the course given at Columbia Base Transportation School and were issued their government drivers licenses which specified that they were authorized to drive any government vehicle up to and including the 2 and ½ ton truck. These licenses were not honored at Hunter Field.

After approximately three weeks on the flight line the Squadron was ordered to Hunter Field, GA., and proceeded by truck convoy arriving on the evening of September 11th, 1943.

Overseas physical examinations were immediately started by the unit medical Officer. It was found that approximately 70% of the replacements assigned to the organization through Hunter Field were unfit for overseas service. These men were eliminated from the Squadron and more replacements were requested. Many of the new replacements were also eliminated due to both physical disabilities and malassingments in Military Occupational Specialties. Up to October 28th, 1943 adequate replacements had not been made to complete the process of replacing men physically unqualified for overseas duty which has begun in August.

On September 13, 1943 a day and a half after arrival at Hunter Field, the 3d AF inspection team visited the Squadron and three days later the POM inspection team arrived. The findings of these inspectors was that the organization was inadequately trained due to the fact that outside of the three weeks spent at Columbia AAB, S. C. the organization had not ample opportunity for further training. As a result of the findings of the POM inspectors, the readiness date of the Squadron was postponed.

An intensive program consisting of both sectional and organizational training was instituted. For this purpose the limited sectional equipment on hand was augmented by devices improvised by the Squadron personnel.

Just as the program got well under way the organization was ordered on September 25, 1943 to tear everything down and pack all organizational equipment for overseas shipment. Although considerably hampered by the difficulty in obtaining adequate packing materials, the Squadron

was able to finish the job in less than a week. On October 2, 1943 the packed equipment was loaded on the freight cars. The only equipment remaining with the Squadron was that to accompany the troops.

With the equipment on its way a comprehensive training program was instituted to correct the discrepancies noted by the POM team. Lectures, demonstrations, and practical training on Safeguarding Military Information, Chemical Warfare, Field Sanitation, First Aid, Map Reading, Compass, Bomb Reconnaissance, Chemical Decontamination, Booby Traps, Camouflage Discipline, use and care of the Carbine, Thompson Sub-Machine gun, and proficiency in the 50 caliber machine gun.

In addition, two hours daily were devoted to close order and extended order drill. During the same period the men were thoroughly processed as regards personal affairs - wills, allotments, powers of attorney. Sectional training was resumed in the afternoons.

The entire Squadron journeyed to the bombing range at Townsend, GA., and bivouacked there from October 5th to October 6th, inclusive while the men qualified with carbines, sub-machine guns, and the gun crews with the .50 caliber machine guns. On the bivouac pup tents were set up, field ranges set up, field sanitation was practiced and camouflage discipline was strictly maintained. On October 7th, the organization returned to Hunter Field.

Due to the fact that our scheduled time on the range was shortened, it was necessary for the entire squadron to return to the range in order to complete firing on the following Sunday October 10th; the trip being accomplished by truck convoy.

Upon return from the range the training schedule was resumed and two mile hikes and one ten mile hike were accomplished. Stamping of clothing, salvage and show-down of equipment were initiated.

The POM team arrived for the second time on October 15TH, 1943 and an exhaustive inspection ensued. In the course of this inspection the Squadron was sent out on a simulated Field Problem involving all of the sections of the organization. It was required to set up an airdrome with facilities to service 18 fighter aircraft. A field lighting system was installed, communications throughout the airdrome was established, a message center set up, and the different sections of the organization were dispersed and camouflaged for security.

On Saturday, October 23, 1943 telegrams were sent to all the EM on furlough ordering them to return to the field immediately, thus canceling the remainder of their furlough, due to the moving date of the organization having been set forward.

As the men returned from furlough, the training schedule was resumed in compliance with the suggestions of the POM inspectors; in addition to which the final processing of TAT equipment for shipment was completed.

On October 30, 1943 the unit of 256 Enlisted Men and 10 Officers entrained at 2030 for the POE. Morale was good and everyone was speculating as to what experiences were in store for them in the weeks and months to come.

We detrained at Camp Patrick Henry, Va. On October 31, 1943 at 1115 hours and were immediately given a next to impossible schedule to maintain in order to be ready to board ship in less than 48 hours. Pay formation was held at 1900 and all the Enlisted Men received their pay for the month of October. Many of the men sent money offers home feeling they wouldn't need much money for the next month.

On November 1, 1943 the overseas physicals were given and the 3 men who failed it were replaced by men from the MRPE Replacement Pool.

Organizational TAT was loaded on MR 617 better known as the James Hoban (a compact little Liberty ship) at 1540 hours. The same afternoon Typhus and Cholera shots were given to all of us.

The Administration, Supply, and Medical sections of the Squadron were strained to the breaking point working about 38 of the 44 hours we were at Camp Patrick Henry.

On November 2, 1943 everyone was up at 0430, at the assembly point at 0600 and on the train at 0700 which was to take us to the dock. 1st Lt. Slocum, Adjutant and 1st Sgt. Aiken were the first ones to climb up the gang plank which was so steep that many of the men had trouble climbing up onto the deck. Everyone was aboard by early afternoon so the good ship James Hoban slipped out of its berth and dropped anchor out in the harbor. There were 499 Enlisted Men and 42 Officers aboard crowded into the forward hold and scarcely enough room in which to move around.

On November 4, 1943 the "James Hoban" weighed anchor and started its long trip. Major Coyne, our Commanding Officer, was Transport Commander. Conditions aboard ship were pretty rough and unbearable so the Transport Commander had his hands full trying to correct all the gripes and complaints. Thirty-four of our men manned the guns but did not have an opportunity to use them. 1st Lt. Tear, our Medical Officer, was the Transport Surgeon. He and his 8 medical Enlisted Men really had their hands full treating sea sickness, colds, and minor cuts, and afflictions. Unfortunately for Pfc. William McQuade, he received a severe cigarette burn on the pupil of his eye. Lt Tear was right on the job and performed a very skillful and delicate operation (with the boat lurching and rocking in heavy seas) on McQuade's eye ball that very probably saved the sight of his eye.

The days and weeks passed with boat drills, alternately fair and rough weather, and a definite lowering of morale by most all concerned, for the food was not palatable and very definitely prepared in adequate amounts. But we managed all right and our spirits rose when we sighted land and passed the Rock of Gibraltar.

The 23d of November 43 was a great day for we bid farewell to the old "James Hoban" and walked down the "gang-way" onto the dock at Oran, Algeria. Then we climbed into trucks that took us out of town about 15 miles to Staging Area #2 which was to be our home for the next six weeks.

The 24th of November 1943 we unloaded our TAT equipment from the boat and trucked it out to our tent area. The 38th and 60th Portable Surgical Hospital Units were attached to our Squadron for rations. Thanksgiving day was a memorable day because we had our first good meal, a turkey dinner, in over 3 weeks.

The ensuing days and weeks were busy ones for everyone. A permanent interior guard was set up around our camp. Much work had to be done on the area such as digging drainage ditches, building paths, etc. We were called upon to furnish large details of men to help load and unload ships at the docks in Oran. The weather was cold and rainy most of the time and we were not able to get cots for the Enlisted Men until after we had been there two weeks.

Major Coyne organized a schedule of training covering First Aid, Map Reading, use of compass; Scouting and Patrolling, Combat Intelligence, Security and Combat team firing. The firing was made practical and interesting by incorporating the course of training into a tactical problem. The program was very unpopular to the majority of the officers but when completed the enlisted men realized the need and value of such training.

On January 7, 1944 we broke camp and climbed into trucks that took us down to the dock where we boarded the transport "Ruys". We pulled out of port January 10, 1944 and headed east. This boat trip was far different than our first one, for there were adequate facilities for entertainment and recreation, which made our three weeks cruise very pleasant. Again members of the 8th were used to man the guns. This time about 180 men were used and every one liked the job.

On February 1, 1944 we docked at Bombay, India and disembarked two days later on February 3d. We boarded a train and reached Deolali, a British Camp, at 1700 February 3d.

On February 4, 1944 the Squadron loaded onto another train bound for Calcutta. We reached the staging area at Kanchrapara just outside of Calcutta about 0530 on February 10th. 1st Lt. Vieth our Supply Officer who we hadn't seen since last October joined us there. He had docked at Calcutta with our Organizational Equipment only a few days previously.

Our stay at Kanchrapara lasted about three weeks during which time our men worked continuously on an Ordnance detail, unloading ammunition and bombs from freight cars.

On March 1, 1944 the Squadron left Kanchrapara to start the long tedious trip by train, riverboat and train to Chabua. 1st Lt. Vieth stayed behind with Sgt. Berger, Sgt. Marids, and Pfc. McKee to take care of our equipment and get it started on its way to catch up with us.

We started from Kanchrapara in the afternoon of March 1, 1944. Major Coyne was Troop Train Commander with over 600 Officers and EM to take care of. On March 2nd we left the train at 1830 at Sirang Sabt and boarded the river boat Mahlong at 2000. We were forced to carry all our TAT and rations over 1/2 mile in the heat of the day in a sand storm. But we managed, as we always do, and finished the job, had a light supper and were ready to slip out into the Kramaputia at 2000. With over 500 men and their equipment aboard and space so limited it was an impossibility for everyone to stretch out on the deck and sleep. As a result none of us had too good a nights sleep and welcomed the breaking of day.

On March 3d we left the barge at 0730 at Thietmak Ghat and walked to a British rest camp where we stayed over night to rest up.

On March 4, 1944 our Squadron and two smaller units loaded their equipment and men onto a smaller riverboat which was to take us further up the river which had become shallower necessitating the use of a craft drawing less water. We pulled away from shore at 1145 and spent two nights aboard; arriving at Pandu at 0900 on March 5th. Here we unloaded all our equipment and carried it up a hill about one-half mile and loaded it on the train. The train pulled out at 1800 and we spent two nights on the train before we finally reached the end of the line. Here we loaded our equipment into trucks and were driven to the Polo Grounds at Chabua arriving there at about 1700 on March 8th. For the first time since March 1st Major Coyne was able to "let down" and relax, for all his charges had completed the long hard trip without any mishaps or accidents, or casualties.

For a couple of days it seemed as though we would be broken up and not be able to proceed to our destination in China. But this matter was finally straightened out and our spirits rose again, for everyone in the outfit wanted to go on to China. A day or so after we arrived in Chabua the old members of the Squadron ran into a bunch of their friends, former members of the 8th who had left the states in July 1943 with a group of Air Corps fillers. This meeting was quite a coincidence and certainly was cause for back slapping and the swapping of stories, and talking about the good old days.

On March 18th 2nd Lt. Mulloy flew over to Kunming to check in our TAT Equipment as it arrived there. It was here that he met Cpl. Raymond Watkins our Supply NCO. Watkins hadn't seen any one in our outfit since he said goodbye to Lt. Vieth, our Supply Officer, back in December at the Los Angeles POE, so he was over-joyed to hear that the 8th had finally caught up to him.

On March 21st 2nd Lt. Rentz and seven EM of our Headquarters section reached 5308th Air Service Area Command (P) at APO 627. From March 26 to the 29th inclusive the entire organization was flown into China.

On March 29, 1944 3 Officers and 57 Enlisted Men started the long tough trip by train, truck, and train to APO 430. The average time for this trip was two days.

On April 6, 1944 1st Lt. Slocum and 2nd Lt Mulley with 26 enlisted men including 1st Sgt. Aiken and M/Sgt Hellman arrived at 0530 at APO 430. Major Coyne stayed in Kunming until practically all of his men had been started off on the trip to Kweilin and then flew to Kweilin arriving here April 10th before the majority of his men had arrived. Consequently, he was able to be where he was needed most at the right time. By April 16th the last group of our men had completed the long trip from Kunming to Kweilin. Lt. Hacking and Pfc McKee were still in Chabua getting our equipment checked and on its way over the "Hump".

The 8th Airdrome Squadron was divided into 13 teams of from 10 to 20 Enlisted Men each and 11 teams to date have been sent to outlying bases here in East China. [The teams were sent to Liuchow (2 teams); to Chihkiang (2 teams); to Tanchuk (2 teams); to Suichwan; to Nanning; to Hengyang; to Lingling; and to Paoching. And later to Namyung and to Kanchow.] Fifteen EM in the Headquarters section have been attached to Headquarters Yang Tong Air Base and assigned to duties here.

According to reports received from outlying bases where our men are working on D/S, to a man they are working hard, enjoying the work they are doing, feeling very happy and contented, and needless to say their morale is very high. Even though the 8th Airdrome Squadron is scattered, the men are doing a grand job working at jobs they were not necessarily trained for but which never the less they enjoy. As a result most every man has found a spot for his self so that he now feels he is really doing something which will materially help to bring an end to the war.

At this time we have 259 EM and 14 Officers assigned to the squadron. This leaves us two enlisted men short and two Officers over authorized T/O strength.

At this time, June 1944, the 8th Airdrome Squadron was based at Yang Tong Air Base, Kweilin, China, under the command of the 5308th Air Service Area Command (P), Sector No. 3.

Mid-June 1944, saw a number of the 8th Airdrome Squadron's men stationed at Suichwan returning to its home base at Kweilin due to the evacuation of Suichwan. At the end of June, 3 men were sent to Liuchow, 1 Officer and 6 Enlisted Men (EM) were sent to Kunming, while 9 men were relieved from Detached Service at Hengyang.

On June 30th, 1944, there were 76 enlisted men assigned and 7 attached present for duty at Yang Tong Air Base here in Kweilin; 185 enlisted men assigned and 8 still on detached service at outlying bases here in East China.

July continued with the movement of men throughout East China with 8 Enlisted Men returning from Kanchow, 9 returned from Lingling Air Base, and 7 enlisted men traveling to Poaching on temporary duty, 6 of them returned to Kweilin a few days later. 11 enlisted men were evacuated from Yang Tong Air Base to APO 627, Kunming.

On August 4th, 12 of our enlisted men who were at Kunming were sent to Liuchow.

On August 22nd, Sergeant John W. Collier, was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action on 11 May 1944. Sgt. Collier, who is stationed at Tanchuk, was not seriously injured, for which we were all very thankful. He has the distinction of being the first member of the 8th to receive the Purple Heart.

On 5 September, Sgt. Ruford H. Smith, was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy action at Lingling, China on 27 August 1944. Sgt. Smith was not seriously injured and is the second man in our Squadron to receive this award.

On 14 September, Major Coyne, our Commanding Officer and 40 EM were transferred to Luliang, China traveling by air.

On 16 September, the Squadron was relieved from attachment, Sector #3, CASAC, APO 430, to Sector #2, CASAC, APO 210, with station at Hsingching, China. This was due to reasons of military necessity and there was and is still going on a rallying of the Squadron from Lingling, Tanchuk, Chihkiang, Liuchow, Poaching, Namyung, Nanning, Yang Tong, Ehr Tong, Lia Chia Chen. These fields with the exception of Liuchow and Chihkiang were either blown up or in the process of being blown up. For many of the Squadron, it was an arduous trip by trucks, trains, which were dependent on the whims of nature, man and fortune. So far, all have come in, in good shape.

On 17 September, 1 officer and 9 EM departed from Chengkung, for this station. On 18 September, M/Sgt. Hellman and 24 other EM departed Luliang, for this station.

On 26 September, Squadron Headquarters; Major Coyne and 2nd Lt. Mulloy and 35 EM arrived at Hsingehing, China for permanent change of station, and the assignment of men to the various bases in this Sector was begun.

On 27 September, 14 EM rejoined Squadron, enroute from Kunming by motor convoy. Then on 28 September, 37 other EM rejoined Squadron, after a trying journey of 17 days by motor convoy and trains from Liuchow, China. There had been two cases of severe illness enroute but due to the first aid and constant attendance of our medics, this shipment came thru in fine shape, albeit tired, dirty, hungry and overdrawn financially. On same date, 17 EM, enroute from Liuchow by motor convoy, were at Peishiyi, placed on D/S.

September was a more than usually active month for the 8th Airdrome; a dispersal and a gathering; and a further dispersal; but there were opportunities for both officers and men to see each other and to exchange experiences.

This month of October 1944, for the 8th, was a continuance of the gathering and the dispersal that had gone on in the previous month. Some of our officers and men were yet at bases in South-East China; Nanning, Chihkiang, Nanyung, Kanchow, Liuchow and to date of this history, at Kweilin. They were standing by, prepared to blow these fields up. Meanwhile carrying on as base detachments.

Early in the month, 7 EM reported for duty after an arduous motor trip from Ehr Tong, while 3 EM were sent out to A-3. 15 other men reported for duty, having traveled by motor convoy from Kunming. 2 Officers and 2 EM rejoined from Kunming while 4 EM went out on temporary duty to base A-2.

On 11 October, Captain Tear and 16 men departed for a point between Station A-1 and A-7 to do rescue work on a crashed airplane. They were give this commendation from the Commanding Officer of Sector No. 2, CHINA AIR SERVICE AREA COMMAND: It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and commend you for the splendid and untiring efforts exerted by you in the performance of outstanding duty under hazardous and adverse weather conditions as a member of the Emergency Rescue Crew who extracted by use of pocket-knives, hack-saws, crow-bars and axes, the bodies of five dead and one living flier from the wreckage of two military aircraft, near this station, on 11 October 1944 and for your part in administering to the living flier who had been imprisoned for nineteen hours and later litter-carrying the five bodies and living flier to this station.

On 14 October seven teams, each consisting of one Officer and five Enlisted Men, were organized to go on D/S to the outlying bases as Base Supply Detachments. To date three of these teams have taken over their duties at bases A-13, A-14, and A-16 but the other four teams are still awaiting the necessary transportation to their respective bases.

Later 1 Officer and 5 EM reported for duty, after a difficult motor convoy trip from Kunming. On 24 October, Lt. C. K. Wong returned from D/S Secret Mission to D/S Liuchow while Lt. Dalton went out on D/S to Base A07 as Engineering Officer.

The month of November, for the 8th Airdrome Squadron, has been another month of evacuation in East China and dispersal in this part of China. Two more bases, Liuchow and Nanning were destroyed and then evacuated. The final destruction and evacuation of Kweilin, which was started in September, also took place.

On the 29th of November 13 Enlisted Men, tired and dirty after a seven day truck ride from Kunming, China, arrived at this station. eleven of these men had been evacuated from Nanning to Ninming and were then sent on to this base to rejoin the organization.

December has been another month of regrouping the personnel of the 8th Airdrome Squadron. The men continued coming up from Southeast China through Kunming to APO 210. After arriving at this base the men are reassigned to this or other bases in this sector.

On the 15th of December the 1st Sgt. rejoined the organization. Sgt Aiken had been in on the final destruction of Kweilin Air Base and Liuchow Air Base and now is back with the Squadron with many interesting stories about demolition and travel in China.

As of the 31 of December 1944 there were 97 Enlisted men at this base with one officer. The total number of officers in this Sector is 4 and the total number of enlisted men is 231.

January, the start of the new year, was rather a quiet month for the men of the 8th Airdrome Squadron. There was a little changing of stations but for the most part it all took place in Sector #2 and the moves were short. The men in east China did little or no moving about.

February started off rather quietly for the men of the 8th Airdrome Squadron but before it had ended, the few men remaining in Eastern China had seen action again. The bases of Kanchow, Nanyung and Suichwan had to be evacuated and our men at these places were once again on the move. Before the month had ended several of these men were here at APO 210 and reassigned. All stated that they would rather have stayed at their little bases back east but were relieved to be out after sweating the Japs for the past six months.

On the 1st of March the 8th was released from attached to Sector #2, CASC (P), APO 210 and was attached to the 315th Service Center, APO 210.

March was a month of little activity for the men of the 8th Airdrome Squadron. A few men came in from the bases in East China but the main activity was the shuffling of the men at the bases in this area. Men returned to the squadron from Kanchow AAB, Pengshan, Kwangnan AAB, Klunglai AAB, Hsien , Chihkiang , Changting, one of the most remote of the Eastern air bases, while men, sometime the same men who just returned days earlier, were sent to base in Kwangnan AAB, Hanchung, Ipin, Hsien AAB.

During the month of April the activity of the 8th Airdrome was more or less limited. For the most part it was a matter of re-assigning the men who had come in from bases in the East and the routine work for the men already assigned.

On April 1st 2 men returned from Lao Ho Kow after it had been demolished and evacuated. Other men arrived from Klunglai AAB, Schwanliu AAB, Chihkiang, Enshih AAB, Liangshan AAB, Lao Ho Kow, Peishiyi, and men were dispatched to Schwanliu AAB, Pungwangshun AAB, Hsingching AAB, Hsien, Hanchung, Kwangnan AAB, Pungchacheng AAB.

On 11 April orders were received awarding the Bronze Star Medal for his outstanding work in the demolition of one of the Eastern Bases to Cpl Stanley W. Kahle.

This month's highlight was of course V-E day, 8 May 1945. It was generally felt that now we could get to our job of exterminating the Japs and that we could figure on more supplies and men to carry it out. Much discussion was heard on what would happen to the Eighth once things got rolling and much hope was expressed that we might be sent back to our old stamping ground --- South-Eastern China. All members of this organization saw the War Dept. film "Two Down and One to Go" and learned that in spite of 18 months overseas very few would be eligible for discharge under the point system.

Several more men rejoined the outfit this month here at Hsingching from Chihkiang, Peishiyi, and Liangshan which are not under the jurisdiction of this service center. Those men from Chihkiang and Peishiyi, have been away from the outfit for over a year and were welcome back with open arms.

Orders were received this month authorizing S/Sgt Paul E. Faulk, Sgt Harold Bagley, and Pvt (now Pfc) Ralph Hunt, the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in connection with Military operations against the enemy from 19 Sept. to 26 Sept. for Sgts Faulk and Bagley and from 21 June to 6 July for Pvt Hunt.

As has been the case ever since this organization has been in China we are not functioning as a unit nor in the jobs we are originally trained for. Most of the men and officers are working in base detachments and in practically every section of the 315th on this base. The nomadic qualities that have been apparent since the Squadron's activation on Thanksgiving Day of 1942 are still apparent in the many changes in station and assignment. The morale is now quite high and Squadron pride is rampant as any outsider will vouch for. We are old China hands now in comparison to the rest of the personnel in this area and we have been around.

The big event of this month was a parade of the 315th Air Service Group and the 8th Airdrome Squadron on 22 June for the purpose of decorating four men, all of whom were members of this Squadron. Col. Kirkpatrick, made the presentation to Cpl William K. Mitchell and Pfc. Clifford C Bailey (Air Medal and DFC for their work with the flight section of the 315th) and to Cpl. Fable, and Pfc. Hunt, (Bronze Stars). S/Sgt. Paul Faulk, and Sgt. Bagley, (Bronze Stars), Sgt. Collier, and Sgt. Buford Smith, (Purple Hearts), were scheduled to be decorated also but were away from this base. After the presentation the troops passed in review before Col. Kirkpatrick, his staff, those decorated, and Col. Kirkpatrick's dog. This was definitely the 8th's day.

Every officer of this Squadron is on DS from the outfit. Major Coyne, our CO, is in charge of S-3 for the Service Center and since this is a full time job he has to let the Squadron run itself much more than he'd like but the outfit gets along well together and by the use of common sense needs a minimum of supervision to carry on.

Because of Major Coyne's, S-3 duties men from this organization have been driving many convoys. This month 7 men left here for Kunming, to bring heavy equipment over the Stillwell Road but arrived there late and were sent to Nanning, with vehicles instead. Sgt. John Alger, and Earl R. Murphy, are now on DS at Kuanyhan, China, one of the remote stations on the overland gas route to the forward bases.

This organization is now 20 months overseas with 15 of them actually in China. The men are slightly discouraged by the lack of formal recognition of the unit's work in this theater. The only thing to date has been one battle participation star.

21 July 1945, the 8th Airdrome Squadron was relieved from attached to the 315th Air Service Group and assigned to the Northern Sub-Depot which has its headquarters at Liangshan. The

315th Air Service Group is in the process of moving out of this area and upon the 8th Airdrome Squadron falls the responsibility of taking over such functions as Air Corps Supply, Quartermaster, Engineering, Signal Supply, Ordnance Supply and Motor Pool, all of which had formerly been operated by the 315th Service Group. Needless to say, this is a big job and will cause us many headaches, but everyone is overjoyed at the prospect of being all together and working as a unit for the first time since we came to China in March 1944. This organization just completed twenty-One (21) months overseas service and was losing its pep and zip, but this new job is a challenge to every man in the outfit to do the best job he knows how and to pull together as a team.

As of 1 August 1945 there were only 2 Officers and 126 Enlisted Men present for duty. On 31 August 1945, 9 Officers and 213 Enlisted Men were present for duty. Altogether 87 Enlisted Men and 7 Officers were returned to the organization "present for duty."

Now with over four fifths of the organization physically present here on this base, we are nearly altogether for the first time in our seventeen months in China. By next month ninety-five percent of the outfit should be here.

Since V-J Day the men talk about nothing but "when do we go home?", the uppermost thought in their minds of all of us. With ATC (the 1344th AAF Base Unit) leaving early next month we were told that we could move into Hostel #6 which they will soon be vacating. This move will be a big break for the outfit, as it will give us a chance to have a dandy hostel all to ourselves, the first time we have had this since we came to China in March 1944.

The Northern Sub Depot established its Hqs. on this base around the middle of September. The 8th Adm Sq is under the Northern Sub Depot and has been given the task of closing down this area, receiving and storing all supplies being turned in by the various organizations in this area.

Nine of our EM [Carroll E. Aiken, Glen E. Blackbutn, Elmer H. Daumiller, Howard W. Parson, Herbert M. Thuernagle, Harold A. Johnson, Michael J. Mares, Robert C. Snell, Paul Szekely] received the Bronze Star Medal this month for the important part they played in the evacuation of East China a year ago.

About the middle of September the 8th Adm Sq moved into Hostel #6 vacated by ATC when they left on the 11th of September. We now have the best setup we have had since coming to China eighteen (18) months ago. The living quarters for the EM are very nice and there is a dandy roomy Headquarters Building where Major Coyne installed his Orderly Room and Supply Room. This is the first time the 8th has had a hostel area solely for its own use, consequently the men take pride in keeping it clean and in good repair.

As of November 10, there were 9 officers and 292 EM on duty with the 8th Airdrome Squadron.

Again, we have another month of men coming and going from day to day, and from place to place. On October 1, 7 EM left for the Replacement Depot at APO 627, starting on their way to return to the states.

The usual run of events was normal, and consisted of only routine camp duties, with the exception of one and of an Ordnance warehouse burning down, with no casualties and little loss of property. On October 10, 15 EM were promoted in grade, and this brought about a boost in the morale, which is slowly on the down-hill grade. The weather is getting colder, the food is slowly getting less appetizing, and the outlook towards going home, or elsewhere for this station, gets hazier with each passing day. One thing that did help a great deal, was the arrival of thirteen movie films from Shanghai, which broke a period of almost two months without a movie. These were shown on consecutive evenings in the Rec Hall, with the permission of such things as stubborn generators and projectors that are war-weary and should have been rotated long ago.

This day, October 19, also saw another 37 EM from the 8th Airdrome Squadron on their way home, plus another 54 EM who were transferred to the 1641st Ordnance Company, for return to the states.

On October 30, Major Coyne, the former Commanding Officer that had brought the 8th overseas, departed for an assignment with the Chinese Liaison Mission at APO 679. With his departure, it leaves only three men in the unit that were with the original organization that came overseas. These men are 1st Lt. C. C. Petsch, S/Sgt. C. C. Baldock, and Sgt Denzil Richards.

As of 10 November 1945, there were 10 officers and 114 enlisted men present for duty with the 8th Airdrome Squadron at Hsingching, China.

The latter part of this month and through the early part of December, saw the men of the Eighth closing this base rapidly. Nothing of particular interest happened and the men went along with their usual squadron duties, plus the work of turning over equipment and installations to the Chinese.

On the 25th of the month, the Eighth's job at Hsingching was virtually completed, and the organization started moving to Peishiyi, China, with the departure of M/Sgt. Rowlands, who was to be acting first sergeant at Peishiyi, and four other men. Again, on the 27th of the month, a promotion list was posted, which made the sun shine for 43 men.

As of 10 December 1945, there were 8 officers and 72 enlisted men present for duty with the 8th Airdrome Squadron at Hsingching, China.

The 8th Airdrome Squadron, as an organization, officially departed from Hsingching on the 15th of December, with the departure of 3 officers and 51 enlisted men. A six-man crew was left behind to put the finishing touches to the disposition of property.

The 8th Airdrome Squadron, consisting of ten officers and 114 enlisted men, was stationed at Hsinghing, China, after V-J day and was busy liquidating this Army Air Base and turning over equipment and installations to the Chinese Air Force. This job virtually finished on November 25 and the squadron began moving to the place of its new assignment, Peishiyi, China, close to the wartime capital of Chungking.

M/Sgt Rawlands, being appointed First Sergeant at Peishiyi on November 25, left for that place on the same day, accompanied by four other enlisted men. At the beginning of December two further detachments of 13 men were transferred from Hsinching to Peishiyi. The fourth detachment sent to the new base arrived on December 11th. It consisted of S/Sgt C. C. Baldock and nine men and brought P. X. rations for Peishiyi which were very much enjoyed by the small garrison. Following this "Santa Claus" mission, twelve more men came to Peishiyi on December 12, and on the 15th the 8th Airdrome Squadron, as an organization, left Hsinching officially, leaving a six man crew behind to put the finishing touches to the disposition of property.

Meanwhile, at Peishiyi Army Air Base, Capt. P. S. Fancner was appointed Squadron and Base Commander on December 16. Two days later, four more officers were assigned who formed the flight crews for the two aeroplanes assigned to the Squadron. On the 21st of December the 8th Airdrome Squadron got its final shape, when the six men forming the rearguard at Hsinching flew over to Peishiyi and Capt. Ch. Lange and 1st Lt. L. Tippin joined the organization for duty. Capt. Lange took over command from Lt. Fancner on December 23.

After its transfer to Peishiyi the Eighth Airdrome Squadron was constantly taking in and letting out, transferring and retransferring men from various organizations and places. On January 6, 1946, the unit sent 16 enlisted men to Hankow on detached service.

The holiday season was pleasant and gay on the Peishiyi Air Base. On December 23 each man of the outfit received a full fifth of a bottle of Schenley's Stateside whiskey to help keep the holiday spirits going - or perhaps one should say "burning: ... 53 enlisted men got a far more precious Christmas gift than some gulps of whiskey - and they enjoyed it fully though it was delayed for some days and arrived but on December 27, in the form of an order sending them on their way home. During the holiday season, the ASC was very proficient in providing and preparing very nice dinners for Christmas and New Year, plus a "Midnight Chinese Chow" complete with chopsticks and all the trimmings, and a fire work display on New Year's Eve. With all the boxes from the people at home, the tasty meals, the whiskey and the beer, and several dances held in the city of Chungking, the majority of the men on that far Western outpost of the AAF in China had as mice a holiday season as they have had overseas. The high spirits were kept even in the first days of the new year 1946, when a new treat arrived for the men at Peishiyi in the form of more P.X. rations which included six cans of beer per head.

At the beginning of the new year, the 8th Airdrome Squadron had a strength of 175 officers and men, but only 58 were employese on the Peishiyi Army Air Base while the rest were on detached service or temporary duty assignments in different places of Western china.

Meanwhile General of the Army, George C. Marshall, had arrived in Chungking as President Harry S. Truman's Special Envoy with a mission both delicate and difficult - to act as intermediary between the National Government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and the Communist faction governing North Western China. The 8th Airdrome Squadron was charged with the task of transporting the communist delegates, General Mao Te-tsung and others, from Yen-an to Chungking and back. The squadron's crews were quite busy throughout the month of January making flights from Chungking to the capital of the communist held territory.

The redeployment program for the China Theater published in the last week of January affected the 8th Airdrome Squadron considerably, as 29 enlisted men left for Shanghai and return to the States on February 2nd. Among them were First Sergeant Berke, 13 men of the Peishiyi Army Air Base and 15 men from the Hankow detachment. But the Squadron was not to carry on for long, anyhow. On the 9th of February the deactivation order reached Peishiyi. February 16 was set as the final date.

Special Order #19, issued February 16, transferred the remaining nine officers and 65 men into the 14th Air Depot Group at Shanghai - Kiangwan. Four officers and 19 enlisted men departed for Shanghai by air on February 21, while five officers and 46 men remained in Peishiyi to close the Army Air Base. After this task had been fulfilled, they too moved to Shanghai. When the deactivation order was published, only one man of the original staff that came overseas in November 1943 was with the squadron: T/Sgt C. C. Buldock.

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.