

# **DEPOT, FAIRFIELD, CA**

## **MISSION**

### **LINEAGE**

Depot, Fairfield

### **STATIONS**

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **COMMANDERS**

### **HONORS**

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

### **OPERATIONS**

When World War I came to a close with the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, the Army Air Service was operating a number of supply depots in the continental United States. These depots were located at Americus, Georgia; Buffalo, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Fairfield, Ohio; Garden City, Long Island, New York; Houston, Texas; Little Rock, Arkansas; Los Angeles, California; Middletown, Pennsylvania; Morrison, Virginia; Richmond, Virginia; San Antonio, Texas; Sacramento, California; San Francisco, California; and Washington, D.C. The depots, with a complement of about a dozen officers and a few hundred enlisted men, received, stored, and issued all supplies and equipment to the airfields in the United States. Three aviation repair depots were responsible for the repair and maintenance of aircraft. These depots were at Dallas, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Montgomery, Alabama. The Air Service also operated an

experimental laboratory at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio, and one at Langley Field, Virginia. At first, the laboratory at McCook Field was called the Airplane Engineering Division and, later, just the Engineering Division. Both laboratories reported directly to the Chief of the Air Service.

The Air Service consolidated its repair activities at three locations-Fairfield; San Antonio; and Rockwell Field, North Island, San Diego, California--in 1920 and 1921. In 1920, it transferred the repair facilities at Indianapolis to the depot at Fairfield, erected new repair facilities at Rockwell Field, and moved the supply depot at Los Angeles to Rockwell. It transferred the repair facilities at Dallas to San Antonio in the spring of 1921. Middletown did not become both a repair and supply depot until 1925.

In January 1921, the depots at San Antonio, Middletown, Rockwell Field, Fairfield, Little Rock, Richmond, Montgomery, and Americus became air intermediate depots. Seven months later, in July, the Air Service transferred control of the depot system from Washington, D.C., to Wilbur Wright Field, Ohio, and established a new organization consisting of six military and 55 civilian employees to supervise all supply and maintenance activities at the depots. This new organization was called the Property Maintenance and Cost Compilation Section and its first chief was Captain Elmer E. Adler.

The Air Service made a number of changes in its depot structure between 1921 and 1923. During this period, it established a depot at Scott Field, Illinois, and deactivated the depots at Richmond, Montgomery, and Americus. The depot at Scott Field became the air intermediate depot for airship and balloon equipment. On January 26, 1924, the Property, Maintenance and Cost Compilation Section became the Field Service Section (FSS).

The problem that loomed largest in the eyes of most supply officers during the 1920s and 1930s was the lack of trained personnel. As early as 1925, Major Robins proposed that officers be rotated through the Engineering and Supply Departments in a two-year training program before they were assigned to a specific position at a depot. He stated that the existing practice was "to fill vacancies from the Air Service at large, ignoring the experience and qualifications of the officers selected for the posts they were to fill." Despite repeated attempts by the Materiel Division in the late 1920s and early 1930s to obtain permission to organize a training course for Air Corps supply officers, no action was taken to establish a course until the fall of 1940 when the Materiel Division Supply School was opened at the Fairfield Air Depot. The first class of 35 officers completed the eight-week course in November 1940, and the second class began in April 1941.

Before 1939, the hiring, working hours, pay, and promotion of civilians were not standard throughout the Air Corps. Both the workday and workweek varied from depot to depot. Some depots worked eight hours a day, five days a week, while others worked seven hours a day, five and a half days a week. Administrative leave without pay was also used during the 1930s whenever funds were low, and some civilian employees did not receive the minimum pay that was authorized for their grades. At various times during the 1930s, the depots were not permitted to replace employees who had died, retired, or resigned. During Fiscal Year 1936, the

four major depots employed a total of 386 civilians in their Supply Departments. The Supply Department at Fairfield had 111 civilian employees; Middletown, 72; San Antonio, 115; and Rockwell, 88. Despite the difficulties, all of the depots managed to retain a core of highly experienced civilian personnel who provided some continuity in their supply operations and who could provide on-the-job training for the new employees who began to come into the depots in 1939 and 1940.

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USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

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