

117 AERO SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

117 Aero Squadron

STATIONS

Kelly Field, San Antonio, TX

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

DH-4M

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Afterwards to the Flying School Detachment Squadron "C," the 117th Aero Squadron was organized at Kelly Field, Texas, March 18th, 1918, on which date there were only 17 men connected with the Squadron. Although not a very impressive Squadron at first. owing to the number of men connected therewith. it soon took its place among the topnotchers of Kelly Field. DUE in a large degree, to the officers under whom the men have been serving and the willingness of the men to make the Squadron rank among the Best

On April 4th, 1918. two hundred and nineteen men were transferred to this command in One day.

After passing a number of them on to another Squadron, the enlisted personnel was completed. Lieut. Frank C. Yates was then Commanding Officer and served in that capacity until relieved of the command July 22, 1918, being assigned as Commanding Officer of a Squadron in Kelly Field No. 1. The members of the command consisted of men adapted to the needs of a service squadron. the majority of the men being connected with the Field and Hangar Division. There were also a number of men who had been working at the Motor Repair Shops since their arrival on this field. Different sections of the E. & R. Department have had the services of our men since date of organization. The Transportation Department of Field No. 2 also had a number of our men working in it. The services of all these men have been appreciated, as shown by the number of promotions that have rewarded their efforts to do all they can to make this field one of the best in the United States.

On July 1st, 1918, the 117th Aero Squadron was put in charge of the 2nd Solo Stage, then operating Hangars 16-17-18. At that time there were twenty ships assigned to that stage and under the supervision of some of the oldest and most experienced non-commissioned officers that have ever had to tackle a ship that organization has maintained one of the best stages on Kelly Field. The 2nd Solo Stage included Casson and Vanderstucken Fields. Sergeant 1st Class Oscar L. Johnson. Sergeant 1st Class Paul R. C. Winans and Sergeant John J. Stark, troubleshooters at Casson Field, have been instrumental in keeping the work at a high standard at this field. Sergeant Earl J. Gaffney and Sergeant Louis C. Perry, who shot trouble at Vanderstucken Field. have always given their best in the work that they do. as shown by the excellent records of that Field. This stage now has over forty ships under its control. Sergeant 1st Class Kyren J. Dooley. stage inspector of the 2nd Solo. has had a hard task since

becoming the stage inspector. but has always demonstrated his ability in handling men and ships in the most capable manner. This stage has more ships flying than any other stage on Kelly Field. Sergeant Rex R. Jenne and Sergeant Arthur H. Koeppe. Hangar Inspectors have assisted Sergeant Dooley considerably in his work. Private 1st Class George R. Sweeney and his crew are one of the best on this stage. July 22, 1918. Lieut. George N. Belser. prominent flyer. who had been acting as Engineer Officer of the squadron from July 9th, was made Commanding Officer and Lieut. Leonce H. Smith. another prominent flyer of Kelly Field, was assigned as Engineering Officer. Under the direction of these two officers and Sergeant 1st Class Charles W. Milligan, who had been acting as Sergeant Major since the date of organization, the work of the Squadron and Stage was carried on most diligently and satisfactorily. On July 22nd, the 117 Aero Squadron was discontinued and the personnel thereof was changed to Kelly Field Squadron "C."

The Squadron Mess of which we must mention a few words. has had quite a lot to do with creating good fellowship and willingness of the men to tackle anything that they were asked to do. The mess. which has been under the direction of Sergeant Lawrence C. Beavers since April 4th. 1918, has been of the very best, owing to the keen selection of food by him and the cooking of same by the Squadron cooks. Sergeant Beavers realizes that a man's best friend is his stomach, as he is gifted with one himself was then transferred to the Bureau of War Risk Insurance at Kelly Field No. 1. He always rendered his services to the Squadron in a very satisfactory manner. Lieut. S. Blakeley. Jr.. was transferred to the Salvage Department in November, after carrying- on the work of Supply Officer from April, 1911. to the satisfaction of the whole command. Sergeant 1st Class Ralph C. Ruhl was then Supply Sergeant and his work in that department has always been of the best. Sergeant Ruhl is now

"Top-Kick" and is proving that a Supply Sergeant can make an excellent Top Sergeant. Corporal Marts, formerly a clerk in the Supply Office has been appointed Supply Sergeant and is carrying on that work very well.

When Lieut. Belser was transferred as Assistant Officer in Charge of Flying on October 10, 1918, Lieut. Smith Engineer Officer was made Commanding Officer. During his regime he did everything he could to uphold the good reputation that Squadron "C" had established throughout the field. His work as Commanding Officer and Engineer Officer for the 2nd Solo Stage kept him busy at all times, but lie demonstrated his ability as a leader of men in such a way as to prove himself worthy of his position. Lieut. Smith has always been interested in the welfare of the enlisted man and does everything in his power to help them.

On November 18. 1918, Kelly Field Squadron "C" was transferred to the Flying School Dc tachment. which comprises all lettered squadrons. Sergeant Charles L. Marvin who had been chief clerk of the 2nd Solo Stage since it was taken over by Squadron "C." was appointed Sergeant Major of the Flying School Detachment Squadron "C." He is a level headed man and a good man to be in charge of the paper work that is connected with the Squadron and has helped the boys to such an extent as to receive the appreciation of all have been the scene of many a good time especially in the fifth ward where, led by Corporal Herman Mason and two Irish comedians, Sweeney and Wedlock, they have shoe battles every night before going to sleep. Pvt. John J. O'Shea whose trumpet is very noisy at night is to be quarantined for the rest of his time in the Army if he doesn't put a muffler on it. The rest of the fellows cannot sleep when he starts. Pvt. 1st Class Alexander A. Maktaitis has given out a notice that he is going to reside in a nearby city after the war is over as he has spent so many pleasant hours there. Private Howard Baker is contemplating buying one of the army bunks to take home with him as he has become so strongly attached to It that it would be rather hard for him to get along without it. Private John Welch, of the 1st Ward has started a night course on how to talk in your sleep.

Lieut. Edwin T. McCanna was transferred to the Squadron on November 1st. 1918, but has since been discharged. He showed himself to be a man of marked ability in carrying out the work of Adjutant of the organization. He was formerly connected with the Casual Detachment at Kelly Field No. 2. Lieut. Smith was relieved of the command of the Squadron in December and is now Adjutant of the Flying School Detachment. Lieut. Harry S. Smedley; a flying officer has been appointed Commanding Officer and he has already made himself one of the most well liked officers that this Squadron has ever had, owing to his ability in handling men. For the past two months, he has also been carrying on the work as Engineer Officer of the 2nd Solo Stage.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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