

638 AERO SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

117 Aero Squadron organized, Aug 1917
Redesignated 117 Aero Squadron (Service), Sep 1917
Redesignated 638 Aero Squadron (Pursuit), Feb 1918
Demobilized, Jul 1919

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX
Garden City, NY, Oct 1917
Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, NY, Dec 1917
AEF, Dec 1917
Mitchel Field, NY

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

A half-starved cat superimposed on the numeral V, signifying the Fifth Pursuit Group.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

638 Aero Squadron

Type: Service (Pursuit)

Service Period: January 8 to August 17, 1918

Locations: Beverley, Catterick, Gormanston, Harlaxton, Scampton, South Carlton, Spittlegate. Arrived in England as 117 Aero Squadron but redesignated as 638th Aero Squadron in February 1918. To France on August 24 to serve as 638th Pursuit Squadron.

The Six Hundred Thirty-eighth Aero Squadron was a pursuit squadron, and was assigned to the Fifth Pursuit Group, Second Army, on October 28, 1918. It did not function on the Front before the Armistice and was finally ordered demobilized on May 11, 1919.

According to orders issued from your editorial sanctum, a page or so of perfectly good space is to be devoted to the history of the 638th. Of course, orders is orders but before proceeding to burn up the bearings of the squadron typewriter in executing your command, I should like to point out that the history has already been written in the most complete and accurate manner by one Julius Caesar, who used only two words to do the job, namely: "veni vidi"

In the interest of conservation of conversation, this masterpiece should be allowed to stand. But if you insist that we drag the skeletons out of the family closet and delineate such unpleasant details as the battle between Lts Willsey and Noble and the Paris M. P. then listen, my children, and you shall hear

Aug 31, 1917, 117th Aero Sqdn organized at Kelly Field (of course). Later, due to the scarcity of 7's and 11's, this number was taken away and 638 substituted.

Oct 10, 1917, Mineola Beaucoup pick and shovel training in preparation for overseas.

Dec 17 to 31 On the briny. Mess Sgt. reports most of the outfit detached from rations.

Jan 7, 1918 Rest camp at Winchester, England. Everybody's stomach gets a good rest.

Jan to Aug Cattericks, Harlaxton, Dublin, and other stops. Real planes to work on, while the old pick rusted up." The language is kinda hard to get, but, say buddy, them girls are there!"

Aug 31 I'm off for the war, mother. Orders for France at last. We hit Havre, and cheat some horses out of transportation to St. Maixent.

Sep and Oct Gosh ain't this war awful! Being in the terrible Colombey-les-Belles sector, only 20 miles behind the lines, we can plainly hear the big guns. Jerry also obliges with a few air raids but all his ash cans fall out in the open. Archie succeeds in getting two hunks for us.

Nov 15 At last! We're on the front (at Lay St. Remy) and everything is sittin' pretty, except for the trifling fact that the guerre is fini, and we have no planes or pilots.

Nov 18. We are now a regular outfit. Pilots, planes and everything, including a C. O. who has gotten himself the D. S. C., the Legion d'Honneur, and the Croix de Guerre with a couple palms 'n things. But even his medals didn't help Buford when he ventured into the red dog game in Noble's room.

Nov 28. Thanksgiving. "Wotinel have we got to be thankful for?" wails the chorus of the-guys-who-wanted-to-fight. Mess Officer Schultz concocts a pink punch that makes 'em feel better. (Next morning they feel worse.)

Dec 25. The Xmas fireworks display knocks em dead, especially When Operations Elliot starts 94 rockets off at once and the war is on again.

Jan 1, 1919. Two gold chevrons for the outfit.

Jan, Feb, Mar; Still at Lay St. Remy, waiting. Will it be Coblenz or Hoboken?

Air Force Lineage and Honors
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.