

79 BALLOON COMPANY

MISSION

LINEAGE

79 Balloon Company
Organized Oct 1918
Demobilized Jun 1919

STATIONS

Camp John Wise, TX
Camp Travis, CA, 25 Nov 1918
Brooks Field, TX, May 1919

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

On October 17th 79th Balloon Companies were organized for overseas service

On OCTOBER 17th, 1918, the 79th Balloon Company was organized in the Recruit Division of Camp John Wise, San Antonio, Texas. At that time the Company consisted of two officers, and

four enlisted men, namely: Lieutenant Arthur G. McKenzie, Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Robert Manning, Supply Officer, Sgt. T. J. Kelley, Corp. F. G. Baker, Private First Class P. P. Cobb and Private A. O. Bakken.

Lieutenant Manning, Corporal Baker and nine men left for the camp vacated by the 56th Company on the Blanco Road, commonly known as the "Sticks" on October 24th, 1918. These men were to get the camp in readiness for the remainder of the company. On October 28th Lieutenant Carl P. Eiffler was attached to the company for duty.

By this time the company was fully organized, and on November 1st, 1918, moved to the camp in the Sticks and began training for "Overseas" service. We had a ten day program to follow, which meant work for every member of the company. At that time the minimum strength of the organization was three officers and one hundred twenty-one enlisted men. Everyone was overly anxious to get into active service and kept up with the schedule, which consisted of maneuvering the balloon, taking frequent hikes, gas mask drill, infantry drill, carrying on shoots and everything else that would pertain to overseas service.

We were due to leave for port of embarkation, November 17th, 1918. Every member of the company looked forward to that date with great pleasure. We had been issued our Overseas clothing, sent our unnecessary articles home, and the Super 79th was ready to cross the "Pond" and do its share toward winning the war. But on November 16th, our traveling orders were rescinded which was undoubtedly a great disappointment to all concerned. Nevertheless, the 79th kept up the same fighting spirit which they have always retained. At the present time the old 79th has more real spirit in it than any other company in that Post.

November 25th, orders were received sending us to Camp Travis, for demonstrating purposes. We started to break camp about 10:00 o'clock, and by one o'clock the company was on its way to Camp Travis. It was necessary to maneuver the Balloon the entire distance. The Balloon party in charge of Lieutenant Carl P. Eiffler, and Sgt. P. DeHaan left our camp in the sticks at 1 P. M., arriving at Camp Travis at midnight that day. The trip was very difficult and disagreeable on account of snow and rain. The equipment and a portion of the men were moved via trucks, arriving at Camp Travis about 6 P. M., we begun pitching camp and by 10 o'clock our camp was completely pitched and we then had supper. The Balloon party, after many trials and troubles arrived about 12 midnight. It was necessary to cross numerous telephone wires, and on account of the weather the trip was very hard and disagreeable.

The site selected for Camp was very well protected from wind but on account of the ground being wet and boggy it was necessary for us to select a new camp, which was situated about 200 yards east, on a hill near the Artesian Wells on Salado Creek, this proved to be a very favorable location and a permanent camp was established.

Our work at Camp Travis consisted of demonstrating the balloon and working in conjunction with the Cactus Division. The 79th Company is justly proud to have in its possession a letter from Brig. Gen. Estes, Commanding General of Camp Travis, praising the services of the officers and men of

the 79th Balloon Company.

On the 20th of December the 78th and 80th Companies moved over there and the first Provisional Balloon Wing was established at Camp Travis, commanded by Major Henry Rodgers.

On January 20th, 1919, we were ordered back to Camp John Wise, and at the present time are located in the barracks formerly occupied by the 68th Company.

Since returning to Camp many of the original members of the 79th have been discharged and their places filled by men transferred from other companies.

Shortly after our return to Camp Wise, Lieutenant McKenzie was relieved and Lieutenant Ryland G. Taylor was assigned as Commanding Officer, and on February 5, 1919, Captain Edward L. Fernsten took command.

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.