

800th. AERO REPAIR SQUADRON.

The 106th., (800th) Aero Repair Squadron was organized at Kelly Field South San Antonio, Texas August 26, 1917 by Sergeant G. H. Jones of the 84th., Aero Squadron. Sergeant Jones was at that time a candidate for Commission in the Aviation Section Signal Corps, and has since that time been commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

Approximately one week after the squadron was organized by Sergeant Jones, Lieutenant Corson was placed in command. He was relieved on September 23, 1917 and First Lieutenant Harley W. Lake was made Commanding Officer. The hobby of Lieutenant Lake was inspections. The men, equipped with only the clothes on their backs found it a rather trying proposition to appear in creditable condition at inspections with fatigues and Kitchen Police coming in rapid succession. His thoroughness was a displeasure to the squadron cooks none of whom had cooked in the army before for they could not understand why it was important to have manicured nails, spotless pans and white uniforms, when those things would surely get dirty again. But in a short time the strict sanitary and disciplinary measures enforced by Lieutenant Lake succeeded in impressing on all of the men the necessity of cleanliness and military bearing. His scathing comments to some of these new soldiers were rather trying to men only recently in civilian life. Lieutenant Lake was relieved from duty with the squadron about October 22, 1917 and Captain Loring Pickering was made Commanding Officer. During the short time Captain Pickering was in command he made friends of all the men in the squadron.

First Lieutenant Lyman S. Baird assumed command of the squadron on October 30, 1917. The duties of the squadron at Kelly Field were the regular cantonment duties. Exceptionally long hikes and drills under the merciless sun of Texas were given daily. For many of the men who were not used to Texas weather, the experience of hiking through the hot sand was one to be dreaded. Overseas equipment had been issued for several weeks and many rumors that the squadron was to entrain for "Somewhere Else in America" were to be heard. Finally travel orders came, on October 30, 1917, and the squadron entrained at 8.30 PM on that date. Nearly five days were spent in making the trip from Kelly Field to Garden City, L.I.N.Y. The trip was very enjoyable as pleasant weather was experienced every day and the men were given opportunities for taking hikes in nearly every large city enroute.

The squadron arrived at the Aviation Field, Garden City, L.I.N.Y. on the morning of November 4, 1917. The squadron was placed in Barracks No. 25, an uninviting shelter without doors, windows or heat. Windows and doors were provided two days later but stoves were not to be obtained until the last week in November. Some of the men from Oklahoma, California, Georgia and Florida found the northern climate very severe, but they had by this time learned that no trouble was so bad it could not be doubled so they got out their Red Cross Helmets and Sweaters and fought the cold with knitted wool. Overseas equipment was immediately made complete and the squadron held in readiness to embark at any time for overseas duty. The men were allowed to visit New York City on twenty four hour passes and most of them took advantage of the opportunity. Large details were called for by Camp Headquarters and the men were used for digging ditches and other work that would put the camp in better condition. This work in the mud and cold was the cause for many sore throats and had colds. The squadron was quarantined for a short time while analysis were being made of supposed diphtheria cases, but none developed from the 106th.

squadron. On Thanksgiving day, 1917 many of the men were given passes to New York so that they might take advantage of the invitations extended for dinners by many New York Families to members of the squadron. On that day our men were treated to the hospitality of "The City without a Heart" and many friendships made that day which will endure for years.

On November 14, 1917 First Lieutenant Thomas C. Sims was assigned to the squadron and relieved again November 16. Second Lieutenants J.F. Moore and G. B. Wells Jr. were assigned to the squadron on November 16, and relieved from duty again on November 23. On November 30, 1917 First Lieutenants Robert E. Bowers, Theodore P. Davis and Loui E. Lindemann were assigned to the squadron for duty. Lieutenant Bowers was made Adjutant of the Squadron, Lieutenant Davis was made Supply Officer and Lieutenant Lindemann was made squadron Mess Officer and assigned to other duties pertaining to the equipping and drilling of the squadron. On December 6, 1917 First Lieutenant Charles H. Piebes was assigned to the squadron and on December 7th., First Lieutenant Horace Jones was assigned. Both of these officers were pilots. During the first week in December censorship was placed on all squadron mail and rumor had it that at last the squadron was on the eve of its departure for France.

THE TRIP OVERSEAS.

The squadron was one of several organizations composing what was known as "Provisional Wing No. 2, consisting of the 106th., 107th., 108th., 109th., and 116th. Aero Squadrons. Major Robert Bates was in command of Provisional Wing No.2. The squadrons entrained at Garden City at midnight December 7, 1917. The journey to France had begun and everybody was jubilant. We were finally embarked on the "Great Adventure."

The medical Detachment accompanying the 106th., Aero Squadron was composed of First Lieutenant George J. Korby, M.C. and three Medical Enlisted men. Lieutenant Korby came with the squadron from Kelly Field, having been assigned October 27, 1917. The men had expected to take a steamer at Hoboken but hour after hour passed and still the rails clicked beneath the speeding train. When morning came we were passing through the New England States. New London was passed and still we were going north-ward. The train stopped at Portland, Maine, and the men were marched from the depot to the Y.M.C.A. building where they were treated to good hot baths. Again the train sped northward through a country glistening white with snow. On the morning of December 10, 1917 the squadron arrived at St. Johns, N.B. and immediately went aboard the R.M. S. Tunisian, a British Allan Line Steamer used as a Transport for American Troops. On the night of December 10th., the ship left St. Johns, N.B. and arrived outside of Halifax, N.S. Harbour the next day. On December 12, 1917 we steamed past the Bay of Fundy and what had once been Halifax and anchored in Bedford Basin. Our arrival in Halifax harbour was only five days after the Mont Blanc disaster. Practically the entire city had been destroyed by the explosion. The big blizzard which preceded the storms on that never-to-be-forgotten December had covered the stricken city with a mantle of ice. No houses were left standing except the abutments of several of the reinforced concrete houses. Relief parties were everywhere trying to dig through the ice to the wreckage in their heroic attempts to rescue those victims who might be alive. The offers of the squadrons on board ship to go on shore and aid in the relief work were not considered favorably for the reason that our convoy was subject to leave at any time.

At noon on December 14, 1917 we left the confines of Bedford Basin and slipped quietly away from Halifax. Our ship the R.M.S. Tunisian was joined by the Adriatic, Manchuria, Northland and the ill-fated Tuscania. In addition to these troop ships were one ammunition and one

oil ship in the convoy. A converted cruiser escorted the convoy. After the ship was well under way the reckless heaving of most of the members of the 106th., Aero Squadron would have caused Hoover to throw up his hands in despair. Few of the men in the squadron had ever been on a sea voyage and for three or four days they were little concerned with whether a submarine showed up or not. Conditions were not improved by the salt fish smell of the galley and the tripe and slum gullion of the mess line. Fire and life boat drills were given at odd hours every day. Each soldier was assigned to a certain boat in charge of an officer. On December 23 we witnessed the welcome sight of a Flotilla of nine destroyers steaming toward us at full speed. They remained with us until we reached Liverpool harbour. On December 23rd., Private Eric O. Sayre of the 106th., Aero Squadron Repair succumbed to a sudden attack of pneumonia despite every medical attention. His body was taken to Liverpool where it was delivered to the Port of Embarkation Medical Authorities.

Food aboard ship was no doubt cooked in an effort to make it seem appetizing, but to no avail. Perhaps that is the reason why a side of beef mysteriously disappeared from the kitchen and why the atmosphere of the galley was black with the smell of frying steak on the night of December 24. The conspirators were not easily located as several squadrons were on board, but next morning some of the men who had suffered most from sea sickness during the earlier part of the voyage looked as though they might have had a satisfying meal of fried beef steak the night before.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1917: On the morning of December 25th., 1917, Christmas Day, the Tunisian was met by a pilot outside of Liverpool Harbour and piloted past the numerous transports anchored opposite the docks on the Mersey River. The giant German Steamship "Vaterland" which had been taken over by the United States Government as a Troop Ship and renamed the "Leviathan" was at the docks. Christmas dinner was eaten on board ship and consisted of tripe, marmalade and tea, an unusual Christmas Dinner for most of the men on the boat. That evening the squadron dined like royalty on Salt Herring. On the morning of the December 26, 1917, the squadron debarked on a lighter and landed at the docks. Early in the afternoon of December 26, the squadron entrained in the peculiar English Coaches and at 4 PM the train was on its way through the green hill sides via Oxford to Southampton. On December 27, in a blinding snow storm the squadron arrived at Southampton and was marched to the Commons, a combination English-American Rest Camp. On December 29, 1917 this squadron with the other squadrons of Provisional Wing No.2, embarked on the Side Wheeler Transport Mona's Queen for the trip across the English Channel. At dawn on December 30, 1917, the squadron debarked at Le Havre and marched to another rest camp which, as one of the men said, "was as restless as the other". The men were assigned to small round tents, twelve to a tent. Practice bombing and cannonading was heard in the distance. All of the squadron was excited at this first sound of what they fancied was war. At noon on January 1, 1918 the squadron was entrained for St. Maixent (Deux-Sevres). On this New-Years Day the men were introduced to what they termed the now famous French Pullman Cars, side door style for "40 Hommes, 8 Cheveaux." Snow was nearly a foot thick and it was very cold. Necessity being the mother of invention, several of the men constructed stoves out of Bacon Cans which kept the cars warm to some extent. After thirty two hours of travel we arrived at St. Maixent, on January 2, 1918. There the squadron was quartered on the third floor of the Presbytere Barracks. Hot coffee was served to the men. The squadron remained in the Air Service Replacement Concentration Barracks at St. Maixent from January 2, 1918, to February 26., 1918. Provisional Wing No.2 was dissolved at this point and Major Bates was ordered to Paris for duty. On January 18, 1918, 1st Lieut. Phil A. Henderson 137th. Inf. attached to the Air Service as an Aerial Observer reported for duty with the 106th., Aero Repair Squadron. On January 30,

Ist Lieut. Lyman S. Baird was relieved from Command and First Lieutenant Phil A. Henderson named to succeed him. First Lieut. Theodore P. Davis was relieved of this duties at squadron Supply Officer and Ist Lt. Lindemann was appointed to succeed him. Lieutenants Baird and Davis were ordered to proceed to the First Air Depot, Zone of Advance, for duty, per S.O.31 Par. 2 Hq. A.S.R.C.B. A.E.F., dated January 30., 1918.

First Lieut. Phil A. Henderson was relieved from duty as Commanding Officer of the squadron February 10, 1918 and Ist Lieut. Robert E. Bowers was made Commanding Officer succeeding him. First Lieut. Horace Jones and Ist Lieut. Charles H. Piebes were relieved from duty with the squadron February 10, 1918. During the stay of the squadron at St. Maixent Ist Lieut. Gus Kohn and 2nd. Lieut. Robert L. Mahormay, First Lieutenants H.W. Royal and A.E. Lee were assigned to the squadron and relieved shortly afterwards. During much of the time the squadron was at St. Maixent it was under quarantine because of the measles and mumps. Much time was spent by the squadron at St. Maixent in hikes and close order drill. It was at this time that the 800th., Aero Squadron became known as the best drilled squadron in France. Early in February Major Bohlen came from Headquarters Air Service and interviewed each man in the squadron as to his previous experience as a mechanic. This trade test proved very helpful later in placing the men of the squadron on field work.

On February 1, 1918 the 106th., Aero Repair Squadron was changed to the 800th., Aero Repair Squadron per Par 7, Cable No. 655-R January 18th., 1918.

On February 23., 1918, aighteen enlisted men from other squadrons were transferred into the 800th., Aero Repair Squadron and ten men were transferred from the 800th., Aero Repair Squadron to other squadrons at that post. These transfers were made with a view of dividing the squadron into three flights, each of which would be able to function as an individual unit in the repair and up-keep of airplanes and airplanes motors. On February 24, 1918 2nd Lieut. Cecil W. Mason 2nd Lieut. Harold G. Mead and 2nd Lieut. Earl E. Ives were assigned to the squadron. One of these Officers was to go with each flight as Engineering Officer. On February 26, 1918 the division into three flights was completed. On February 27, 1918 Flight "A" entrained for Camp de Souge, Base Section No.2, Bordeaux (Gironde). On the same date Flight "B" entrained for Camp Coetquid an (Guer-Morbihan). Flight "C" entrained for Camp La Valdahon (Doubs).

From this point the history of each flight may be said to be the history of the Aerial Observation School to which it was assigned for duty.

HEADQUARTERS FLIGHT.

An effort had been made to have each of the units as nearly equal in skilled mechanics and other trained personnel as was possible. The Headquarters Flight left for Camp de Souge. There were fifty men and two officers, Ist Lieut. Robert E. Bowers and 2nd Lieut. Cecil W. Mason, Commanding Officer and Engineering Officer respectively. Headquarters Flight reported for duty at the Second Artillery Aerial Observation School at 11 P.M. February 28, 1918.

On the trip from St Maixent to Bordeaux the Headquarters Flight rode in style compared with the cars occupied on the trip from Le Havre to St. Maixent in January, being loaded into Third Class compartments. The Headquarters Flight was fortunate in having with it three culinary artists of proven ability, so the food, though not fastidious, was plentiful and filling. The engine that pulled the train into Bastide

Station at Bordeaux deserted it there. It waited until noon on February 28, during which time an American Officer argued with a French Railroad Man concerning the possibilities of getting the cars pulled nearer Camp de Souge. About two o'clock a wheezy locomotive jerked it out of the shed, across the river, and around some miles of track until the flight would have felt sure they were near the Spanish border had they not been able to see Bordeaux quite plainly two kilometers away. We stopped for several hours in a freight yard while long conferences were held among the French as to what should be done with the train next. At dark it was pulled off in another direction, and when the train stopped the flight was told that trucks were waiting to take them to camp. Then it started to rain as it has rained but seldom, even in the Department Gironde, and the flight arrived soaking wet at Camp de Souge, only to be loaded into other trucks and moved again to the Aviation Field some six kilometers away. Here three chauffeurs who were all were on detached service at the school had warm fires ready, and by midnight in the Land of Nod. Being eager to see the field the flight was out early next morning looking into every nook and cranny of the place. In an old wooden hangar were found three ancient airplanes that were there when the school was taken over by the Americans. The barracks were of concrete brick construction. All were enthusiastic when the flight learned that they were to be the entire enlisted personnel of the school. After that it was felt that the camp was its own and no work was too hard if it meant adding to its attractiveness or comfort.

Captain Oscar L. Gruhn 6th Field Artillery was Commanding Officer of the school. His heart was bent on making the camp an ideal one, and everyone set to work with a will to help in every possible way. A program of camp sanitation was instituted at once. Camp sanitation meant everything from furnishing motive power for shovels and wheel-barrows, to mixing concrete. The camp was Policed from the entrance to the outlying limits of the flying field. Weeds and underbrush were cut, holes were filled in, ditches were dug, a royal highway was built, and soon the camp assumed the appearance characteristic of a well kept U.S. Army Post.

On March 13, 1918 all of the officers and men of the 2nd. Artillery Aerial Observation School had their first experience in fighting French Forest Fires. At about 5:30 in the afternoon of this unlucky thirteenth a call came from a French farmer who owned the adjoining property, saying that a forest fire had started which threatened to destroy the thick pine woods which comprised a part of his property and bounded the camp on one side. The smoke had been noticed earlier in the afternoon, but the fire did not look serious. A serious project was on hand that afternoon as General Pershing in company with Secretary Baker was making an inspection of Camp de Souge. Every man was polished up to within an inch of his life in anticipation of that important event. But the fire would not wait so every available officer and man, with the exception of the guard, jumped into old clothes and denims and rushed pell mell across the fields to the fire, armed with such primitive weapons as spades, hoes, rakes, sticks, tree branches and sacks. The fire was gaining rapidly in the dry underbrush and the Frenchmen who had been trying to hold it back were exhausted. Every American jumped into the fighting in a manner to convince the most conservative that a mistake had been made in not ordering the "800th" to the front. For two hours they beat and cut and back fired until at last it was under control. It was fortunate that General Pershing and Secretary Baker did not inspect the camp after the flights returned as the inspection neatness had vanished and in its stead was grime and blistered hands and faces.

A canteen was opened, and many extras appeared on the mess table as a result. A need was felt for music. Private "Buck" Loeschern described himself as a man who made music where music never grew before, so a piano was rented. It was carefully mounted on a platform, and everyone

stood back to make room for the musicians. None came. "Buck" Loeschorn said he could not play without music. There was no music. The lack of musicians in the Flight somewhat lessened the entertaining value of the piano, but as Sergeant W.H. Irish says: "It adds to our social prestige."

The flight rendered distinguished services to a widowed French Lady who owns a Chateau a short distance from the camp. A strawstack close to a frame barn caught fire and the fire, spread to the barn. From there the fire leaped to the outhouse and wine storage room, which in turn was under the very eaves of the chateau. The full strength of the flight ran to the scene armed with anti-fire bombs and other modern but useless equipment. Sergeants Jensen and Lindler, ably assisted by Sergeant Major Walker, ran great risks in rescuing several racks of very rare old wine from the burning wine room. Soon the gardens of the chateau presented the appearance of a town suddenly voted "dry" so numerous were the bottles of precious vintage. In the meantime a bucket brigade was organized and drained every well and water hole on the property. The chateau, was saved from destruction. Half an hour and the danger was over. Then the lady insisted that the brave Americans should partake of wine from her plentiful store; she demanded it as a fitting reward for the services rendered. And the camp was very gay that night. But morning found every man carrying out the motto: "Business as Usual", for the wheelbarrows rolled as had been their wont, and shovels were plied lustily.

From March 1, 1918, to September 11, 1918 the Headquarters Flight of fifty enlisted men performed all specialists duties at the 2nd Artillery Aerial Observation School. Sergeant Klein was named storekeeper. Corporal Bender, who joined the army to escape running his father's light plant in Nebraska, was detailed as camp electrician and put in charge of the electrogen. Corporal Brown was given charge of the Photographic Department. Sergeant Hubert Upton and Pvt. Emmett Smith were made wireless men, while Sergeant Marion Silvius and Pvt. "Buck" Loeschorn were given work in the Armory. Other men remaining were organized into crews by the Engineering Officer, Lieutenant Cecil W. Mason, for the repair and upkeep of airplanes and motors on the field.

On the day before the first airplane flight was made at the field Corporal Cass McCormick proved himself to be fit material for a pilot. To start with, it should be understood that Pvt. Andy Bjorn deserves the blame for the side slip that the borrowed steam roller did at Camp de Souge. The flying field was in need of rolling, while the rock foundation in front of the machine shop needed to be rolled, so the school borrowed a French Steam Roller at Camp de Souge and Corporal Mc Cormick was detailed to run it to camp. He promised to negotiate the six kilometers by noon, and disappeared in the direction of Souge. Noon came on schedule time, but Cass did not. In the afternoon Cass came into Camp on foot. It seemed that after much fussing and spluttering the old roller started toward the school. Pvt. Bjorn was with Mc Cormick and having had a bit of experience with the family "flivver" he offered to guide it while Cass stoked. While Cass' head was bent toward the fire box the hand that ruled the steering gear made a false move, and the right rear wheel of the roller slid off the road into the deep sand. Rescue parties were organized. Lieut. Bowers managed to have an artillery tractor lend a hand, and the roller again started toward the school. Pvt. Bjorn was fired on the spot. In the meantime, the French Sergeant who had loaned the roller was becoming anxious for its safety. He forbade it to leave camp before the morning, so it was backed up at the entrance to Camp de Souge, where again the earth gave away beneath the rear wheel. The next morning two four wheel drive trucks pulled the roller on the road and the journey was resumed but only after the French Sergeant had detailed a Frenchman to accompany it on the trip. In the afternoon, for the third time, it slid off the road into a ditch, inside camp limits.

Cass named it every uncomplimentary thing in his wide vocabulary, but after it had been rescued and set in front of the machine shop for needed repairs some wag in the Flight dubbed it the "Emma M" in furtherance of a plan the pilots had adopted of naming their planes for their best girls. It is rumored that Cass considered this an ill omen and stopped corresponding with Emma M. shortly afterwards.

On Monday March 18, 1918 the first airplane for use at the school arrived at St. Medard station, five miles away. This was a Sopwith 1-A-2 with a Le Rhone motor. On March 19, two more Sopwiths arrived, and the fourth plane came on March 22. The fifth and sixth Sopwiths were received on March 24, and March 31, respectively. Three more which were received several weeks later completed the quota of airplanes furnished the school for its work at that time. Two French mechanics reported from the factory to assemble the planes and on the morning of April 8, 1918 the assembling of all airplanes on hand was completed. The six planes were lined up in front of the hangars, and the crews assigned to each plane were kept busy cleaning up the wings, fuselage and motor, and familiarizing themselves with the Sopwith.

Six Mechanics reported the first week in April as instructors for the Headquarters Flight. In three weeks they reported that the men of the "800th., were able to handle any repair and do all the work required to keep an airplane in first class flying condition." The men of the Headquarters Flight who reported for duty on February 28, were mechanics with excellent training, but none of them had experience in airplane upkeep. They entered their work with enthusiasm and in a short time their conscientious and painstaking work was rewarded with the expressed confidence of the pilots, and the favorable comments of several inspecting officers. Lieut. Mason proved himself equal to the many problems that confront an Engineering Officer when a new field is started. His crew organization was excellent. A close watch was kept on every man, and each man was placed in the class of work for which he was best fitted. The shops were opened with few tools other than those made by the squadron blacksmith, yet the work done was the very best. There have been few accidents at this school, and none have been serious. The Headquarters Flight feels that the comparative freedom of the field from accidents is due in a large measure to the high mechanical ability and painstaking work of the men of the flight.

Roster of Officers of the 800th Aero Repair Squadron
since organization.

Capt.	Loring Pickering
Ist. Lieut.	Lyman S. Baird
" "	Robert E. Bowers
" "	Max Ehapman
" "	Theodore P. Davis
" "	Phil A. Henderson Inf. R.C.
" "	Horace Jones
" "	Gus Kohn
" "	Harley W. Lake
" "	Loui E. Lindeman
" "	Cecil W. Mason
" "	Charles H. Piebes
" "	Tom C. Perkins
" "	H. W. Royal
" "	Thomas C. Sims
2nd Lieut.	W. E. Dove
" "	E. E. Ives
" "	Horace G. Mead
" "	Joseph F. Moore
" "	T. H. Mittendorf
" "	R. L. Mehornay
" "	George B. Wells Jr.
Ist Lieut.	George J. Korby Med. Officer.

Tuesday April 9th., 1918 was a red letter day for the Headquarters Flight and the Second Artillery Observation School. On this date the first aeroplane flights were made at this school. First Lieut. John A. Young with his Chief Mechanic, John F. Jones as passenger, took the air at 10;35 A.M. for a fifteen minute flight. The flight was the occasion for rejoicing by everybody on the field. Lieut. Young made a second flight at 10;59 A.M. with Captain Oscar L. Gruhmas his passenger. First Lieutenant Pitts and Mitchell also made flights that day.

In September 1918 ten Curtiss JN-4 Airplanes were ~~H.M.K~~ received from the Canadian Flying School at Vendome. These Curtiss machines are reputed to be the only ones in France. On November 9, 1918, ten Liberty Motored D.H.4 airplanes arrived at the field from Romarantin. Their arrival made the three types of airplanes which have been used at the Second Artillery Observation School.

On every flying day at the school adequate planes have been ready for the work in hand. Aerial adjustments of artillery fire were made for the brigades of field Artillery training at Camp de Souge. From two to eight reglages have been made in one day with the limited equipment on hand. In addition to reglage missions. Infantry Laison, Photographic, Smoke-bomb and Reconnaissance missions have been performed by each class of observers that were trained at the Second A.A.O.S. The Headquarters flight points with pride to the 98 Officer-Observers who have received training at this school in planes kept aloft by our mechanics. Most of them saw service at the front in the most critical moments of the war. Some of them have given their lives for our country. Some of them have won distinguished Service Crosses. We feel a justifiable pride in having assisted in the training of such men, and in the fact that 14 Brigades of Field Artillery were given their training in aerial adjustments of artillery fire from our planes.

Flight "B" of the squadron reported for duty at this school on October 30, 1918, and was consolidated with the Headquarters Flight. A celebration of no mean proportions was held in honor of the occasion. All that remains to be done to make our happiness complete is to have Flight "C" roll into camp some fine day and fill the empty bunks we have waiting for them.

(Original signed by Loui E. Lindeman 1st Lieut. A.S. Edited by E.A. Rogers 2nd Lieut. Information Section A.S.)

HISTORY OF FLIGHT "B" 800 AERO REPAIR SQUADRON.

On the evening of February 27, 1918, the second flight of the 800th. Aero Squadron slung packs, and clamoured into the tiny little coaches which were to convey them to their destination. The flight was composed of fifty enlisted men under command of 1st Lieut. Louis E. Lindemann, and Engineering Officer 2nd Lieut. Earl B. Ives. The first stop was at Niort. The day following a stop was made at La Rochelle. Here the population turned out to greet the dashing young aviators. The boys returned the compliment by giving a practical demonstration of how water can change a travel stained Yankee into a comparative Beau Brummal in four minutes. After the ablutions the pay roll was signed and the coffee and hard tack ration was handed out. The small boy population of La Rochelle gorged itself on hard tack and cigarettes handed out by the men of the flight. It was at this place that Sergeant Prince made friends with a Toothless Old Peasant Woman who was down to see herself whether the American Soldiers wore war paint and feathers. The following morning found the flight at Messac where a jam factory was discovered in operation a short distance from the station. Sergeant "Slim" Mc Keown the squadron "food Hound" raided the sweet shop and brought away many jam tins and several hearts belonging to the fairer sex. In fact Flight "B" proved itself a champion unit of fire side athletes on the trip from St. Maixent to Coetquidan. On March 1, 1918 the little Brittany village of Guer was reached. The flight all unloaded in a cold drilling rain and waded ankle deep in mud under full packs up the hills to Coetquidan. A rest was anticipated here but the flight marched a few kilometers further to the Flying Field and at last found themselves inside wooden barracks that possessed a bacon can stove. The camp proper has been one of the largest artillery camps in France since the time of Napoleon the Third and had been recently turned over to the United States Government. A small detachment of men was already garrisoned at the camp. They had been trained in Paris and sent to the First Artillery Aerial Observation School for duty as Aeroplane Mechanics. The coming of the flight brought joy to the camp as this detachment had long since become expert in the use of pick, shovel and wheel barrow. The reputation of the 800th., Aero Squadron earned in San Antonio and Mineola as wielders of these instruments of agriculture and war had no doubt preceded us. The men were put on construction work at once. When the Sergeant in charge of the field was asked by members of the flight what aeroplane they would be assigned to, they were told that they would be given their pick, and sure enough they were. Each man wore out about two picks and two shovels before the construction work was completed.

Six ancient Farman planes had recently arrived at the camp by rail from Chateauroux, and had been assembled by the detachment trained in Paris. Up to this time the flight had had no training on any kind of aeroplane work. It had an unusually large number of skilled mechanics, however and their experience in working on automobile motors proved very in taking over the work on airplanes.

Several of the pilots were kind enough to take the men most eager for a flight up to Lofty Heights in the "Farms". Men who soared aloft in these "Gallopings Geese" now break out in cold perspiration at the mere thought of another such ride. In the course of a few days we lost our reverence for the planes, and began our work in earnest trying to put them in the safest possible condition. The Engineering Officer, Lieut. Ives selected twelve men for a trip to Paris for first hand instruction in motors and planes. These men were given a course of instruction at the Renault, Loraine, Dietrich, Farman and Bregust motor factories. The French Mechanics proved very willing to assist and explain whenever possible. An opportunity was had at Paris to examine the Liberty Motor. It was handled with loving care as it was one of the first to arrive in France. While this detachment was in Paris the Germans fired their first shot into Paris