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SQAVN-4-HI
10 JUNE 41 - 1 MAR 44

4TH AVIATION SQUADRON
10 JUNE 41 ÷ 1 MARCH 44

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MICROFILMED 24

Captain Odman
21 January 1944

THE 4TH AVIATION SQUADRON

The Fourth Aviation Squadron was activated at Maxwell Field, Alabama on 10 June 1941.¹ It was the first colored squadron in the state,² had an authorized strength of 225 and an official mission of "securuity."

The cadre for this organization consisted of eight trained and seasoned soldiers, one of whom was Master Sergeant Roy H. Johnson ASN 6021413³ now^{3A} and from the day of activation its First Sergeant, a soldier with more than twenty years of service. Arriving on 30 June 1941 from the 368th Infantry Division, Fort Huachuca, Arizona,⁴ they were soon placed under the command of Captain Berthier C. Riley Jr. (O-242632)⁵ the first Commanding Officer of the 4th Aviation Squadron.

Captain Riley and his four successors in command continued with these eight men to comprise the squadron until the 13 November 1941.⁶
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1. General Orders #25, 12 June 1941 (Instructions W.D., A.G.O. AG 220.31 AC 5-14-41 MRMC 6 June 1941)
 2. Funds, Unit and Organization, Maxwell Field File 123 (Letter from Commanding Officer, Maxwell Field, To Commanding General, Fourth Corps Area, Atlanta Ga. 11 December 1941)
 3. Service Record Roy H. Johnson ASN 6021413 - enlisted 25 July 1919, Camp Stuart, Virginia.
 - 3A. 12 December 1943.
 4. SO #177 Par 19, Maxwell Field, per Par 1 SO #143, Hq. Fort Huachuca, Arizona 27 June 1941. SO #190 Par 2 15 July 41 & amendment thereto SO #192.
 5. SO #187 Par 10 Maxwell Field 12 July 1941.
 6. 2nd Commanding Officer-1st Lt. Arnold Q. Edmonson (O-294020) Par 4 SO #212 6 Aug 1941, relieved Par 12 SO #232, 26 Aug 41. 3rd CO * Captain Arthur P. Fillastre (O-229627) Par 14 SO #232, 26 Aug 41. 4th CO-1st Lt. David H. Marshall (O-306068) Par 28 SO 26, 23 Sept 41. 5th CO-Capt. McBride S. McFadden (O-383536) Par 22 SO 91, 1 Dec 41.
 7. SO #257 Hq., 1302nd Serv. Unit, Reception Center, Ft. George G. Meade, Maryland, 7N Nov 41.

During these months, prior to November, the small group quartered in Tent City No. 1 devoted its time to the training of the 34th Quartermaster Company (Colored) and in preparations for the troops needed for the completion of its own strength.⁸

On 13 November 1941 the troops arrived--216 of them, all raw material from induction centers.⁹ The cadre of eight then under the command of Lt. Marshall¹⁰ began the tedious process of basic training of the recruits. The Squadron also began preparing for their many other duties for soon they were to serve as janitors, chauffeurs, truck drivers, foot messengers, drummers, buglers, M.P.s and hospital and mess attendants.¹¹

When the Japs struck at Pearl Harbor, twenty-four members of the squadron then under command of Captain McBride S. McFadden¹² were immediately detailed to serve as interior night guards within the confines of the Post, thus fulfilling for the first time the official mission of "security" which had been scheduled for the squadron.

On 3 March 1942 the squadron with its attached men moved from Tent City No. 1 to Tent City No. 4 where they remained but twenty days for on the 24 March the squadron moved across the Field to a Tent City near the New Prison Camp.¹⁴

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8. Statement of 1st Sgt. Roy H. Johnson 5 October 1941.
 9. See 7 above
 10. See 6 above.
 11. Statement of 1st Sgt. Roy H. Johnson 5 Oct 1941.
 12. See 6 above.
 13. Statement of 1st Sgt. Roy H. Johnson 5 October 1943.
 14. Station and Records of Events, Morning Report March 1942.

On 1 May 1942 the squadron vacated the tents and moved to the newly constructed barracks also in the vicinity of the New Prison Area or the area commonly referred to as "near the dump." Within a few months this mass of red clay was transformed by the enlisted men and under the direction of Major Dwight M. Wilhelm (O-175177) sixth commanding officer into military site worthy of Maxwell Field. With the approval and sanction of the Post Commander, Colonel Elmer J. Bowling (O-10532) the site was designated as the West Barracks, a name with both military dignity and directional value.

The original buildings in the West Barracks area were six in number with seven more being added by May 1943. Of the first six there were four barracks each housing 86 men, a one thousand man modern mess, and an administrative and supply building all of tile and stucco type construction. The second group of six buildings were of the five year type, three having capacity for 63 men each, were of two story construction while the remaining three were of single story type. The seventh and last of the buildings to be completed was a theater with capacity for three hundred brought about by Col. Elmer J. Bowling's and Col. Louis A. Guenther's interest in a suitable movie house for the colored troops.

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15. Morning Report - Record of Events May 1942.
 16. 6th CO * Major Dwight M. Wilhelm (O-175177) SO #133 Par 12. 2 May 43
 17. Statement Major Wilhelm 2 August 1942.
 18. Barracks 1208 - 9 - 10 - 11, Mess Hall 1214, Administrative 1215.
 19. Temporary barracks 1203 - 4 - 5, Recreation Bldgs 1206 - 7, Theater 1212 and Post Exchange 1213. For location and layout see Master Plans Maxwell Field. Post Engineers approved Col. Elmer J. Bowling 20 July 43
 20. Authority Col. Deaderick.

Major Wilhelm was in command until 12 December 1942. He left to his successor an organization high in morale and well established in its new quarters. His successor, 1st Lt. Chester D. Shepherd (O-906247)²¹ (later Captain), was not new to the squadron as he had served under Major Wilhelm from 25 June 1942.²² This tour of duty and familiarity with the squadron's operational policies made it possible to continue without interruption the work that had been started. Much of the training that followed fell on the shoulders of 2nd Lt. Morton B. Howell (O-857554)²³ who brought the first extended order drill to the squadron.

Regular training and adherence to those sound basic principles laid down by the cadre had resulted in the squadron ranking high in competition with other enlisted organizations on Maxwell Field.²⁴ It had in open competition specifically been awarded on several occasions the cup for "the best mess" and had taken the trophy four out of the five times awarded for "best in parade." On Armistice Day, 11 November 1942 and again in 1943, members of the squadron participated in the City of Montgomery's observance of the day.^{26A}

On 16 October 1943 Captain Morgan C. Odman (O-910013)²⁷ became the 8th Commanding Officer of the squadron, having transferred from the 14th Base Hq. & AB Squadron. He, like his predecessors, found the organization in excellent physical condition and morale bright.

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21. 7th CO - 1st Lt. Chester D. Shepherd (O-906247) Par 3 SO 329 22 Dec 42
 22. SO #158 Par 24, Maxwell Field, 24 June 1942.
 23. SO #38 Par 17, Maxwell Field, 11 February 1943.
 24. Monthly Squadron Rating Charts, Maxwell Field 201.61
 25. Letter 22 August 1942, Major T.A. Bailey, Administrative Inspector.
 26. Up to date November 1943.
 - 26A. Record of Events, Morning Report, November 42-43.
 27. 8th CO - Captain Morgan C. Odman (O-910013) Par 14 SO #283.

As the year 1943 drew to a close the squadron again received a large shipment of men attached to the squadron for reassignment in the Eastern Flying Training Command. This, as attached figures show, has been a function of the command since its day of activation. It is hoped that the cadres which have been made up from these groups will have carried some of the spirit with which they came in contact while attached to the 4th.

Official visits to the squadron have been made by the Post Commander Col. Bowling with his visiting guests.

28. Comparative Figures.

	<u>Assigned</u>	<u>Others</u>
July 41	8	---
Dec 41	225	302
Jan 42	280	350
June 42	236	---
Dec 42	243	---
June 43	153	33
Dec 43	124	466
Feb 44	109	

29. Cadres: Craig Field, Selma
Dow Field, Bangor, Maine
Greenville, Miss.

M/R 25 April 1942, SO #103.
M/R 20 June 1942, SO #155.
M/R 9 July 1942, SO #172.

30. A Few:

Brigadier General B. O. Davis, M/R 21 April 1942.
Major General Stratemeyer, M/R 5-9 May 1942.
Lt. Col. Libby, Washington, D.C., M/R 12 July 1942.
Major General Ralph Royce, M/R 25 Sept 1942
Secretary of War Stimson, M/R 3 October 1942.
Major General Thomas J. Hanley, M/R July 1943.

In its first two and one half years of existence the squadron has succeeded in creating and maintaining an "esprit de corps" which is evident to all. Much of this is undoubtedly due to the provisions which have been made for physical comfort and for the opportunities provided in full expression by social and religious functions and privileges which have existed.

C
O
P
Y

August 22, 1942

Major Dwight M. Wilhelm, A.C.
4th Aviation Squadron
Maxwell Field, Alabama.

Dear Major Wilhelm:

During the past month the writer has made a number of inspections of your mess. During that period there has been just one question. The question is this: Do the members of your organization realize and appreciate the following:

1. That they have the best mess hall on the field?
2. That they have the best prepared meals on the field?
3. That the menus are the best balanced meals on the field?
4. That the cleanliness of the storeroom, utensils, and all implements used to prepare their meals is superior to any on the field?

I could go on and enumerate a number of outstanding features of your mess. The above are just a few.

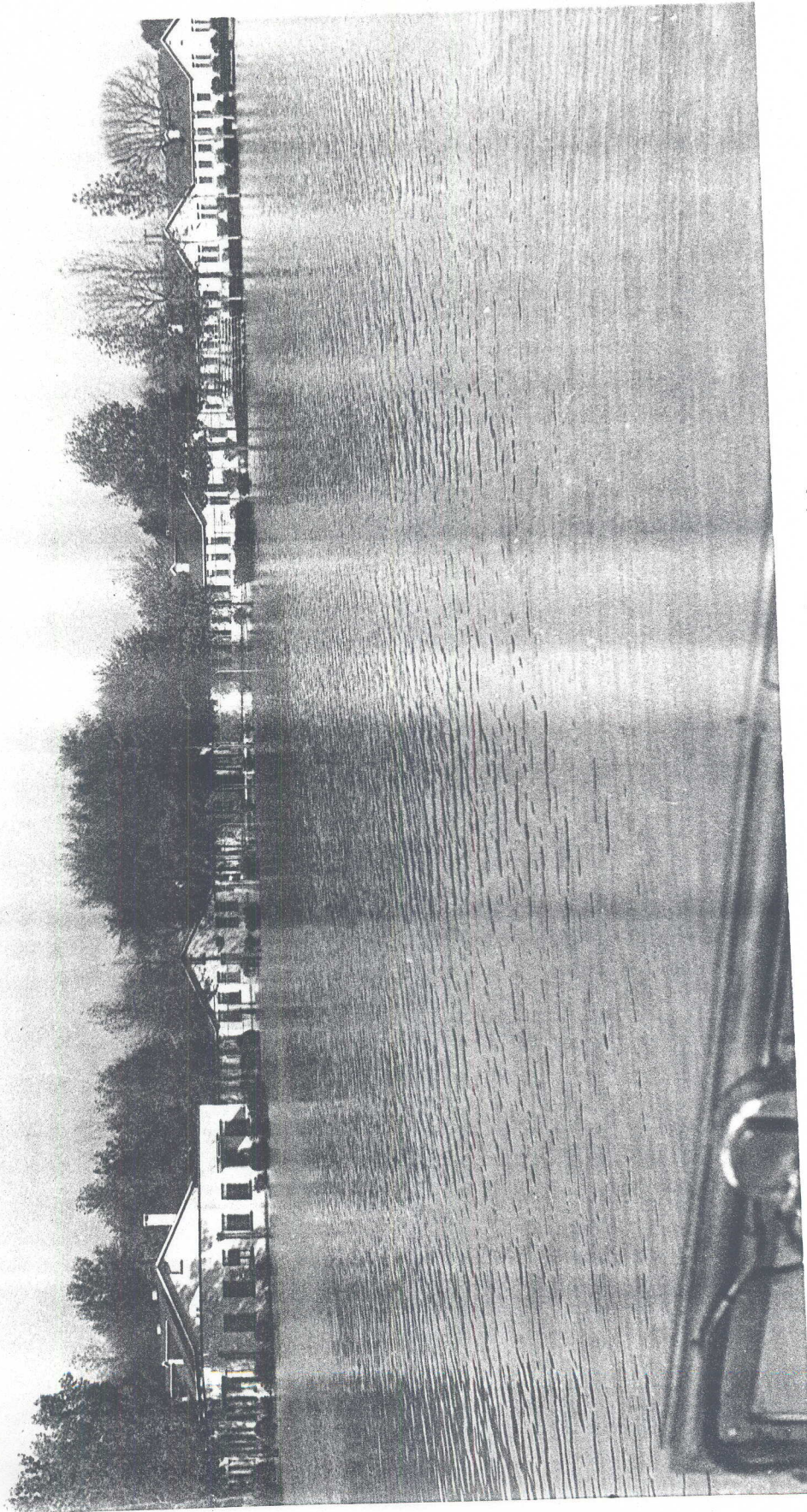
You, yours officers, and your noncommissioned officers are to be congratulated. It is attaining objectives like this that makes the American Army the best Army in the world. Day by day the colored soldier who is truly an American has taken an important part in keeping our Army what it is.

We may look back on the colored race as far back as Revolutionary times, and we will find that the colored race was always ready to do their share for their country. I refer to Crispus Attucks, first colored man to give his life's blood for freedom at the Boston Massacre.

It is a tradition that has been handed down to your men by Crispus Attucks and other great men of his race, and my observation of the Fourth Aviation Squadron has proved his sacrifice was not in vain.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS A. BAILEY
Major, Air Corps,
Administrative Inspector



Flood 1200 Area. Dec. 1948

SEE INSERT "A" THIS SHEET

