

The usual airdrome duties were performed for the remainder of the year and on December 20, 1938, Barksdale Field was inspected by the Commanding General, 3rd Wing, General Headquarters Air Force.

On February 23, 1939, 8 officers and 9 enlisted men engaged in a cross country Navigation Mission flight to Hamilton Field, California and returned via one night stop at El Paso, Texas. They were commended on the manner in which the mission was carried out.

The Commanding Officer, Major Pitts, was relieved from command and was assigned to Hq. & Hq. Squadron, 3rd Attack Group. Captain Lee assumed command on July 11, 1939, the date of Major Pitts' release from command.

The usual airdrome duties were performed until October 31, 1939, when at this time the 8th Attack Squadron was awarded the Harmon Efficiency Trophy for being the most efficient organization in the 3rd Wing, General Headquarters Air Force, during the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1939. (7)

On December 21, 1939, Captain Lee was relieved from command and assigned to Headquarters, 3rd Attack Group and Captain Guillette assumed command of the organization.

In September 1939, the Squadron had assigned the B-18 A Type Airplanes. It was a Douglas light Bomber. It was powered by twin-engined Wright Cyclones.

On January 31, 1940, the organization was split in half, both officers and enlisted men leaving to form the 15th Bomb Squadron of the 27th Bomb Group at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. The designation of the 8th Attack Squadron was changed to the 8th Bombardment Squadron (L) GHQAF.

Captain Guillette was relieved of command and transferred to the 27th Bomb Group. Captain Lee was assigned as Squadron Commander.

On February 1, 1940, 12 enlisted men were transferred to the 37th Bomb Squadron to be sent to Alaska. The Squadron received 88 recruits to fill vacancies caused by the transfer of men to new organizations.

The Squadron was assigned 8 A-18 Attack Bombers and operated as Attack Squadron in the 3rd Army Maneuvers in May 1940.

On August 17, 1940, 12 officers, 12 enlisted men with 6 B-18-A's participated in cross country flight to Langley Field and operated

(7) See letter concerning Harmon Trophy — Personal and Local Interest Section.

successfully in the G.H.Q. maneuvers from August 17 to August 29, 1940.

Usual garrison duties were performed until October 6, 1940, when the Squadron received orders to pack supplies and equipment for a change of station. October 6 was the date of change in station to Savannah, Georgia. One officer and 100 enlisted men departed from Barksdale Field on troop train at 8:00 P.M.. Then, with 4 days allowed enroute, 14 officers and 54 enlisted men departed by privately owned automobiles for the new station at Savannah, Georgia.

The 100 enlisted men and 1 officer arrived at Savannah, Georgia on October 8 at 8:35 A.M. and set up at the Municipal Airport. The remainder of the personnel arrived on October 10, 1940 and the Squadron began ferrying aircraft and Air Corps equipment to the National Guard Armory at Savannah. By October 20, equipment was set up and operations begun. The airfield was officially named as the Savannah Air Base.

The Squadron received by assignment its first A-20-A's, which was a Douglas Light Attack Bomber, powered by 2 Wright R-2600-11 Type engines, on January 10, 1941.

To form the new 78th Bomb Squadron, 50th Bomb Group on January 15, 1941, the Squadron personnel was again split and 84 enlisted men were transferred to the above squadron and to the 19th Recon. Squadron.

On January 19, 1941, all personnel of Savannah Air Base were moved into barracks which had been recently constructed. The hangars and new runways were at that time still being built.

Normal garrison duties were performed until May 19, 1941, when, as a result of a crash in mid-air between two A-20-A's at Rains, South Carolina, one officer and two enlisted men were instantly killed. They were 2nd Lt. Ralston, Sgt. Boyd and Cpl. Pruitt. The organization regretted the loss of these excellent soldiers.

On June 12, 1941, the Squadron moved to take part in the 2nd Army maneuvers at Chattanooga, Tenn.. The maneuvers were ended successfully without any serious mishap.

Captain Gopen, who had relieved Captain Lee as Squadron Commander, was relieved on July 1, 1941 by 1st Lt. Robert F. Strickland.

On July 17, 1941, 13 A-24 airplanes with 13 officers and 17 enlisted men departed for Little Rock, Ark., to participate in 10 days of maneuvers.

The Squadron was assigned a small number of A-24 type airplanes, which was a Douglas Dive Bomber with a Wright Cyclone R-1820-52 engine.

The Squadron left Savannah Air Base on September 2, 1941 for participating in the 2nd and 3rd Army maneuvers at Monroe, Louisiana. The Squadron again received commendation for its successful part in these maneuvers at Monroe.

The usual airdrome duties were performed until November 2, 1941 at which time the Squadron left Savannah to participate in maneuvers at Raleigh, North Carolina. The Squadron arrived at Raleigh on November 3, 1941 and camp was established for participation in these maneuvers which were successful, but a great loss was felt by the instant death of 2nd Lt. Harrison who was killed as a result of a crash in an A-24 dive bomber. The rear gunner, thrown clear of the plane, came through with slight injuries. The Squadron returned to its base at Savannah November 29, 1941.

With the successful maneuvers at Chattanooga, Monroe, Little Rock and Raleigh behind them, the Squadron resumed normal airdrome duties until December 1, 1941, when 50% of the Squadron personnel were granted a well deserved leave of absence. Most of the men expected to enjoy spending Christmas at home. This was the situation on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941. The Japanese attack on that day resulted in orders being issued at Savannah Air Base for all personnel to return to duty immediately.

The personnel of the 8th Attack Squadron returned to its base and preparations were started for wartime conditions.

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