

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Annette D. Amerman** has worked with the Marine Corps History Division since 1995 and became the head of the Historical Reference Branch in 2015. She holds degrees from Shenandoah University and George Mason University, and is nearing completion of her doctorate at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom. In addition to her daily work, she is coordinating the Marine Corps' World War I centennial commemorative publications.



*Join the Air Service and Serve in France: Do It Now, poster by J. Paul Verrees, c. 1917*



# DEVIL DOGS WITH ARMY WINGS



## MARINES WITH THE AEF AIR SERVICE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BY ANNETTE D. AMERMAN

### INTRODUCTION

On 30 July 1918, the first elements of the Marine Corps' 1st Marine Aviation Force disembarked at Brest, France, and were assigned to the Navy's Northern Bombing Group. Due to the lack of functional American aircraft, the aviators found themselves instead flying British aircraft in combat over the Western Front the very next month. Shortly before the end of the war, with enough operational aircraft of their own, the Marines formed the Day Wing of the Northern Bombing Group and conducted fourteen raids over the German lines. This historical narrative has remained unchanged regarding the date that the first Marine aviators arrived in France and conducted their initial aerial combat operations over the Western Front during the First World War. For nearly one hundred years, this widely accepted account did not provide a full and accurate portrayal of Marines

and aviation in the war. Six individual marines arrived in France as early as 1917, were trained by the Army, received Army wings, fought with Army squadrons, and, in some cases, died with the Army. Identifying these unique marines and determining how they came to fly for the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Air Service is the goal of this piece.

Buried toward the end of Maj. Edwin N. McClellan's *The United States Marine Corps in the World War* (published in 1920, reprinted 1968 and 2015) is a small table of statistics regarding Marine Corps aviation in World War I. McClellan's chart accounts for the number of squadrons overseas, officers and enlisted in France, trainees, raids flown with the British, raids by Marine squadrons, and more. Within this chart is the number of "Marine officers serving with Army Air Service, American Expeditionary Forces . . . 6."<sup>1</sup> No further explanation is offered by McClellan, the first director of Marine Corps History.

The earliest Marine aviators such as Alfred A. Cunningham and Roy Stanley Geiger were heralded as innovators, and the members of the Northern Bombing Group were recognized as the forefathers of aerial resupply and close air support.<sup>2</sup> However, the six marines who flew with the U.S. Army have been largely omitted, or more likely, simply forgotten. This gives rise to many questions: Who were these six men? What role did they play? How did they become assigned to the AEF Air Service? Where does their service fit into the larger history of Marine Corps aviation in the First World War?

### RECORDS OF SERVICE IN THE AEF AIR SERVICE

While research to identify the sixth marine continues, a great deal of information has been gathered on the remaining five. Their tenure with the AEF Air Service is unique to the history of marines in the First



San Diego Air & Space Museum Archives

Alfred A. Cunningham, shown as a first lieutenant, c. 1912

World War, and it is imperative to understand how they came to fly with the Army, the contributions they made to the war, and their place in the larger history of American military aviation.

## KENNETH PICKENS CULBERT

Kenneth Pickens Culbert was born on 22 August 1895 to William H. and Emma L. Culbert in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Culbert entered Harvard University in 1913 but did not graduate. On 5 July 1917, he enrolled in the Marine Corps Reserve as a provisional second lieutenant and reported to Marine Barracks Quantico, Virginia, to begin his instruction at the Officers' Training Camp. The 6th Regiment was formed at Quantico in the late summer of 1917, and Culbert was attached to the 74th Company after completing his officer training. On 16 September 1917, Culbert's unit departed aboard the USS *Henderson* for France.<sup>3</sup>

Nothing in his official record or other documents covering Culbert's life before his enlistment indicated any previous pilot training or other inclination to fly, thus making his transfer to aviation a seemingly odd

one. However, the first indication appeared in Culbert's only fitness report, filed while still on board the *Henderson*. An annotation by his commanding officer stated that he believed "he [Culbert] would be an excellent risk on aviation duty."<sup>4</sup> A memorial biography published by Harvard University after the war stated that Culbert was so interested in aviation that he had secured his own orders to aviation duty. These orders were issued on 16 October 1917, just ten days after Culbert's arrival in France, and directed him to attend aeronautical school.<sup>5</sup>

Culbert completed his training as an aerial observer on 31 March 1918 and transferred to the 1st Aero Squadron the next day.<sup>6</sup> The squadron began active reconnaissance operations over the Western Front on 4 April 1918, and over the next six and a half weeks, Culbert participated in at least three reconnaissance missions as observer and gunner.<sup>7</sup> He was cited for gallantry in action for a mission flown on 15 May 1918:

While on a mission to photograph enemy gas projectors, Lt. Culbert, with his pilot, descended to five hundred meters over the enemy

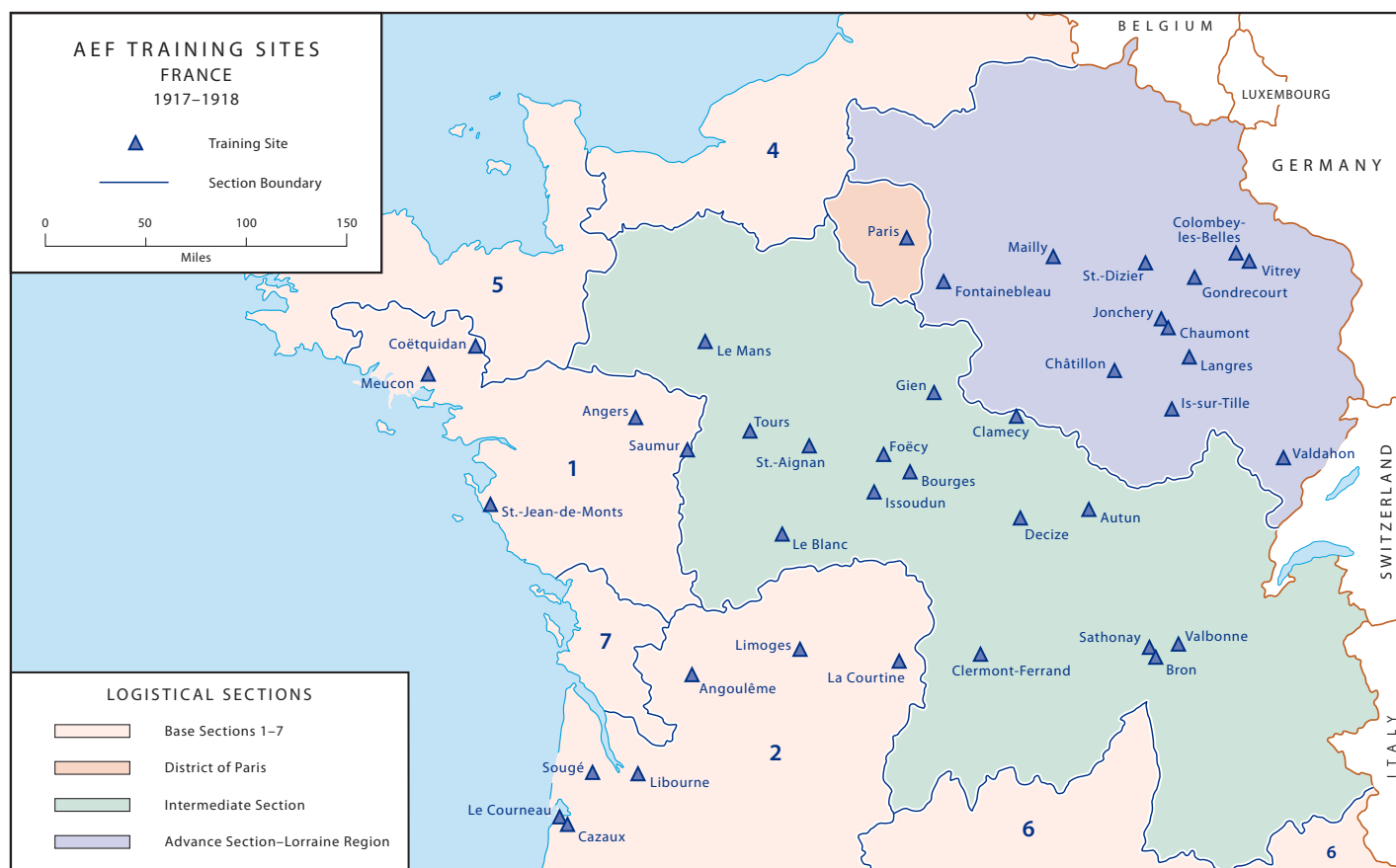


Roy Stanley Geiger, shown as a lieutenant general, c. 1945



Kenneth P. Culbert, shown as a second lieutenant, wearing his Army observer wings on his Marine Corps uniform

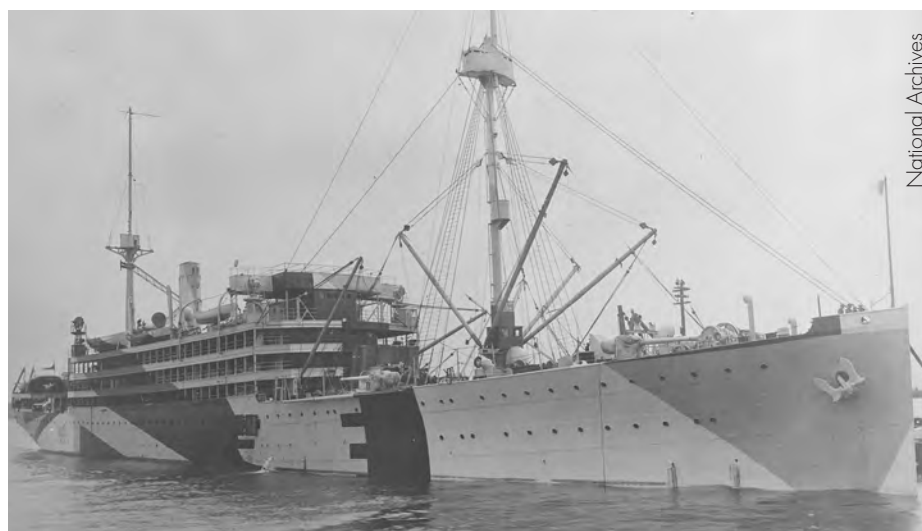
second line trenches and secured the photographs, despite heavy enemy antiaircraft and machine-gun fire. Although their plane was severely damaged by enemy fire they completed their mission and returned with the photographs.<sup>8</sup>



Just one week later, Culbert and pilot Lt. Walter V. Barnaby were assigned another photography mission.

About five o'clock on the afternoon of 22 May, 1918, while flying over the lines near St. Mihiel, the plane, apparently struck by a German anti-aircraft shell, became unmanageable and crashed just behind our lines, the pilot being killed instantaneously and Culbert rendered unconscious. He was taken at once to the American hospital at Sebastopol Farm, just north of Toul, where he died at midnight without having regained consciousness.<sup>9</sup>

The French government posthumously awarded Culbert the Croix de Guerre stating he was a "young officer with a big heart animated with the purest sense of duty, who demonstrated sangfroid courage and determination in the course of several reconnaissances [sic] on the enemy."<sup>10</sup> After the war,



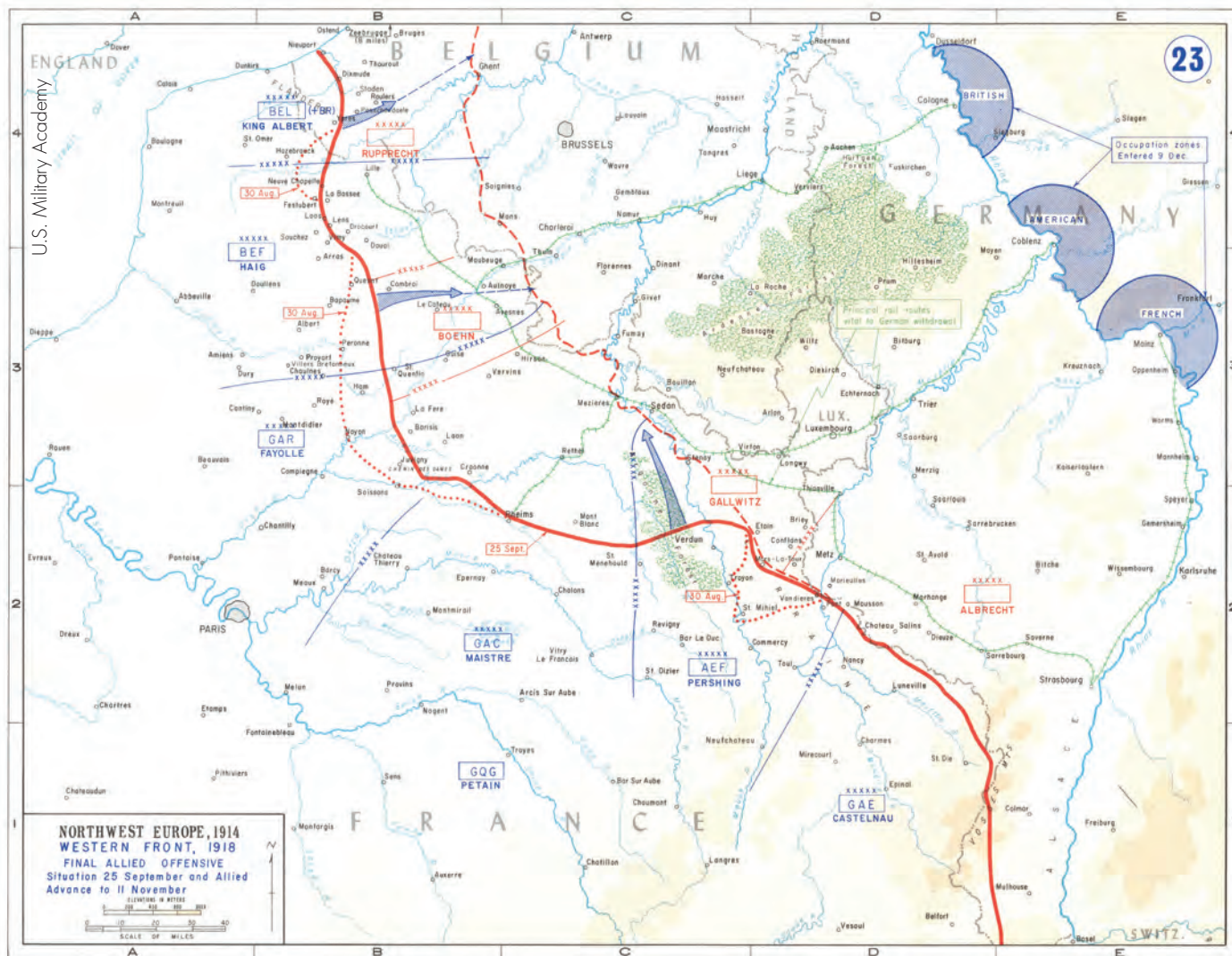
The USS *Henderson*, c. 1918

Culbert's brother, a lieutenant in the Navy, presented a silver cup to the squadron "in appreciation for the squadron's kindness to his brother in life and death."<sup>11</sup>

While there is not a wealth of documentary evidence indicating Culbert's own desire to fly, the available information seems to

indicate that he actively participated in his reassignment to aviation. The lingering question is why Culbert did not fly for the Marine Corps despite his apparent pride regarding his service as a marine. "I counted it a greater honour [sic] to be a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps than a higher officer in the Reserve Army when I





received my commission, at which time both choices were open to me.”<sup>12</sup> Culbert’s awards of the Silver Star and Croix de Guerre make him stand out from his fellow marines because they are possibly the first decorations received by any marine for action in the First World War.

## ALLAN MACROSSIE JR.

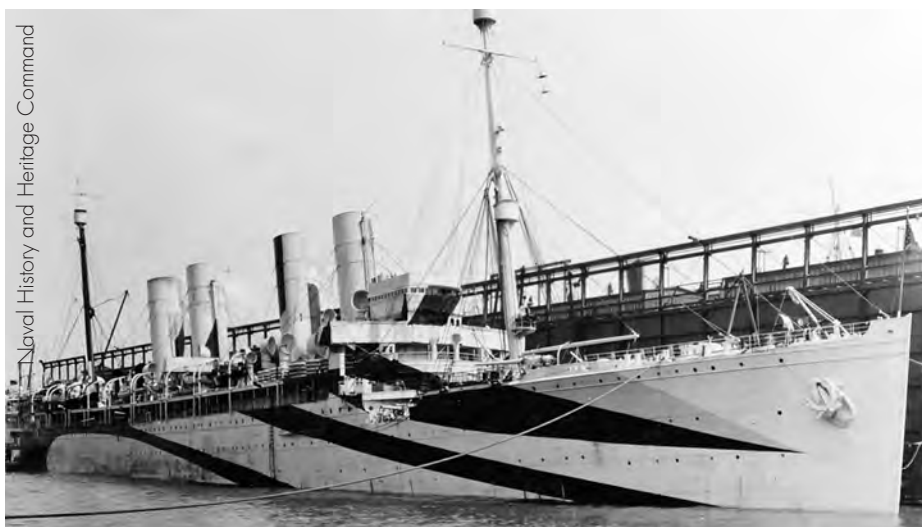
During World War I, many men entering the Marine Corps officer ranks were graduates or former students of some of the most prestigious universities in the country. Allan MacRossie Jr. was born 3 December 1893, in the suburban area of New York City and graduated from Columbia University.<sup>13</sup> On 29 March 1916, he started his military service with the New York National Guard’s 1st Motor Battery, an armored car unit equipped with “rapid-fire guns and a high-speed

motor.”<sup>14</sup> He served for fifteen months as a private before leaving to enroll as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve.<sup>15</sup>

MacRossie reported to the Officers’ Training Camp at Quantico on 28 July 1917, and the following month he and four other second lieutenants were transferred to the 1st Field Artillery Regiment at Quantico.<sup>16</sup> He departed the United States for France aboard the *USS Von Steuben* on 24 October 1917 while attached to the 83d Company, 6th Regiment, and arrived on 19 November. MacRossie’s tenure with the 83d Company was short-lived. On 15 January 1918, he was detached and sent to Aero Observer School at Tours, France, where he completed his initial training in April.<sup>17</sup> MacRossie was transferred to Salm 30, a squadron with the 5th French Army, to participate in on-the-job training with an operational



First Lt. Allan MacRossie Jr., (left), with an unidentified pilot, c. 1918



**USS Von Steuben, c. 1918**

squadron.<sup>18</sup> He was described by his French instructors as a cheerful and intelligent officer who learned their methods of observation with ease.<sup>19</sup>

His training with the French complete, MacRossie was reassigned on 15 June 1918 to the Air Service's 99th Aero Squadron (Observation) as an observer.<sup>20</sup> During the next three and a half months, he accumulated nearly ten hours of flight time, mostly participating in reconnaissance flights over the German trenches.<sup>21</sup> In an interesting twist, MacRossie's father

was also in France and was in regular contact with his son. On 5 October 1918, Allan MacRossie Sr. wrote to the commandant of the Marine Corps, Maj. Gen. George Barnett, regarding his son's medical condition stating that "the constant flying at the front which he has been doing for a period of some months has begun to undermine his nerves and strength."<sup>22</sup> Just six days later, on 11 October, his son was sent to Evacuation Hospital #6, diagnosed with influenza, and did not return to his squadron.<sup>23</sup> Because the elder MacRossie's letter had not yet reached the commandant, it is unlikely the correspondence had any effect on his son's removal from the front. MacRossie returned to the United States in March 1919 and served five more months at the Brooklyn Navy Yard before resigning his commission in the Marine Corps, having reached the rank of captain.<sup>24</sup>

## WILLIAM OSCAR LOWE

A third marine who wore Army observer wings was William Oscar Lowe. He was born on 23 May 1894 in Athens, Tennessee, and graduated from the University of Tennessee. Lowe enrolled as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve one day after his twenty-third birthday and was assigned to active service at the Marine Corps Rifle Range at Winthrop, Maryland, for duty and



**Maj. Gen. George Barnett,  
commandant of the Marine Corps,  
c.1918**

instruction. Nearly a month later, on 18 July 1917, Lowe was detached from Winthrop and sent to the Officers' Training Camp.<sup>25</sup>

At Quantico, Lowe was assigned to the 1st Machine Gun Battalion under the command of Maj. Edward B. Cole; later, the unit was redesignated as the 6th Machine Gun Battalion upon arrival in France. Lowe was among 750 other marines and sailors who left for France aboard the USS *DeKalb* on 8 December 1917.<sup>26</sup> Once in Europe, Lowe was assigned to the 5th Regiment and began training for trench warfare; however, on 12 January 1918, his infantry training was cut short when he was ordered to Aero Observer School at Tours.<sup>27</sup>

After completing his initial training in late February, Lowe was sent for additional training in aerial reconnaissance at observation school in Amanty, France. He remained there until 24 April when he received orders to join the French 52d Squadron that was operating at the front near Chalon-sur-Marne. Lowe remained with the unit until 20 June when he was transferred to the American 90th Aero Squadron (Observation), which was based at Ourches and working on the St. Mihiel sector between Apremont and Reminville.<sup>28</sup>

During the summer of 1918, the 90th Aero Squadron participated in numerous photo reconnaissance



**Edward B. Cole, shown as a first  
lieutenant, c. 1914**



missions across the front lines as it tangled with German fighter aircraft and dodged ground fire. Over the course of three days in September, Lowe and his pilot, 1st Lt. Wilbert E. Kinsley, impressed their commanding officer with their skill and daring over the front lines:

During the offensive operations in the St. Mihiel sector on Sept. 12th, 13th, and 14th, he, with his pilot . . . while flying at an altitude of about one hundred meters, in the course of an infantry contact patrol, had the radiator of his airplane pierced by machine gun fire from the ground, but succeeded in bringing his plane safely back within our own lines, and dropping messages containing valuable information at Corps Headquarters, where he was forced to land. During the operations in the sector north of Verdun he has given constant proof of his zeal in the performance of the missions assigned to him. In the course of one reconnaissance, although persistently attacked by a large formation of Fokkers, he completed his work before leaving the lines, and returned with much valuable information, although his plane was pierced by several bullets.<sup>29</sup>

On 7 October 1918, Lowe and Lieutenant Kinsley were sent on a mission to stake the advance lines of the 80th Division; the ensuing action garnered both men the Army's Distinguished Service Cross. The citation recounts the events:

suddenly attacked by a formation of eight enemy machines, which dived out of a cloud bank. Although greatly outnumbered, Lieutenant Lowe succeeded in shooting down one out of control and disabling a second so that it was forced to land. Later, on the same mission, he was again attacked by a patrol of five enemy scout machines, and in a running fight he drove these off and successfully completed his mission.<sup>30</sup>

Later the same month, the only marine in the squadron was appointed



1st Lt. William O. Lowe (right) and 1st Lt. Wilbert E. Kinsley (left), as they appeared after receiving the Distinguished Service Cross in October 1918



Capt. W. G. Schauffler Jr. (left) and Lt. F. A. Tillman (right), c. 1918

the operations officer; he wrote home stating, "I am assistant to the Commanding Officer now so have loads of work to do. Many nights I work until 10 o'clock and sometimes am called out of bed after this to see about some attack that is going to be pulled off."<sup>31</sup>

The 90th Aero Squadron continually flew and reported the progress of the 79th and 90th Divisions as the war drew to an end. After the armistice on 11 November 1918, the squadron remained in France but did very little

flying. Lowe's officer record book detailed his service in his own hand and that of his commanding officer, Capt. W. G. Schauffler Jr.

Lieut. Lowe has served under me for the past six months and has proved himself to be one of the most dependable and accurate observers in the organization. He has always been one of the first to volunteer for the most difficult and dangerous missions in any kind of weather. He has flown

constantly in both the St. Mihiel and Argonne-Meuse offensives and has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal for extraordinary heroism and exceptional services.<sup>32</sup>

Lowe returned home with the 90th Squadron in 1919 with more than fifty-five hours flight time over enemy lines, the Distinguished Service Cross, and later the Navy Cross for the same action. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on 6 August 1919, a little more than two years after his enrollment.

### MARCUS ALEXANDER JORDAN

Marcus Alexander Jordan, born in Phoenix, Arizona, on 8 July 1894, was raised in the Washington, D.C., area.<sup>33</sup> Jordan was keen to enter the fight overseas, but because the United States remained neutral, he crossed into Canada and entered the Canadian Legion on 22 April 1916. He hoped to fly with the British Royal Flying Corps eventually, but for the moment he was assigned to the 97th Infantry Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, as

a lieutenant.<sup>34</sup> On 15 August 1916, Jordan requested a leave of absence to travel to Great Britain and join the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>35</sup> It is unclear if Jordan was aware of the prerequisites for applying for a commission before he departed for England; the specific requirements included being of “British birth” and in “possession of a ‘Pilot’s Flying Certificate.’”<sup>36</sup> By 25 August, he was in London attempting to enroll, however, this was a short-lived attempt.<sup>37</sup> Jordan decided to resign from the Canadian military in early December upon his return to the United States.<sup>38</sup> He later reported that he resigned because he “was unable to be transferred to the Royal Flying Corps without becoming a naturalized British subject.”<sup>39</sup>

Just four months after resigning his Canadian commission, and two weeks after the United States declaration of war against Germany, Jordan enrolled on 21 April 1917 as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. Jordan’s application for enrollment indicated that he was partially color blind, but based on the recommendation of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, General Barnett waived his disqualification and accepted

him.<sup>40</sup> Despite his defective vision, Jordan reported to Marine Barracks Philadelphia on 18 May where he joined the Aeronautic Company of the Advanced Base Force under the command of Capt. Alfred A. Cunningham, presumably to begin flight training.<sup>41</sup>

Here, once again, Jordan was stymied in his attempts to learn to fly. On 6 June 1917, he underwent an additional medical examination, and this time the doctors of the Aeronautic Company opined “this condition makes it very unsafe for him to engage in aeronautic work, and it is recommended that he be not allowed to engage in this duty.”<sup>42</sup> Cunningham added his negative comments about the need for full-color vision when he forwarded the surgeon’s report requesting that General Barnett make the final decision about Jordan.<sup>43</sup> In the end, the commandant of the Marine Corps concurred with Cunningham and Jordan was dismissed from aviation duty. By the end of the month, Jordan had been transferred to Quantico and the Officers’ Training Camp for all of July.<sup>44</sup>

Jordan joined the Base Detachment, 5th Regiment, on 31 July 1917 as it was embarking on the USS *Henderson*.<sup>45</sup> Hours before the ship departed Philadelphia for France, Jordan met up with a friend, Lt. Edmund G. Chamberlain, who was the duty officer in the Marine aviation section of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The two men exchanged friendly greetings and Chamberlain introduced Jordan to Captain Cunningham’s pet bear, which was kept nearby. After a short conversation, the two went their separate ways. Shortly after Chamberlain departed the post for lunch, Jordan returned, absconded with the bear, and boarded the *Henderson* as it was leaving its moorings.<sup>46</sup>

Cunningham immediately brought Jordan up on charges of theft and requested he be court-martialed; however, Jordan admitted that he had not realized the bear was private property, instead thinking it was the company mascot.<sup>47</sup> Regrettably, the bear did not survive long after the



Marcus A. Jordan, shown in his Canadian uniform before entering the Marine Corps, c. 1916



Maj. Alfred A. Cunningham, c. 1930





Edmund G. Chamberlain, c. 1917

voyage across the Atlantic. Jordan repaid Cunningham for the loss of the bear and its accoutrements.<sup>48</sup> As Jordan admitted his indiscretion, and provided remittance to Cunningham, the 5th Regiment's commanding officer, Col. Charles A. Doyen, considered the matter concluded and did not proffer charges against the young lieutenant.<sup>49</sup> Jordan's chance of ever flying with the Marine Corps was permanently squashed with this incident, as Cunningham was the

senior Marine aviator, de facto head of Marine aviation, and later led the 1st Marine Aviation Force to France in 1918.

However, it seemed that Jordan was not quite out of flying just yet. It is unclear from the records if he engineered the orders to fly for the Army or if, like MacRossie and Lowe, was chosen by headquarters to report for flight training. On 17 October 1917, Jordan was directed to report to the chief of the Air Service and subsequently



Maj. William Ord Ryan

ordered to an aviation school for flight instruction.<sup>50</sup> Just a few days later, Jordan and fifty-four other aviation cadets were transferred to the 8th Aviation Instruction Center in Foggia, Italy.<sup>51</sup> Jordan immediately began pilot training on 31 October 1917. Over the course of six weeks, he took part in nineteen flights as a student, accumulating almost four hours of flight time.<sup>52</sup> He soloed on



8th Aviation Instruction Center in Foggia, Italy, c. 1918



U.S. Army

Col. Thomas DeWitt Milling

7 December 1917 and passed his first military brevet (a series of demanding flight requirements that had to be passed in order to continue) nine days later.

Less than a week later Cunningham contacted the AEF Air Service Training Department, informing them of Jordan's color blindness.<sup>53</sup> By the time Cunningham interjected himself, Jordan had already amassed ninety-nine minutes and fifteen flights as a solo pilot, without incident.<sup>54</sup> The commanding officer of the 8th Aviation Instruction Center, Maj. William Ord Ryan, immediately defended Jordan:

I have investigated the matter of color blindness . . . Jordan is slightly color blind . . . but the defect does not exist to the extent of disqualifying him from aviation service. In my opinion this slight defect in no way detracts from Lieutenant Jordan's flying ability.<sup>55</sup>

Major Ryan continued to support Jordan by writing to Col. Thomas DeWitt Milling of the AEF Air Service Training Department, unofficially trying to explain the situation as he saw it, the situation with the bear, and the court-martial charges.



Map of the 8th Aviation Instruction Center's South Camp

It was thought that the matter would be forgotten, but Lieutenant Jordan tells me that he feels that Captain Cunningham has done other things which he, Jordan, has heard of indirectly, showing that Captain Cunningham is doing all in his power to discredit all that Jordan does. Lieutenant Jordan is a very good officer, in fact one of the best I have here. He has worked hard and being the only officer I have with previous practical military experience he has been almost invaluable.<sup>56</sup>

The matter seemed put to rest after this interjection by Ryan. Jordan returned to flying without further interference from Cunningham.

In February 1918, Jordan completed his course in night flying. Aside from his flying duties he assisted in the instruction of machine gun work and pistol practice.<sup>57</sup> That same month, the first Societ Italiana Aviazione (SIA) 7B biplane arrived at Foggia—one of the eighteen purchased by the United States for training purposes. On 24 March 1918, Jordan and Italian instructor "Lieutenant Freddi" took an SIA-7B





National Archives

An SIA-7B biplane, the type that Jordan flew

aloft over the south camp. The aircraft side-slipped into a dive, but could not recover and crashed. The Italian instructor suffered deep cuts and Jordan suffered a broken arm and leg. Two days later, Jordan's leg was amputated and he was in and out of consciousness.<sup>58</sup> During his lucid moments, and despite excruciating pain, his only concern was for his Italian comrade's well-being. On 27 March 1918, Lieutenant Jordan succumbed to his wounds.<sup>59</sup> Ironically, on the same day as Jordan's death, General Barnett had officially put the Cunningham matter to rest and approved Jordan to remain in aviation.<sup>60</sup>

## CHARLES PATTERSON NASH

How the fifth identifiable marine came to fly with the Army in World War I has not yet been discerned. Charles Patterson Nash was born in Buffalo, West Virginia, on 1 March 1897. After high school he attended the Virginia Military Institute, graduating in 1917. On 11 April 1917, Nash enrolled as a provisional second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve for a period of four years and was ordered to report to Marine Barracks Port Royal (today's Parris Island), South Carolina, for duty and instruction. He remained at Port Royal until 4 June 1917 when he was sent to Philadelphia to join the 43d Company, 5th Regiment, and make the Atlantic crossing aboard the USS *Hancock*, which arrived in St. Nazaire, France, on 27 June 1917.<sup>61</sup>



Capt. Charles P. Nash, pictured during World War II. He was recalled to active service despite the loss of his left arm.

Nash spent the next three months training at the Automatic Rifle School in Manvoges, then at the First Corps School at Gondrecourt.<sup>62</sup> On 24 November 1917, Nash was detached from the 5th Regiment and assigned to the 2d Aviation Training Detachment at Tours for instruction in flying.<sup>63</sup> The reasoning behind his reassignment is not reflected in his military service record and there are no documents indicating any particular interest in flying. The Army taught Nash to pilot

aircraft and then transferred him to the 3d Aviation Instruction Center, near Issoudun, France, for advanced training in April 1918. In July he attended a course of instruction in aerial gunnery.<sup>64</sup>

It was not until 22 August 1918 that Nash was assigned to an operational squadron, the 93d Aero Squadron, part of the 3d Pursuit Group operating from Vaucouleurs, behind the Toul front.<sup>65</sup> Nash's tenure with the 93d Aero Squadron was short-lived. The St. Mihiel Offensive was launched by the Allies on 12 September 1918, and the 93d was called on to provide air support. The next day, Nash went up in his scout plane in rainy and cloudy weather.

While flying at an altitude of 700 meters over an enemy aerodrome at Marx-la-Tours, France, [I] was struck by explosive bullet in left arm and by incendiary in left shoulder. [I] fainted in air and regained consciousness eighteen hours later. [My] left arm [was] amputated while unconscious.<sup>66</sup>

Nash had crashed behind enemy lines; he was picked up by the Germans and taken to an old schoolhouse turned dressing station where his left arm was removed by a German surgeon.

After several weeks of moving from hospital to hospital, on 19 October, Nash was imprisoned in the Karlsruhe



Troops aboard the USS *Hancock* about to sail for France, c. 1917

Prison Camp.<sup>67</sup> Nash did not stay long at Karlsruhe; on 1 November he was transferred to an American officers' prison camp in Villingen, Germany. Nash was sent back to France via Switzerland on 1 December 1918 and was then shuttled from one base hospital to another until 19 January 1919, when he embarked on the USS *Susquehanna* bound for Newport News, Virginia.<sup>68</sup>

The 93d Aero Squadron had been erroneously informed that Nash was dead. While still in France, he would occasionally run into old squadron-mates who were stunned to see him alive. "I would meet some fellow I knew and his mouth would gape open."<sup>69</sup> It was while in France that Nash learned he had been promoted to captain. Because of his wounds, Nash was incapacitated for active service and medically retired 27 June 1919.<sup>70</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Understanding how these marines ended up in Army squadrons is discernable from the documentary evidence. In June 1918, the AEF

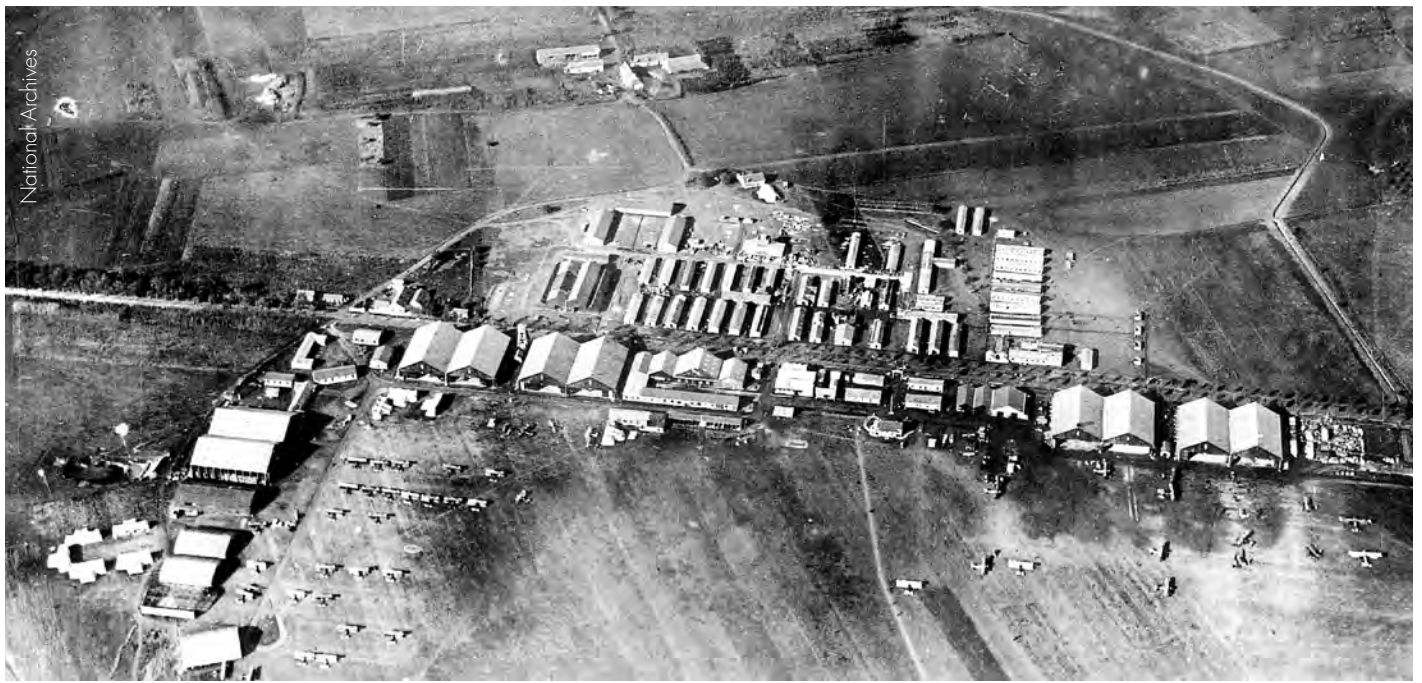
realized that the quantity and quality of trained observers was severely lacking. Despite requests to draw men from the United States, the number received was insufficient.<sup>71</sup> Lowe and MacRossie had originally been assigned to the 5th and 6th Regiments, respectively, and in January 1918, along with two soldiers from the 9th and 23d Infantry (all of the 2d Division), were reassigned to the AEF Air Service's observation units.<sup>72</sup> This appears to confirm that it was a conscious decision by the AEF to assign men from their infantry regiments to observer school, likely to take advantage of their skill and training as foot soldiers, but mostly to fill the growing need in observation.

Culbert's and Jordan's assignments to Army squadrons stemmed from their own personal desire to fight from the air. It appears that Jordan finagled the orders to flight training with the Army knowing that his troubles with Cunningham would preclude any chance at being a naval aviator. Why Culbert chose to fly with the

Army instead of the Marines remains a mystery. However, it may simply have been a case of proximity and availability; Culbert was already in France and Marine aviation was still stateside. The First Marine Aviation Force did not arrive in France until mid-July 1918 and was not fully operational until October 1918. Nash appears to be the odd man out of the five known marines who flew with the Army. There is no indication within his record that he had a desire to fly as Culbert and Jordan did, and unlike MacRossie and Lowe, it does not appear that he was chosen because of skills in infantry that could be utilized in aerial observation. He was a pilot. Without knowing the identity of the sixth marine, it is hard to speculate if a larger pattern appears between Nash and the unknown marine.

From the five men identified, a cumulative award listing includes three Purple Hearts, one Distinguished Service Cross, one Navy Cross, one Silver Star Citation, and one Croix de Guerre with palm. With such a commendable record of achievement, the remaining question is why these



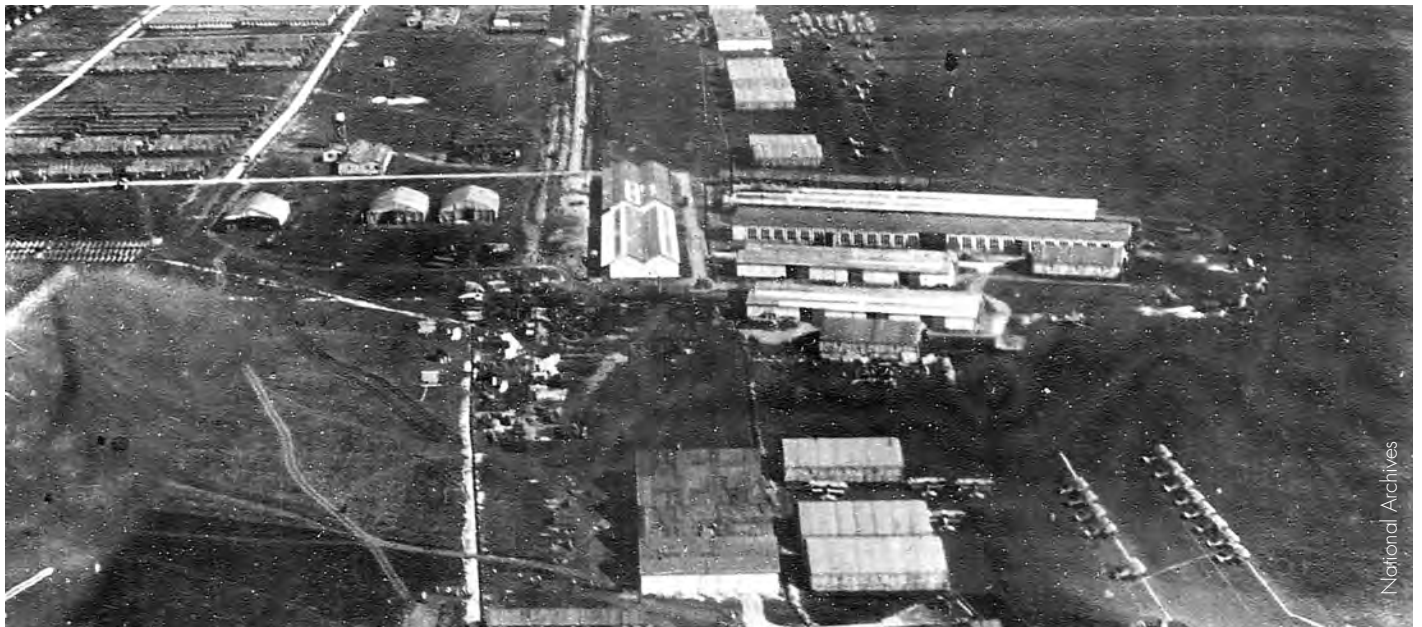


2d Air Instructional Center near Tours, France, c. 1918

marines were omitted from the larger picture of Marine aviation in World War I. The simple conclusion is they were overlooked due to the small numbers involved. The probable truth is that the historian writing the Marine Corps' war story, Major McClellan, did not forget their deeds; he simply did not expand on their actions to the fullest extent possible.

The early days of Marine aviation in the war were filled with combined operations with the Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force, which suggests that the Marine Corps would not have produced a formidable aviation combat element entirely on its own. Cooperation and tenacity were key to getting the Marines "off the ground." The overall service of the

marines who flew with the Army may seem to pale in comparison to that of their counterparts who flew with the Navy, however, it should not be diminished. The Army, under General John J. Pershing's leadership, understood that if the Allies were to win the war, every able-bodied man was needed in the fight—regardless of uniform.



3d Air Instructional Center near Issoudun, France, c. 1918

American military aviation was in its infancy in combat, and it was not in the Air Service's best interest to turn away qualified and capable men simply because they wore the eagle, globe, and anchor on their uniform.



## NOTES

1. Edwin N. McClellan, *The United States Marine Corps in the World War* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, 1920), p. 74.

2. For additional information on the earliest years of Marine Corps aviation and the missions flown by the Marines of the Day Wing, Northern Bombing Group, see Edward C. Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912–1940* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1977).

3. Record of Kenneth Pickens Culbert, Marine Corps Military Service Record, National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), St Louis, Mo.

4. Report on the Fitness of Officers of the U.S. Marine Corps, 31 July–30 September 1917, Culbert Military Service Record, NPRC.

5. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *Memoirs of the Harvard Dead in the War Against Germany*, vol.3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922), p. 84; American Expeditionary Forces Special Orders No. 84, 16 October 1917, Culbert Military Service Record, NPRC.

6. Culbert Military Service Record, NPRC.

7. Edgar S. Gorrell, *Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service*, Series E: Squadron Histories, vol. 1, "History, 1st Aero Squadron" (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975), p. 6.

8. Silver Star Citation, Culbert Military Service Record, NPRC.

9. DeWolfe Howe, *Memoirs of the Harvard Dead*, p. 97.

10. Edgar S. Gorrell, *Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service*, Series L: Miscellaneous Sections of the Air Service, vol. 10: Air Services Bulletins 251–320 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975), p. 59.

11. Stanley Walsh, ed., *First Over the Front* (Bloomington, Ind.: Author House, 2011), p. 134–35.

12. Culbert to Maj Gen Commandant, 21 November 1917, Culbert Military Service Record, NPRC.

13. Enrollment Application, 7 July 1917, Record of Allan MacRossie Jr., Marine Corps Military Service Record, NPRC.

14. New York Guard Service Card, New York State Archives, Albany, N.Y.; Anon., "New York Forming Motor Battery," *The Horseless Age*, 1 February 1916, p. 134.

15. Enrollment Application, 7 July 1917, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

16. Commanding Officer, 1st Field Artillery Regiment to Maj Gen Commandant, 22 August 1917, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

17. Record of Service, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

18. Headquarters Advance Section Air Service, Special Order 230, 15 June 1918, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

19. 5th French Army Fact Sheet, 24 June 1918, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

20. Headquarters Advance Section Air Service, Special Order 230, 15 June 1918, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

21. Edgar S. Gorrell, *Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service*, Series J: Training, Volume 7, "Account of Operations 99th Aero Observation Squadron, St. Mihiel Offensive and Argonne-Meuse Offensive" (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975), pp. 16–17, 32–33.

22. Ltr, Allan MacRossie Sr., to Maj Gen Commandant, 5 October 1918, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

23. Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Memorandum to Marine Corps Headquarters, 31 January 1929, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

24. Secretary of the Navy to Allan MacRossie Jr., 4 August 1919, MacRossie Military Service Record, NPRC.

25. Record of Service, William Oscar Lowe, Marine Corps Military Service Record, NPRC.

26. Maj Gen Commandant to Maj Edward B. Cole, 5 December 1917, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

27. Record of Service, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

28. Memorandum of Service, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

29. Commanding Officer, 90th Aero Squadron to General Headquarters Personnel Department, 20 October 1918, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

30. William O. Lowe Distinguished Service Cross Citation, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

31. Neal O'Steen, "Volunteer Warrior," *Tennessee Alumnus Magazine*, Summer 1995, pp. 25–29.

32. Lowe Officer Record Book, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

33. Passport Application, 17 January 1917, ancestry.com, accessed 10 January 2015.

34. Officers' Declaration Paper, 22 April 1916, Marcus Alexander Jordan Canadian Military Record, Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), Ottawa.

35. M. A. Jordan to Officer Commanding 97th Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, 15 August 1916, Jordan Canadian Military Record, LAC, Ottawa.

36. Beverley R. Armstrong to Camp Commandant, Aldershot, Nova Scotia, 16 August 1916, Jordan Canadian Military Record, LAC, Ottawa.

37. G. S. Jackson to Maj Bligh, 25 August 1916, Jordan Canadian Military Record, LAC, Ottawa.

38. HQ Card, undated, Jordan Canadian Military Record, LAC, Ottawa.

39. Passport Application, 17 Jan 1917, ancestry.com, accessed 10 January 2015.

40. Enrollment Application, 21 April 1917, Marcus Alexander Jordan Marine Corps Military Service Record, NPRC.

41. Record of Service, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

42. Surgeon G. L. Angeny to Commanding Officer, Aeronautic Company, 6 June 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

43. Alfred A. Cunningham to Maj Gen Commandant, 9 June 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

44. Record of Service, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

45. Ibid.

46. Statement of Private Walden H. Sisson, 6 August 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

47. Cunningham to Maj Gen Commandant, 9 August 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

48. Jordan to Maj Gen Commandant, 24 September 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

49. Charles A. Doyen to Maj Gen Commandant, 28 September 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

50. Headquarters American Expeditionary Forces Special Order No. 128 and 129, 17 October 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

51. Headquarters American Expeditionary Forces Special Order No. 76, 23 October 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.



52. Individual Flight Reports, 31 October–6 December 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

53. Thomas DeWitt Milling to William Ord Ryan, 15 December 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

54. Individual Flight Reports, 7–15 December 1917, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

55. Ryan to Milling, 14 January 1918, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

56. Memorandum for Milling from Ryan, undated, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

57. Jordan to Maj Gen Commandant, 4 February 1918, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

58. William F. Hallstead, "World War I: Caproni Pilots in Italy," *Aviation History Magazine* (May 2003).

59. Fiorello H. La Guardia to Brig Gen Charles G. Long, 15 November 1918, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

60. Maj Gen Commandant to Jordan, 27 March 1918, Jordan Military Service Record, NPRC.

61. Record of Charles Patterson Nash Marine Corps Military Service Record, NPRC.

62. Ibid.

63. Headquarters American Expeditionary Forces Special Orders no. 167, 24 November 1917, Nash Military Service Record, NPRC.

64. Record of Service, Nash Military Service Record, NPRC.

65. Gorrell, History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service, Series E: Squadron Histories, Volume 11, "Narrative History of

93rd Squadron" (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1975), p. 3.

66. Nash to Maj Gen Commandant, 4 June 1919, Nash Military Service Record, NPRC.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Maj Gen Commandant to Nash, 11 July 1919, Nash Military Service Record, NPRC.

71. Mauer Mauer, *The U.S. Air Service in World War I* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1978), p. 105.

72. Headquarters Second Division Special Orders no. 1c, 11 January 1918, Lowe Military Service Record, NPRC.

## ARMYHISTORY

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**A**rmey History welcomes articles, essays, and commentaries of between 2,000 and 12,000 words on any topic relating to the history of the U.S. Army or to wars and conflicts in which the U.S. Army participated or by which it was substantially influenced. The Army's history extends to the present day, and *Army History* seeks accounts of the Army's actions in ongoing conflicts as well as those of earlier years. The bulletin particularly seeks writing that presents new approaches to historical issues. It encourages readers to submit responses to essays or commentaries that have appeared in its pages and to present cogent arguments on any question (controversial or otherwise) relating to the history of the Army. Such contributions need not be lengthy. Essays and commentaries should be annotated with endnotes, which should be embedded, to indicate the sources relied on to support factual assertions. A manuscript, preferably in Microsoft Word format, should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail sent to the managing editor at [usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.armyhistory@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.mcnair.cmh.mbx.armyhistory@mail.mil).

*Army History* encourages authors to recommend or provide illustrations to accompany submissions. If authors wish to supply photographs, they may provide them in a digital format with a minimum resolution of 300 dots per inch or as photo prints sent by mail. Authors should provide captions and credits with all images. When furnishing photographs that they did not take, or any photos of art, authors must identify the owners of the photographs and artworks to enable *Army History* to obtain permission to reproduce the images, if necessary.

Although contributions by e-mail are preferred, authors may submit articles, essays, commentaries, and images on readable electronic media (DVD, CD, USB flash drive) by mail to Bryan Hockensmith, Managing Editor, *Army History*, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 102 Fourth Ave., Collins Hall, Bldg. 35, Fort Lesley J. McNair, D.C. 20319-5060.