

**CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE  
ARMY AIR SERVICE AND AIR CORPS HISTORY IN HAWAII  
1914 to 1939**

Compiled by John D. Bennett

The chronological history was taken from "History of the United States Army in Hawaii 1849 to 1939, compiled by Sgt. William C. Addleman, Division Hq Detachment, Hawaiian Division, Schofield Barracks, Territory of Hawaii, dated 1939. Only the portions dealing with the Air Corps history is included in this compilation. The earliest recordation is for the year 1914.

- 1914:           **Observation by aircraft.** General Macomb, in a statement to the press, said the use of airplanes for observation purposes in Oahu had been found impracticable and captive balloons should be used in their stead. (p. 12)  
Note: General Macomb commanded the Hawaiian Department, Jan. 23 to Mar. 12, 1914. (p. 12)
- 1917:           **Ford Island** was acquired by the Government during this year. (p. 16)
- 1918:           **Notable Flights.** On May 9, 1918, Major Harold M. Clarke, made the first over-water flight in the Hawaiian Islands by flying from Honolulu to Hawaii, by using an old "Jenny" type seaplane and coming down to a forced landing on the slopes of Mauna Kea. He was not injured but his plane was damaged.
- 6<sup>TH</sup> Aero Sq** moved to aviation station on Ford Island, n.d. (p. 19)
- 1919:           **Luke Field** established on Ford Island, Apr. 29, 1919, named in honor of Lt. Frank Luke, AS, killed in aerial combat with two German planes over Marvoux, France, Sept. 28, 1918. He had a record of 18 victories in aerial combat in less than three weeks of flying. (p. 20)
- 2<sup>ND</sup> Observation Sq**, AS, organized with station at Luke Field per GO #37 HHD (Headquarters Hawaiian Department). (p. 21)
- 1920:           **21<sup>ST</sup> Balloon Company** arrived May 6, 1920, assigned to Fort Shafter, and Oct. 2, 1920 transferred to Fort Kamehameha.
- 3<sup>RD</sup> Balloon Company** arrived May 6, 1920, assigned to Fort Ruger. (p. 22)
- 1920 (cont.):   **4<sup>TH</sup> Observation Sq** arrived Jan. 24, 1920, assigned to Luke Field. (p. 22)

1921: **4<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq, 11<sup>th</sup> Photo Section, and Branch Intelligence Office # 11**, were assigned to Schofield Barracks during Jan. 1921, and were designated as "Divisional Air Service." This was done in order to complete the organization of the Hawaiian Division in February. (p. 26)

**Air Service Supply Depot** was established at Schofield Barracks Feb. 1, 1921 under the supervision of the (Hawaiian) Department Air Officer, Warehouses 2016, 2017, and 2022 were assigned to this depot.

1922: **4<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq, Branch Intelligence Office # 11, and 11<sup>th</sup> Photo Section** were transferred Feb. 6, 1922 from Luke Field to Schofield Barracks. (p. 33)

**23<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Sq**, AS, arrived Mar. 29, 1922, assigned to 5<sup>th</sup> Gp at Luke Field. (p. 34)

**21<sup>st</sup> Balloon Co** was placed on the inactive list Jan. 27, 1922 and the commissioned and enlisted personnel were transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Sq (Pursuit). (P. 35)

**Wheeler Field** so designated July 13, 1922 in honor of Maj. Sheldon H. Wheeler, Air Service, who crashed and was killed at Luke Field during a flight on July 13, 1921. (P. 35)

1922: **5<sup>th</sup> Gp** at Luke Field named 5<sup>th</sup> Gp (Composite) July 1922. (P. 35)

1922: **Air Intelligence Office #11 and Photo Section # 11** were relieved from assignment to Hawaiian Div. Oct. 23, 1922 and assigned to 5<sup>th</sup> Gp (Composite) at Luke Field. (p. 35)

1923: **The Air Service** was reorganized by GO # 10 HHD, Apr. 5, 1923, effective midnight Apr. 30 to May 1, 1923, as follows:

5<sup>th</sup> Composite Air Gp, Luke Field: Hq 5<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp; 41<sup>st</sup> Air Intelligence Section; 11<sup>th</sup> Photo Section; 6<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sq; 23<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Sq; 72<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Sq; 65<sup>th</sup> Service Sq (72<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Sq organized at Luke Field by the Post Commander from Air Service personnel at that post).

- 1923 (cont.): 17<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp, Schofield Barracks: Hq 17<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp; 4<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq; 19<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sq. (Hq 17<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp and 19<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sq organized at Schofield Barracks by the Post Commander from Air Service personnel at that post).
- 1924: **17<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp** rendered inactive Jan. 15, 1924. (p. 38)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq** assigned to the Hawaiian Div. Jan. 15, 1924 (p. 38)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sq** assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp Jan. 15, 1924. (p. 38)
- 41<sup>st</sup> Air Intelligence Sq** demobilized Dec., 1924 and the personnel transferred to other units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp. (p.40)
- 1925: **COOLRICK, Major Robert E.M.**, AS, appointed Air Officer Hawaiian Department, May 25, 1925 to Aug. 24, 1926. (p. 41)
- Notable Flights.** Commander John Rogers, USN, in a seaplane, flew from San Francisco and landed in the Kauai Channel Aug. 29, 1925. After drifting and floating in the channel for nearly nine days, he and his crew were finally landed on the Island of Kauai. (p. 42)
- 1927: **Air Corps:**
- 4<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq, personnel and equipment were transferred from Schofield Barracks to Luke Field in 1927.
- Provisional Pursuit Gp organized by GO # 1 HHD Jan. 5, 1927 at Wheeler Field, comprised of 6<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sq which were relieved from assignment to 5<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp and assigned to Wheeler Field. (p. 45)
- 1927 (cont.): 18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp organized per GO # 2 HHD Jan. 24, 1927 at Wheeler Field by redesignation of the Provisional Gp mentioned above.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Balloon Gp Hq and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Balloon (inactive) Companies were demobilized May 12, 1927. (p. 45)

1927 (cont.): **Notable Flights:**

Lieutenants L.J. Maitland and H.F. Hegenberger, AC, flew from Oakland, California, and landed at Wheeler Field on June 29, 1927, Completing the first successful flight to Hawaii from the mainland.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants Ernest Smith and Emory Bronte, AC-Resv. Flew from Oakland and landed in the trees on the Island of Molokai, July 15, 1927.

Art Goebel in the "Woolaroc" and Martin Jensen in the "Aloha" flew from Oakland and landed at Wheeler Field Aug. 17, 1927. They were flying for the "Dole" prize. (p. 45)

18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp assigned to Schofield Barracks for supply and administration Purposes only: Sept. 16, 1927 (p. 45)

**Wheeler Field.** During 1927 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineers dismantled a steel hanger and re-erected it in a new location; four steel hangers were re-roofed; and a concrete platform (48' by 410') was constructed. (p. 46)

1928: **Notable Flights.** Captain G. Kingsford-Smith, world famous British flyer, flew from Oakland and landed at Wheeler Field, June 1, 1928. A day or two later he flew to Kauai and took off from there for Fiji and Australia.

**Military Reservations** were assigned as follows: Ka Lae, Puolo Pt., and Upolu Pt.: to Department Air Officer. (p. 46)

1929: **Pratt, Lt. Col. Henry C.**, AC, was Air Officer, Hawaiian Department Aug. 2, 1929 to July 17, 1930.

**Pigeons.** The pigeon loft at Luke Field was discontinued. (p. 48)

1930: **26<sup>th</sup> Attack Sq** organized at Wheeler Field Sept. 1, 1930 and attached to the 18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp.

**75<sup>th</sup> Service Sq** was organized at Schofield Barracks Sept. 15, 1930 and assigned to 18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp.

**Air Corps Detachment, Hawaiian Department** was discontinued.

**50<sup>th</sup> Observation Sq** was reconstituted at Luke Field. (p. 49)

**Organizations in Hawaii, Dec. 31, 1930:** (Hawaiian Dept.)

Air Corps

Luke Field: 5<sup>th</sup> Comp. Gp, 11<sup>th</sup> Photo Sec.; 6<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp,  
19<sup>th</sup> Pur. Sq, 23<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sq, 72<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq,  
4<sup>th</sup> Obsv. Sq, 50<sup>th</sup> Obsv. Sq, 65<sup>th</sup> Serv. Sq.

Wheeler Field: 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp, 26<sup>th</sup> Attack Sq, 75<sup>th</sup> Serv. (pp. 49-50)

1931: **Hq, 18<sup>th</sup> Composite Wing Air Corps** inactivated at Fort Shafter May 1, 1931.

**Glider Flight.** During the International Glider Meet, held on the Island of Oahu from Nov. 22 to Dec. 19, 1931, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William A. Cooks, AC, Wheeler Field, broke the world's record for glider flight, both endurance and distance, by remaining in the air 21 hours 34 minutes and 15 seconds, travelling an estimated distance of 600 miles, on Dec. 17-18, 1931. (p. 50)

**Organizations in Hawaii, Dec. 31, 1931:** (Hawaiian Dept.)

Air Corps

18<sup>th</sup> Comp. Wing, 5<sup>th</sup> Comp. Gp, 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (p. 51)

1932: **Construction, Wheeler Field:** During May, June, July, and August; 52 sets Officers' quarters, 1100 block; 42 sets NCO quarters; bachelor NCO quarters; 4 barracks; dispensary; fire station; guard house; warehouses; Hangers; admin. building. Also completed: landing field (extension of Lighting system) \$110,000; hangers, shops, etc., \$2,367.579. (p. 52)



1933: **Flying Fields.** War Dept. GO # 8 Aug. 19, 1933 gave the following designations to flying fields in Hawaii:

Bellows Field, auxiliary flying field at Waimanalo Mil Resv., so designated In honor of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. F.B. Bellows.

Burns Field, aux. Flying field at Port Allen Mil. Resv. , so designated in honor of 2<sup>ND</sup> Lt. J.S.G. Burns.

Suitter Field, aux. Flying field at Upolu Pt. Mil. Resv., so designated in honor of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. W.C. Suitter.

Morse Field, aux. Flying field at South Pt. Mil. Resv., so designated in honor of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. G.E. Morse.

Putnam Field, aux. Flying field at Fort Shafter, so designated in honor of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. D.E. Putnam. (p. 53)

**Wheeler Field Construction.** Laboratory and various buildings, and miscellaneous work, involving expenditure of \$385,262. Hangers were dismantled by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Engineers. (p. 53)

1934: **Glider** activities were forbidden by HHD, Feb. 3, 1934, when a soldier was Suffered serious injuries at Lanikai, when his glider struck a hill.

**Air Plane Crash.** Two pursuit planes collided at a height of 11,000 feet while engaged in combat maneuvers to the south and east of Wheeler Field. Pilots bailed out and landed safely.

**11<sup>th</sup> Photo Sec.** Transferred to Wheeler Field Mar. 19, 1934, and attached for administration.

**EMMONS, Lt. Col. Delos C.,** AC, was Air Officer, Hawaiian Dept. Aug. 17, 1934 to July 7, 1936. (p. 54)

**Notable Flights.** Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith and his navigator Capt. Taylor, in his plane "Southern Cross" arrived at Wheeler Field from the Fiji Islands **On Oct. 29** and took off again on Nov. 3, 1934 for Oakland, arriving safely the next day. This was the first East to West flight. (p. 55)

1935: **Notable Flights.** Amelia Earhart-Putnam took off at 4:44 PM Jan. 1, 1935 on a solo flight from Wheeler Field to California. The plane was shipped here from San Francisco and thoroughly overhauled by the air force at Wheeler Field.

**Hickam Field.** On Apr. 3, 1935, a check was drawn by the Finance Dept. in the amount of \$1,095,543.78 for the acquisition of lands adjoining Fort Kamehameha, to be used for an air base and landing field. Hickam Field was named in honor of Lt. Col. Horace M. Hickam, AC, killed in an airplane Accident at Fort Crockett, Texas, Nov. 5, 1934. The field was comprised of Tracts "A" and "B", Hawaiian Dept. (p. 55)

1936: **Yount, BG Barton K., AC,** was Air Officer, Hawaiian Dept., Sept. 14, 1936 to July 18, 1928. (p. 58)

1937: **9<sup>th</sup> Signal Service Co.,** stationed at Fort Shafter with strength of 3 officers and approx. 191 enlisted men, maintained a detachment of 61 EM at Schofield and one of 25 EM at Fort Armstrong. It also had EM on detached service at Luke Field, Fort Ruger, and Kilauea Military Camp.

**11<sup>th</sup> Photo Sec., AC,** Wheeler Field, placed under the direct supervision of The Commanding General, 18<sup>th</sup> Composite Wing. (p. 59)

**18<sup>th</sup> Composite Wing, AC,** was redesignated the 18<sup>th</sup> Wing, AC, Sept. 1, 1937 by GO # 14 HHD.

**Review,** Hawaiian Div., 64<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery, and 18<sup>th</sup> Wing, held at Schofield Barracks Oct. 14, 1937 in honor of Congressional party.

**18<sup>th</sup> Wing Hq** was transferred from Fort Shafter to Hickam Field on Oct. 30, 1937 by GO # 22 HHD. This was the first garrison assigned to Hickam Field. (p. 60)

1938: **31<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Sq** arrived from Hamilton Field Feb. 8, 1938, and was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Composite Gp with station at Hickam Field. (p. 60)



1938 (cont.): **Air Corps Units** were redesignated as follows, Feb 24 and Mar. 25, 1938:

<u>Old Designation</u>	<u>New Designation</u>
18 <sup>th</sup> Wing Hq	Hq & Hq Sq 18 <sup>th</sup> Wing
5 <sup>th</sup> Composite Gp	5 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp
5 <sup>th</sup> Composite Gp Hq	Hq & Hq 5 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp
18 <sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp	Hq & Hq 18 <sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp
4 <sup>th</sup> Obsv. Sq	4 <sup>th</sup> Recon. Sq
50 <sup>th</sup> Obsv. Sq	50 <sup>th</sup> Recon. Sq
65 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Sq	Base Hq & 17 <sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq
75 <sup>th</sup> Serv. Sq	Base Hq & 18 <sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq
11 <sup>th</sup> Photo Sec. (demobilized)	

**5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp** reorganized Oct. 12, 1938 GO #23 HHD. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Recon Squadrons were relieved from assignment to the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp and attached to that organization.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadrons were assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp.

The 26<sup>th</sup> attack Sq was relieved of assignment to the 5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Gp and attached to the 18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp. (p. 61)

**18<sup>th</sup> Wing.** The Commander, 18<sup>th</sup> Wing, was charged with being an intermediate commander between the (Hawaiian) Dept. Commander and all Air Corps functions and personnel, except Wheeler Field, which was under the 18<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander for tactical purposes only.

**Frank, BG Walter H.** was Dept. Air Officer and commanded the 18<sup>th</sup> Wing Sept. 30, 1938 (p. 61)

1939: **Reservations, Military.** Military reservations in the Hawaiian Dept., not included in established commands, posts and stations, were assigned for jurisdiction and care as follows:

Commanding General 18<sup>th</sup> Wing:

Ka Lae (Morse Field) Is. of Hawaii (also called South Pt.)  
Molokai Landing Field (is. of Molokai)

1939 (cont.): Puolo Pt. (Burns Field) Is. of Kauai also known as Port Allen)  
Upolu Pt. (Switter Field) Is. of Hawaii  
Waimanalo (Bellows Field) (p. 62)

**Air Corps.** GO # 18 HHD Nov. 24, 1939 designated Air Base Commands, Tactical Command, Responsibility of the Commander of the 18<sup>th</sup> Wing, Air Corps; Responsibility of Air Base Commanders, supply, Department Air Officer. (p. 63)

**17<sup>th</sup> Air Base:** The Commanding Officer, Hickam Field to have the responsibilities and authority of an Air Base Commander in the following areas: All Islands in the Hawaiian Archipelago, less Oahu; Hickam Field, less Hawaiian Air Depot; radio beacon and appurtenances thereto on Sand Island Mil. Resv.; adjacent water to all islands, including all off-shore surface targets for bombing and gunnery, and all Air Corps Rescue surface craft.

**18<sup>th</sup> Air Base:** The Commanding Officer, Wheeler Field, to have the responsibilities and authority of an Air Base Commander in the following areas: The Island of Oahu (less Hickam Field), Hawaiian Air Depot, and the radio beacon and appurtenances thereto on Sand Is. Mil. Reservation.

**Tactical Command:** The Tactical Command of the following listed organizations, including instruction, tactical efficiency and preparedness for war service, vested in the Commanding General, 18<sup>th</sup> Wing: Hq & Hq Sq, 18<sup>th</sup> Wing; 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp; 11<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp; 18<sup>th</sup> Pur Gp; 4<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq; 50<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq.

The Wing Commander's responsibility is defined as primarily tactical, but he is an intermediate commander between the (Hawaiian) Dept. Commander and all Air Bases and Air Depots in this Department in matters pertaining to organization, personnel, morale, discipline, training, plans and projects, construction, tactical employment and technical supply and maintenance. He will not act as station, post, or base commander.

Redesignation of certain Air Corps units was made by GO # 19 HHD Dec. 26, 1939 as follows:

5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (Hickam) to 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)  
Hq & Hq Sq 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (Hickam) to Hq & Hq Sq 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp (M)

1939 (cont.): 23<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sq (Hickam) to 23<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sq (M)  
31<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq (Hickam) to 31<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq (M)  
72<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq (Hickam) to 72<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq (M)

18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Wheeler) to 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Interceptor)  
Hq & Hq Sq 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Wheeler) to Hq & Hq Sq 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Int)  
6<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Wheeler) to 6<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Int)  
19<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Wheeler) to 19<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp (Int)  
26<sup>th</sup> Attack Sq (Wheeler) to 26<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (M)

4<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq (Hickam) to 4<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq (M/R)  
17<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq (Hickam) to 17<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq (2-Gp)  
18<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq (Wheeler) to 18<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq (1-Gp)  
26<sup>th</sup> Attack Sq to move to Hickam Field when accommodations ready.  
(p. 63)

**Wheeler Field** designated as a separate permanent military post effective  
Midnight Aug. 31, 1939. (p. 65)

#### **Insignia, 18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Gp,**

Shield: A fighting cock with displayed sable wattled and combed.  
Crest: On a wreath or and sable two wings conjoined and displayed  
tenne (organe).  
Motto: Unguibus et rostro. (Trans. beak and claw). (p. 65)

#### **Organizations in Hawaii, Dec. 31, 1939:**

##### Air Corps

Hickam Field: Hq 18<sup>th</sup> Wing; 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp; Hq & Hq Sq 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp;  
4<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq; 50<sup>th</sup> Recon Sq; 23<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sq; 31<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq;  
72<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Sq; 17<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq.

Wheeler Field: 18<sup>th</sup> Pur. Gp; Hq & Hq Sq; 6<sup>th</sup> Pur. Sq; 19<sup>th</sup> Pur. Sq;  
25<sup>th</sup> Attack Sq; Base Hq & 18<sup>th</sup> Air Base Sq. (p. 66)