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THE MILITARY AIRSHIP;
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BY

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FOREWORD

The balloon was designed by Francesco de Lama, an Italian friar, during the Seventeenth century but it was not until 5 June 1783 that a Frenchman named Montgolfier successfully lofted a balloon to approximately 6,000 feet in height. On 15 October of the same year a Mssr. deRozier achieved the first manned flight. The initial United States ascent took place on 24 June 1784. The first use of a balloon during wartime occurred when Mr. James Allen piloted one for the Federal side on 9 June 1861. The first successful aerial reconnaissance was made on 3 August of that year. Throughout the balance of the Civil War observation balloons were used by both the North and South.

In 1892 a balloon section of the United States Army's Signal Corps was formed under the direction of Brigadier General Adolphus W. Greely, Chief Signal Officer. A captive-type balloon was used in 1898 during the Spanish-American War for spotting Spanish troops near Santiago, Cuba. In 1902, Brigadier General Greely formed a balloon detachment to replace the section. The French introduced the concept of artillery spotters who technologically advised gun crews where to lay indirect fire. These balloon crews worked in captive balloons which were anchored in place and had telephone wires strung from the balloon baskets. Although pilots did not wear parachutes in 1914, balloon crews did. During 1915 Germany unleashed the Graf Zeppelin on England in a series of bombing raids.

Balloons had a shared impact along with airplanes on aerial developments and artillery philosophy at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In July, 1915, the first military aviation unit, the First Aero Squadron, arrived for duty followed shortly after by the Third Aero Squadron. These units used aircraft to make aerial reconnaissance and fire control possible. Their airfield was a pasture on the site of the present airfield. During May, 1916 Captain F.B. Hennessey of the Field Artillery witnessed kite balloon tests at the Goodyear Plant at Akron, Ohio to check on their application for the branch. Military testing began at Fort Bliss, Texas in October, 1916. Company A, First Balloon Squadron, was formed at Fort Sill on 24 September, 1917. Balloon number "K-3" was first lofted on 26 September. The Fourth Aero Squadron arrived the same day. Construction of an airfield was begun on 8 August 1917 and was activated on 10 September 1917. It was named in commemoration of Lieutenant Henry Post who had been killed while attempting to establish an altitude record in 1914. The following year the School for Aerial Observers was founded. On completion of this two-week course the students attended the Air Service School which was located at the airfield. Upon graduation they were usually picked up by the Signal Corps which controlled the Air Service. In the fall of 1918 an agreement was reached with the Signal Corps and a joint seven-week course was begun for flying cadets and artillery observers. During World War One there were only two courses offered at Fort Sill. In addition to the Air Service program the School of Fire conducted an Artillery Officer's course to prepare artillerymen for combat in Europe. In 1921 an Air Service Observation Course was introduced but was discontinued the same year. An aerial observation unit was part of the Battery Officer Course but was discontinued after the 1921-22 school year. This was the last such course until an organic air observation course was approved on 10 December 1941. From 1942 to July, 1953 a great variety of officer, warrant, and enlisted personnel courses were offered at Henry Post Field.

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"Five thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than five ships of the line; and where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense as that 10,000 men descending from the clouds might not in many places do an indefinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them?"

Benjamin Franklin

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UF1 Antiaircraft Journal
C7

U1 Army Quarterly
A85

UF3 Artilleristische Rundschau
A85

UF7 Bulletin de Renseignements de l'Artillerie
F81

U1 C. & G.S.S. (Command & General Staff School) Quarterly, Review of
R4 Current Military Writings, Military Review

UA600 Canadian Army Journal
A71

UE1 Cavalry Journal
C2

UF1 Coast Artillery Journal
C7

UF1 Field Artillery Journal
F6

UD1 Infantry Journal
I6

D767 Intelligence Bulletin (USAFPOA)
I65

U1 Journal Military Service Institution
M6

U1 Journal of the American Military Institute
A4

UF1 Journal of the Royal Artillery
W8

U1 Journal of the Royal United Service Institute
J7

E171 Magazine of American History
M18

VE1 Marine Corps Gazette
M3

D743 Military Report on the United Nations
U6

D770 O.N.I. Weekly
05

UB323 Recruiting News
A32

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UG1 Royal Engineers Journal
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V1 United States Naval Institute Proceedings
P8

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