

Tour of Historic Randolph

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One of the largest and finest flying schools in the world, Randolph, from its beginning, was known as "The West Point of the Air." Starting with a clean slate, Lieutenant Clark and the architects of the field were able to lay it out in precisely the manner that was best suited for its flying training mission. The overall plan was so well designed that, notwithstanding all the tremendous advances in aviation, few changes have been necessary over the years. General Fechet, in accepting Randolph Field from the city of San Antonio, foretold the central position that the base would hold in the history of flying training when he said, "The work we see here today is only a promise of what is to come. Randolph Field will be developed into the greatest airport in the world, to train the best aviators in the world."

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Capt William M. Randolph



A native of Austin, Texas, Capt William M. Randolph attended Texas A&M before entering the Army in 1916. Following pilot training at Kelly Field, he received his wings in 1919. In 1928 he was selected to a committee to recommend a suitable name for the new flying training field the Air Corps planned to build just east of San Antonio. On 17 February 1928, Captain Randolph was killed when his AT-4 crashed on takeoff from Gorman Field, Texas. Seven months later the War Department agreed to name the field after Randolph.

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The Origins of Randolph Air Force Base

Shown are Brig Gen Frank P. Lahm (center front), Commander, Air Corps Training Center, and members of his staff.



Conception

Following the passage of landmark legislation in 1926, the Army Air Corps embarked on a 5-year expansion program that led to the construction of Randolph Field. Among other things, the Air Corps Act of 1926 provided for the establishment of a new Air Corps Training Center.

Brig Gen Frank P. Lahm was assigned as the first commander of the new organization. Since all primary flying training was given at Brooks Field at that time, and all advanced training at Kelly Field, Lahm established his headquarters at Duncan Field, adjacent to Kelly, on 1 September 1926. (Duncan Field was absorbed by Kelly in the early days of World War II.) General Lahm's instructions were to coordinate and supervise flying training and, at the same time, incorporate the research and training functions of the School of Aviation Medicine, which was moving to Brooks Field from Hazelhurst Field, New York. Before leaving Washington, Lahm summarized his objectives regarding flying training as "bringing the primary and advanced schools closer together so as to make the transition easier."



In the 1920s, primary trainers lined the runway at Brooks Field.

Students, aircraft, and crews line up for inspection at Kelly Field in the 1930s. The Army Air Corps conducted advanced flying training at Kelly.



Pictured here are various types of uniforms worn by pilots in the 1920s.



At far left is 1st Lt Harold L. Clark, who created Randolph Field's unique circular design.

Meanwhile, the War Department had been considering various proposals for a new training field that would best serve the needs of the expanding Air Corps. These proposals ranged from another field to supplement training at Brooks and Kelly to a new central flying field. Lahm concluded rather early on that the existing training fields were inadequate to the task. In the first place, many of the buildings at Brooks and Kelly were hastily erected during World War I, with a life expectancy of five years. There were also no suitable facilities for ground training and the living quarters were inadequate. More compelling, however, was the growth of San Antonio, which was beginning to encroach on flying training operations. In a report to Maj Gen Mason Patrick, Chief of the Army Air Corps, General Lahm said that the primary school was outgrowing Brooks and expressed the need to concentrate the Army's flying school facilities at a new field. (In fact, the Air Corps wound up opening an additional primary school at March Field, California, in 1927, when facilities at Brooks became saturated.) In late 1926, General Patrick recommended such action to Congress and indicated the vicinity of San Antonio as the logical site. The government preferred San Antonio for several reasons. The primary and advanced schools, as well as the Air Corps Training Center, were there; the flying weather was ideal year-round; and San Antonio was well known to aviators.



This is an aerial view of Schertz, Texas, as it looked in the late 1920s. Just to the west construction was underway on Randolph Field.

Several other cities, however, including Dallas, Houston, St Petersburg, and Shreveport, were showing a marked interest in

the training facility. Recognizing the importance of such a facility for their local economies, these cities were offering free land and urban services to attract the facility. In early 1927, Lahm advised William Tuttle, Chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, that if the new consolidated flying training field was to be built in San Antonio, the city would have to provide about 2,000 acres of land.

In April 1927, based on assurances from city officials that land would be made available for the new field, General Lahm appointed a board of Air Corps officers to inspect available sites. After a false start or two, a second board narrowed the candidates down to a single 2,300 acre tract adjacent to the community of Schertz in the fall of 1927. San Antonio city officials and the Chamber of Commerce worked out some imaginative financing arrangements with local banks to raise approximately \$550,000 to buy the land from local farmers and make it available to the Army Air Corps as a gift. On 4 August 1928, the Governor of Texas, Dan Moody, signed a deed of cessation and two weeks later the Secretary of War accepted the land. Just a few weeks later, on 27 September, the War Department named the new base Randolph Field.

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Design

In this 1929 photograph, workers had laid out the major streets that would make up the Army Air Corps' newest "Air City," Randolph Field.



The design of Randolph Field, oddly enough, had been drawn up before a site was selected for the new airfield. In fact, a site was selected to fit the design, rather than the reverse, saving a year in the start of construction. The layout of Randolph was unique and revolutionary for the times. The concept was the idea of 1st Lt Harold L. Clark. Lieutenant Clark had enlisted in the Army during World War I and volunteered for flying service. He completed flying training in 1918 and served as a flying and gunnery instructor. In early 1927, Clark was transferred to Kelly Field and assigned as the Dispatch Officer in the motor pool.

After arriving in San Antonio, Clark began reading articles in the local press about the formation of a consolidated flying training center. Trained as an architect prior to his military service, Clark viewed the proposed training center as an architectural problem. For his own amusement, he began to make sketches on the backs of dispatch sheets. As sketch after sketch followed, Lieutenant Clark began to build his entire layout along revolutionary lines. Clark set out to avoid what he viewed as a horrible layout at Kelly where, because of the prevailing winds, all landings had to be made over the hangars. His sketches evolved into what was termed an "Air City." The plan was unique in that the building area was centered on the field, with streets arranged concentrically, while the aircraft ramps and runways were located on three sides of the field, thus forming a square perimeter framing the circular layout of the interior section of the field. The intention was to divide the circle into four quadrants, each given over to a distinct function: three accommodating primary, basic, and advanced flying schools and the fourth a shop and service area. (Because of airspace congestion, the idea of locating advanced training at Randolph was eventually dropped; it remained at Kelly.)

Borrowing from the local architecture, Clark designed his air city in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival style. With his final drawings in hand, Clark went to General Lahm's executive officer and asked him if the board of officers considering sites for the airfield would like to look over his sketches. The executive officer jumped up and told Clark, "Come on, the board is meeting right now in General Lahm's office. I want him to see this." General Lahm liked the plan immediately, and on 5 December 1927, Clark was detailed on special duty to Lahm's office to devote full time to developing the design.

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Preparations

Once the German farmers had harvested their crops, no time was lost in preparing the site for the largest Army construction project since the Panama Canal. After the owners moved out, 17 farmhouses were leveled, fences torn down, and the farmland cleared. On 11 October 1928, work began on clearing the entire tract.

After clearing the land, workers had to install underground communications and power lines, drill for water, and lay out the roads. Small cadres of skilled enlisted men from Brooks and Kelly were assigned to Randolph to assist in the project. On 12 August 1929, Capt Earl H. DeFord arrived from Kelly Field to take command of Randolph. At that time it consisted of a "few construction shacks, a Chinese restaurant, and the flag pole with a flag."

Communications and power lines were installed in underground conduits to eliminate the use of above ground wires. Even the railway track which ran parallel to the entrance highway was laid nearly flush with the ground so as not to present an obstruction to an aircraft making a forced landing.



By January 1930, workers had begun construction of the enlisted barracks and warehouses (upper right). In the foreground were tents used to house the first personnel assigned to Randolph Field. To the right stood a handful of buildings that were on the land when the Air Corps took possession. They served a number of purposes until more permanent structures were built.

One of the most important projects begun during the preliminary construction period was that of obtaining a reliable water supply. A total of nine wells were drilled but only three produced potable water. These wells were sunk to a depth of from 600 to 700 feet to the Edwards Underground Aquifer, the same strata which fed the wells in San Antonio. At the height of World War II training, a fourth well was drilled, assuring an adequate water supply for the field.

Since the arrangement of the entire field was to be established by the road pattern, the foundation for the elaborate circular network was laid before any construction began. By the end of 1929, the road pattern had been established and, when completed, consisted of 31 miles of roadway at a cost of \$425,000.

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Construction



By September 1930, workers had almost completed four of the large enlisted barracks on the west side.

With these basic installations completed the actual above-ground construction at Randolph began in earnest. The Construction Quartermaster of San Antonio, Capt Arthur W. Parker, was put in charge of the construction. On 18 October 1929, the first contract of \$1.28 million was awarded to Murch Brothers Construction Company of St Louis to build the Quartermaster and Air Corps warehouses and six enlisted barracks. By June 1930, the warehouses were externally

completed, while the barracks stood at various stages of construction.

Also under construction, were the post garage (the large building at bottom right), and to its left, a warehouse, the guardhouse, and the skeletal outlines of a couple of supply warehouses.



A dedication ceremony took place on 20 June 1930. The widow of Captain Randolph, Mrs William M. Randolph, raised the first flag over the field.

With construction only half completed, Randolph Field was dedicated on 20 June 1930. Many high ranking military and civilian officials and a crowd of over 15,000 people attended the formal ceremony. Mayor C.M. Chambers of San Antonio made the official presentation of Randolph Field to General Fechet, Chief of the Air Corps. Escorted by General Lahm, Mrs William M. Randolph, widow of Captain Randolph, raised the first flag over the installation. The program concluded with the spectacular sight of 233 airplanes from Brooks and Kelly Fields, Fort Crockett, and Fort Sill passing overhead in what was described as "the largest assembly of aircraft in the world." A month after the dedication, General Lahm, who came to be known as "The Father of Randolph Field," turned over command of the Air Corps Training Center to Brig Gen Charles H. Danforth. General Lahm's place in Randolph's history was guaranteed.



In the 1930s, the flying school used a number of different trainers, including these BT-9s.

By the autumn of 1931, Randolph was ready for business. On 1 October, the Air Corps Training Center moved its headquarters from Duncan Field to Randolph. At the same time, Maj Frederick L. Martin took the reins as the first commanding officer of Randolph. The flying school at Brooks Field transferred to Randolph on 20 October, while the school at March Field transferred on 25 October. To transfer the training aircraft from March to Randolph, the Air Corps Training Center designated 19 officer pilots to act as flight leaders for the cadets to fly the aircraft to Randolph. The officers and 92 flying cadets ferried a total of 111 training aircraft to Randolph. On 25 October 1931, with 162 officers and 1,432 enlisted men attached to 13 organizations, Randolph Field came into existence as the headquarters for the Air Corps Training Center. The first pilot training class, composed of 210 cadets and 99 student officers, began training on 2 November 1931.

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MEMORIALIZATIONS

Harmon Drive.

Named in honor of Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon, who served as Commanding General of the Gulf Coast Air Corps Training Center at Randolph Field in 1940. General Harmon was lost at sea while flying a mission over the Pacific

in February 1945.

Hangar 12 – Atterberry Hall.

Named in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Edwin L. Atterberry, an RF-4C pilot who, along with his navigator, was shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese on 12 August 1967. Twenty-one months later, on 10 May 1969, Colonel Atterberry escaped, but he was captured the next day. Placed in solitary for interrogation and punishment, Colonel Atterberry died a week later of what his captors described as “a serious disease.” Years later, the 560th Flying Training Squadron provided final flights and requalification training for former prisoners of war (POW) returning to flying status. Many of those POWs suggested naming Hangar 12, the home of the 560th, in honor of Colonel Atterberry.

Building 399 -Pitsenbarger Hall.

Named in honor of Airman First Class (A1C) William H. Pitsenbarger, a pararescueman with the 1st Infantry Division during the Vietnam War. On 11 April 1966 Airman Pitsenbarger was lowered into the dense jungle to coordinate a rescue and recovery operation. When the helicopter was hit and had to abandon the effort, he volunteered to stay behind to tend the wounded and help defend the position. Amid heavy mortar and sniper fire, Airman Pitsenbarger bandaged the wounded, gathered and redistributed weapons, and coordinated defensive efforts. He gave his life to save nine men. Pitsenbarger was the first enlisted man to be awarded the Air Force Cross. In December 2000, his award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Building 491 - Loftis Hall.

Named in honor of Airman First Class Joel C. Loftis who was killed in action on 7 June 1969 while serving with the 35th Security Police Squadron, Phan Rang Air Base, Vietnam. Airman Loftis served as a military dog handler. On 7 June his base came under rocket attack. One of the rockets struck the K-9 barracks killing Loftis and one other airman and wounding a number of others. Loftis had been in the Air Force for just over a year.

Building 581 - Clay Hall and Building 663 - Maysey Hall.

Named after Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clay and Sergeant Larry W. Maysey who died together while serving in Southeast Asia. Clay, a helicopter mechanic, and Maysey, a pararescueman, served on the crew of Captain Gerald O. Young. On 9 November 1967, the crew of the HH-3E Jolly Green Giant flew a nighttime rescue mission in a heavily defended enemy area. While the crew could easily have decided the rescue attempt was too dangerous, when polled by Captain Young, the two enlisted men agreed with the copilot, Capt Ralph Brower, to proceed. A true team effort nearly succeeded when the enemy put a rocket into the helicopter’s engine. Clay, Maysey, and Brower all died in the ensuing crash. Captain Young’s valiant efforts after the crash earned him the Medal of Honor. Clay and Maysey posthumously received the Air Force Cross.

Building 584 – Youth Center.

Dedicated to Lieutenant William L. Parham, the first student pilot killed on Randolph Field. He died in 1932. A student in the basic stage of flying training, Lieutenant Parham had flown a BT-2 with an instructor on the morning of 31 March 1932. Then he began his solo flight. During that flight, the aircraft suddenly nosed down, crashed, and burned near Marion, Texas, east of Randolph Field.

Building 661 - Viccellio Hall.

Originally built to house the School of Aviation Medicine. The building opened in 1943. Fifty years later, on 1 July 1993, the building became the headquarters for Nineteenth Air Force. At that time, it was named in honor of Lt Gen Henry H.

Viccellio, the first commander of Nineteenth Air Force.

Building 900 - Martin Hall.

Named in honor of Major General Frederick L. Martin, an aviation pioneer who served as the first Commanding Officer of Randolph Field from 1931-1934. Just a major at the time, Martin moved from Kelly Field to Randolph in September 1931. Martin later served as commander of the AAF Central Technical Training Command during WWII, but he is best remembered for leading the first "round-the-world" flight in 1924.

Eberle Park

To the side of the east flight line is a park named for Captain Joseph N. Eberle, a pilot killed on 8 January 1953. Captain Eberle was returning to Randolph in his F-80 Shooting Star from a gunnery training mission with B-29s when the aircraft exploded and crashed. The aircraft came to earth midway between the main gate and the Taj Mahal, just narrowly missing the housing areas on both sides of the greenbelt. A year later, on 23 April 1954, base officials dedicated the family park in his honor.

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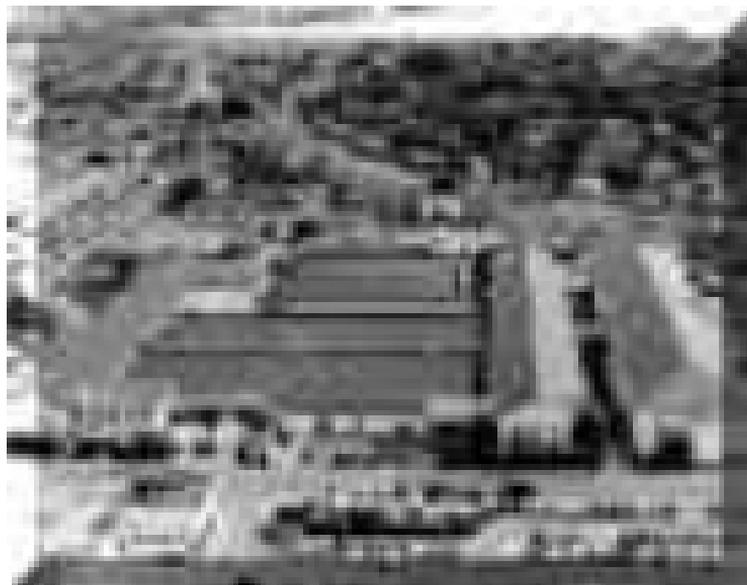
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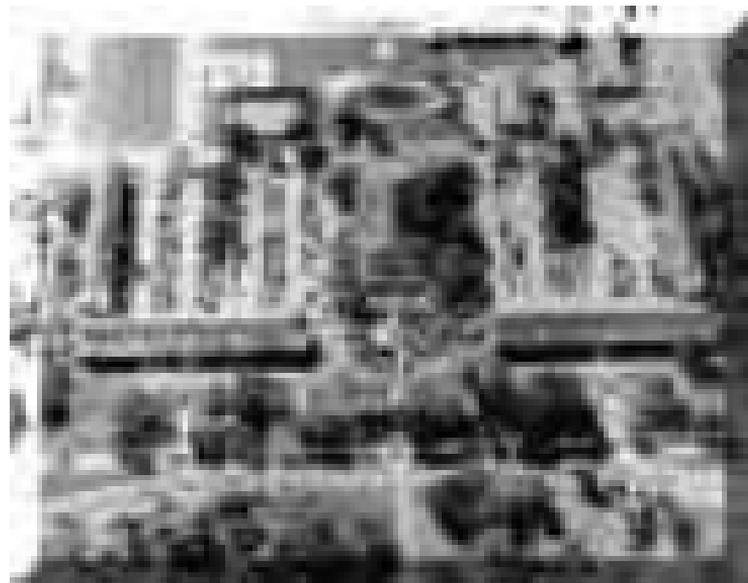




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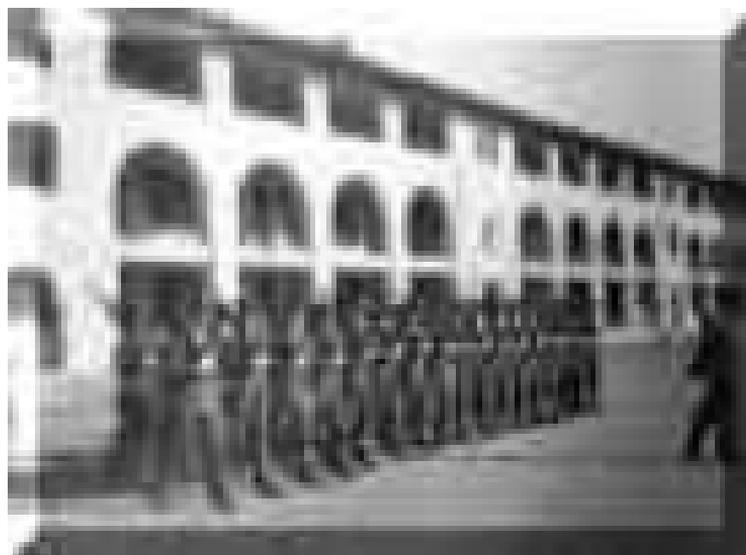




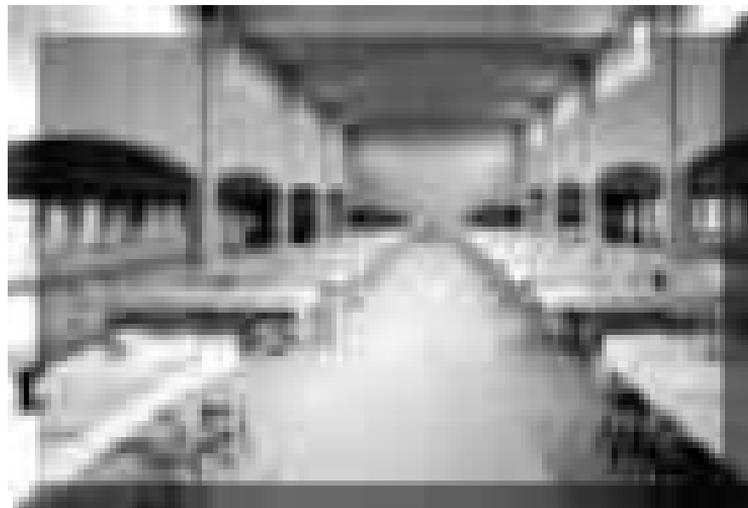


















































MISSING MAN MONUMENT





Randolph AFB Historic District

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A few doors down from the old fire station was the Post Bakery (Building 216). Today, the Veterinarian Clinic is located there.



All baked goods came from the base bakery.

Past the Quartermaster Corps Warehouse (Building 220) and the Air Corps Supply Depot (Building 224), on the next block, was the Post Guardhouse (Building 235). The exterior had an attractive arcade porch with six rounded arch bays. Inside was a large cell block, since converted into office space for the security police. Next to the guardhouse was the Dope Storage facility (Building 237) where the base kept the materials needed to repair and strengthen the fabric that made up the skin of airplanes in those days. The building was designed by San Antonio architect Henry S. Phelps. In the mid-1970s, it was converted into a package store, and in the mid-1980s, it was used for office space.



Originally built as the guardhouse, this facility now serves as the security police building.



The dope storage facility was where materials were kept to repair and strengthen the fabric that made up the skins of airplanes in those days.



This overhead view of the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) shows how builders joined two of the old enlisted barracks to form a new facility. To the right, a third building is also connected to the AFPC complex. It was built in the mid-1960s when AFPC came to Randolph AFB.

Back on Main Circle and off to the right as you head toward the south side of Randolph are four of the six enlisted barracks erected in 1930 and early 1931. All six barracks were constructed from identical plans. Designed by the Quartermaster Corps, the buildings originally contained cadet quarters, a mess hall and kitchen, and a recreational area. Today, two of them have been joined and expanded to form the Air Force Personnel Center (Building 499). Another (Building 491) is now headquarters for the Air Force Recruiting Service and the fourth (Building 663) houses more of the Air Force Personnel Management Center.

Further to the right, beyond the Personnel Center and Recruiting Service, is hangar row and the west flight line. Randolph's aircraft hangars are located along both the west and east flight lines. The west flight line has 10 hangars while the east has 8. All 18 were completed during the summer of 1931 by contractor Kenneth L. Colborn.



Randolph trainers used these PT-3s (parked on the east ramp in December 1931) as part of primary flying training.

The hangars were built originally to house and service the aircraft used for flying training. Although they retain their original integrity, over the years many of the hangars have been altered. The original open floor space of seven (Hangars 6, 7, 12, 13, 62, 63, and 64) were partitioned into offices and workshops. Another (Hangar 70) was converted into a gymnasium in 1942.



Eight hangars sit along the east flight line. They were built in the early 1930s, and each had the capacity to hold 30 aircraft. The price tag on each of the hangars varied between \$31,400 and \$34,800.

When Randolph began flying training in 1931, the west flight line was home to Stage A or the primary phase of flying training. By the end of this first phase, aviation cadets had completed 65 hours in the air. In Stage B or the basic phase, aircraft were faster and more complicated. By the end of the course, cadets had an additional 70 flying hours. After completing basic, cadets moved across town to Kelly Field for advanced training in either single or twin-engine aircraft.



Rows of Link Trainers fill one of the hangars on the west flight line. These trainers were used for instrument training.



Directly on Main Circle is an imposing building (Building 661) with a dramatic, two-story arched entrance. Today the headquarters for Nineteenth Air Force which oversees the command's flying training activities, it was originally constructed in 1942 as part of a budding medical complex in that quadrant of the base and was designed as a medical research facility. The San Antonio architectural firm of Phelps, Dewees, and Simmons designed the building.



Constructed in 1942, Building 661 first housed a medical research facility and today is the Nineteenth Air Force headquarters.

Proceeding around the circle you come to the site of the School for Aviation Medicine (Building 671). Designed by San Antonio architects Adams and Adams, the building was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$58,000. The school provided training for flight surgeons and aviation physiologists and contained laboratories to examine some of the problems connected with the effects of flight. Fittingly, the building is used today to house the command's Office of Medical Services and Training. Right next door (Building 675) was the Station Hospital. As originally designed, the hospital had a capacity of 100 beds with provisions for medical, surgical, and obstetrical wards, a clinic, laboratories, and operating rooms. Today, the building provides office space for several of Air Education and Training Command's major staff agencies.

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Randolph AFB Historic District

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Located in the southwest quadrant of Randolph Field was a 100-bed hospital (center left) and to its right, sat the School of Aviation Medicine. From 1931 to 1959, the school was on Randolph. Then it moved across town to Brooks AFB.

The small two-story building (Building 676) on the corner is the National Headquarters of the Order of Daedalians, a fraternity of military pilots founded "to perpetuate the spirit of patriotism, the love of country, and the high ideals of sacrifice which place service to the nation above personal safety or position." Constructed in 1994, the building meshes nicely with the Spanish flavor of Randolph's architecture.



The aviation cadet complex provided everything a student could need, from recreation to a place to sleep. Included in the complex were four barracks, an academic building, an administration building, and a pool. Each of the barracks had 54 rooms, and each room held two students.

At the southern base of Main Circle is the Aviation Cadet complex, a focal point of training at Randolph in the 1930s. Facing the street is the Academic Building (Building 900). San Antonio architect Ralph Cameron designed the building, which was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$151,000. Here the cadets went through ground school and received instruction in a variety of subjects including weather and the use of the radio. Besides classrooms, the building also contained office space for the instructors and a well-stocked technical library. Today it is the headquarters for Air Education and Training Command with offices for the commander and his immediate staff, as well as for a sizeable portion of the Plans and Operations staff.



The Cadet Administration building held the dining hall, clothing issue, a barber shop, a gymnasium, four squash courts, and a four-lane bowling alley.



A large part of cadet training included drill and ceremonies. Here a unit practices passing in review near one of the cadet barracks.



Cadets used a large part of the main floor of the administration building as a dining hall. Today that area is filled with the AETC conference center.

Flanking the Academic Building were the cadet barracks (Buildings 901, 902, 903 and 907). Buildings 901 and 902 were designed by San Antonio architect Emmett T. Jackson and completed in 1931 at a cost of \$132,000 each. Both barracks were converted into offices in the late 1950s. Building 902 was extensively renovated in 1992, and contractors filled in the original open arcade. Buildings 903 and 907 were built in 1939 at a cost of \$169,000 each. Each barracks had 54 two-man rooms that opened onto arcade verandas that provided some respite from the grueling South Texas sun. Twelve ornamental medallions bearing the Army Air Corps insignia--a white star against a blue background with a small red disc in the center of the star--adorn the front of each building just above the window line on the second floor. Each barracks also had its own orderly room and separate recreation rooms for upperclassmen and lowerclassmen stocked with newspapers, magazines, radios, and pianos. Outside the barracks were tennis, basketball, and handball courts, plus a large swimming pool.

In the middle of the cadet complex, directly behind the Academic Building, was the Cadet Administration Building (Building 905). Designed by San Antonio architect Emmett T. Jackson, the building was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$154,000. Running around the ground floor was an open veranda or "stoop," as the cadets used to call it. Inside, on the ground floor, were the cadet supply rooms, some administrative offices, and a large mess hall with adjoining kitchens. The basement contained a branch of the Post Exchange, a barber shop, a gymnasium, and a bowling alley. On the second floor was the office of the Commandant of Cadets and office space for members of the tactical staff. The building was converted to offices around 1957 and the second floor open terraces on the southeast and southwest corners were enclosed. The first floor porch on the west and the second floor open terrace on the south were enclosed around 1960.



Two identical NCO clubs existed in the early days--one on the east side and one on the west. Today the building on the west is a Family Support Center, while this building on the east continues to operate as the Randolph NCO Club.

Past the Aviation Cadet complex and off to the right as you follow Main Circle back toward the Taj is the Base Library (Building 598). It once served as the NCO Club since its construction in 1931 with only minor external alterations. Originally, there were two NCO Clubs, one in each of the enlisted family housing areas. The other club (Building 693) is on the same street on the west side of the base and serves today as the Family Support Center.

Right on Main Circle was the original Post Children's School (Building 584). The school was an elementary school only; high school students went to schools in San Antonio. The building was designed by the San Antonio architectural firm of Eikenroht and Cocke and completed in 1933. It was originally designed with an open arcade on the main facade. When it was converted to a library around 1952, the open arcade was enclosed. It now serves as a part of the base Youth Center.



In 1952 this building was turned into a base library. Originally, it had been built to serve as the elementary school. High school students had to go off base to attend school.

To the east and southeast of the library are original Non-commissioned Officers' Quarters. The Quartermaster Corps completed 68 of these duplexes in the early 1930s. These two-story units were constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style at an average cost of \$12,750. Similar duplexes were built at Langley Field, Virginia; Maxwell Field, Alabama; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In recent years, these duplexes were altered by enclosing the porches and adding new entrances. Off to the right on the east side of the circle are the two remaining enlisted barracks. Today, Building 581 houses the command's logistics staff and Building 399 contains the base civilian personnel office and portions of other staff agencies.



The largest home built on Randolph Field was the one designated as the Commanding General's Quarters. Contractors completed construction in 1931. Overall cost of the home was about \$25,000.

To the left in the center of the circle is the Officers' Mess (Building 500). Positioned squarely in the middle of officer family housing, the Officers' Mess was the hub of social activity in the early years and continues to fill that role to this day. Behind the club is a large oval swimming pool,

one of four completed in 1932.



The Officers' Club is located at the very center of Randolph AFB. This is how the main entrance looked in the early 1930s before much had been done in the way of landscaping.

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Twenty H-shaped, one-story, single-family dwellings went up around Randolph in the early 1930s. All were officer housing.

Surrounding the Officers' Mess in the inner circle is officer family housing. The largest single-family dwelling constructed at Randolph Field was the Commanding General's Quarters (Building 300) located directly behind the Taj. The dwelling, designed by San Antonio architect Herbert S. Green, was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$25,000. At the rear of the property is a walled yard suitable for informal entertaining. The interior of the house features a two-story living room with exposed rafters and a small balcony overlooking the room. Today this is the home of the Commander, Air Education and Training Command.



Ten of these single-family, company grade officer quarters were built around the base. Each one had a porch with three rounded arch bays.

Exclusive of the Commander's Quarters, a total of 173 single-family designs were built at Randolph Field in 1931. To provide for greater variety, the Quartermaster Corps reversed floor plans and varied entrance designs. The most common house built at Randolph was a standard plan for one-story Officers' quarters. Similar design quarters were built at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and March and Rockwell Fields in California. Two-story dwellings followed floor plans that reflected Gable Front and Wing as well as I-House designs. The former design was widely used in the United States from the 19th century to the development of Ranch style houses in the 1940s. The latter was transplanted from Great Britain and used widely throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.



The Bachelor Officers' Area was located next to the east flight line. It was made up of two U-shaped buildings (center), each of which held 40 sets of quarters, an officers' dining facility (left), and four garages (right).

Between the Commanding General's Quarters and the east flight line was the Bachelor Officers' Area. It contained a trio of buildings designed to house and feed bachelor officers. First came Building 110, a two-story building with a wraparound open gallery on the front of each floor. It

had 40 sets of quarters with each set consisting of a parlor plus a bedroom and bath combination. Next door and recessed a little farther from the street was the Bachelor Officers' Mess (Building 112), complete with the kitchens and a large dining room. On the other side of the mess was Building 120 with another 40 sets of quarters for bachelor officers.



On display in the air park are an AT-6, T-28, T-33, T-37, T-38, and T-41.

Randolph

has used each of these models in its flying training program.

Between the Bachelor Officers' Area and the Taj was the Post Chapel (Building 102) which fronted on Washington Circle. Laid out in the shape of a Lorraine cross, the exterior of the chapel was modeled after two of San Antonio's historic missions, Mission Concepcion and Mission San Jose, and features a striking, ornate entrance. It also incorporates the Spanish custom of leaving a building incomplete; there is no cupola on the right tower. The custom was in keeping with traditional Spanish colonial law that exempted incomplete buildings from taxation.



Money problems delayed the construction of the base chapel. It was not completed until 1934. The total cost of the chapel was \$66,000.

While most of the construction at Randolph was completed in 1930-31, the chapel was not because of some delays in securing the necessary funding. Designed by the Quartermaster Corps, the chapel was finally completed in 1934 at a cost of \$66,000. It is one of the few military chapels with fully stained glass windows. Six of them, installed in 1942-43, surround the sanctuary. One is dedicated to the memory of Mrs Gertrude Lahm, wife of General Lahm, and a second is dedicated to the memory of Maj Gen Augustine Warner Robins. A third window, presented by the Aviation Medical Examiners Class 42-F, honors St Christopher, the patron saint of travelers, and was dedicated to the memory of the many flight surgeons who died serving their country. A fourth window serves as a memorial to the graduates of the San Antonio Aviation Cadet center who died during the war, and a fifth, donated by the Student Instructors Detachment, was dedicated "in memory to those instructors who gave their lives that others may fly." The sixth window bears the inscription, "To the Glory of God--Presented by the Enlisted Personnel of Randolph Field in memory of their buddies who have given their all for the cause of freedom." The remaining stained glass window, on the west facade of the chapel, is known as the Rose

Window and is a copy of the famous Rose Window of Mission San Jose in San Antonio.

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Randolph AFB Historic District



In 1929 the front entrance to Randolph Field was surrounded by open fields.

The entryway to Randolph AFB is one of the most picturesque of any military installation in the country. The view as you enter the base is much the same one young men saw in the 1930s as they stepped off trains at the main gate and stepped into the world of aviation cadets in the Army Air Corps. The major differences are the mature trees that now line Harmon Drive, the display of state flags along the esplanade leading up to the Taj Mahal, and the enlisted housing that flanks Harmon Drive. (On 27 August 1987, the Taj entered the National Registry of Historic Places.)



By the late 1940s, Randolph's main entrance had taken on a much different character.



Looking down Harmon Drive, one can see the avenue of flags, many of the live oak trees donated to the base in 1932, and overlooking it all, the Taj.

Bordering Washington Circle in front of the Taj Mahal are clusters of live oak trees that were donated by the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1932. That was the George Washington Bicentennial year and patriotic groups all over the country planted trees in honor of the nation's first president. All told, the San Antonio de Bexar chapter donated 120 of the live oaks, and they were the first trees planted on Randolph Field. These stately trees also line North Park, Military Plaza, and South Park--the broad avenues which bisect the officer family housing area and extend to the south side of the base and the old aviation cadet complex that now houses Headquarters, Air Education and Training Command.

Casting a long shadow over Washington Circle is the majestic Taj Mahal (Building 100) which rises 170 feet into the air. The origins of the name are unknown, but the distinctive appearance of the building clearly reminded someone of the original Taj Mahal (a mausoleum built in the 17th century by a wealthy Indian ruler in memory of his wife, and one of the seven wonders of the world), and the nickname stuck. In a stroke of ingenuity, 1st Lt Harold L. Clark, the architect of

the air city that was Randolph, came up with the idea of a decorative domed structure to encase the water tower that was usually so obtrusive at most airfields. In doing so, he also devised a scheme to centralize a considerable number of functions in a single large post administration building at the base of the tower.

The job of translating Lt Clark's ideas and sketches for the Taj into blueprints fell to a San Antonio architectural firm headed by the father-son team of Atlee and Robert Ayres. The firm of Ayres and Ayres was well-known and highly respected in architectural circles, having designed such San Antonio landmarks as the Municipal Auditorium, the McNay Art Institute, the Tower-Life Building, and the St Anthony Hotel. The results of their labor are what you see today--a beautiful two-story building done in Spanish Colonial Revival style capped by a dome roof that is covered with ceramic tiles. The building was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$252,000.



Standing on the steps of the Taj are members of Lieutenant Randolph's family, including his parents, Mr and Mrs J.D. Randolph. They visited Randolph Field in June 1936.

In accord with Lt Clark's plans, the Taj came to house not only a 500,000- gallon water tank but the signal office, a photographic unit, the post office, the telephone exchange, a print plant, a weather office, the Judge Advocate's office and courtroom, and administrative offices of the Quartermaster, as well as the personnel, finance, recruiting, and public relations offices. In addition, the rear wing contained a movie theater and auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,150 people, and on the second floor were the offices of the Commanding General of the Air Corps Training Center and the Commanding Officer of Randolph Field. Over six decades later several of those functions are still located in the Taj.

Interestingly, the space beneath the dome, which initially housed the weather office, later served as an artist's studio. The artist, a man named Dean Faucett, had been contracted to do murals and paintings for Randolph under a Guggenheim Foundation grant. Faucett's first works, a set of murals 6 feet high and 106 feet long, depicted the life of early aviation cadets and were displayed at the cadet mess (presently building 905) in 1944. Faucett also painted the four life-sized portraits--pilot, navigator, bombardier, and gunner--that still grace the rotunda. On 28 May 1974, the Air Force and the Order of the Daedalians formally dedicated the rotunda to the memory of Clark, who retired as a Brigadier General in 1946 and died in San Antonio in 1973.



Workers begin laying the foundation for the Taj (center) and Post Exchange (lower right).



This picture shows the 500,000-gallon water tower being built inside the Taj.



The Taj Mahal today is the headquarters for the 12th Flying Training Wing, which conducts instructor pilot, navigator, and fighter fundamentals training. The wing also provides flight screening and operational airlift.

Across the street and just to the west of the wing headquarters is the old Post Exchange (Building 200), another uniquely designed structure. Constructed around a circular courtyard, the building consists of three wings that jut out in the shape of a Y. At the center of the courtyard and enclosed by colorful tiles stands a Spanish-style fountain that is visible through the graceful triple arches that serve as the entrance. The building was designed by San Antonio architect Robert B. Kelly and was completed in 1931 at a cost of \$41,000.



The Post Exchange was a unique three-wing structure built in the shape of the letter Y. In the center courtyard stood a Spanish-style fountain.

Adjacent to the old exchange and facing Washington Circle is a sculpture depicting the Missing Man Formation, which is flown on special ceremonial occasions to honor comrades lost in combat in Southeast Asia. The monument, erected in 1977, is the work of San Antonio sculptor Mark Pritchett and is a gift from the San Antonio Chapter of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association.

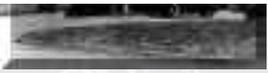


Facing Washington Circle is a sculpture depicting the Missing Man Formation, which is flown on special occasions to honor comrades lost in Southeast Asia.

Behind the Post Exchange are two small structures that served as the PX Filling Station. Building 201, built in 1931, was the gas station, and Building 202, built in 1935, was the garage with six open bays for repair work.



Randolph's first filling station, together with a six-bay garage, was located behind the post exchange. In the early 1930s, gas sold for about 18 cents a gallon.



Down the street from the Post Exchange was the original Post Fire Station (Building 205). The building was originally constructed with three arched entrances containing garage doors. These openings were filled in, and new doors were installed around 1970. Today, the building provides office space for the local Air Force Office of Special Investigations.



When the fire station opened in the early 1930s, it had the latest in firefighting equipment.

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THE AIR CORPS TRAINING CENTER









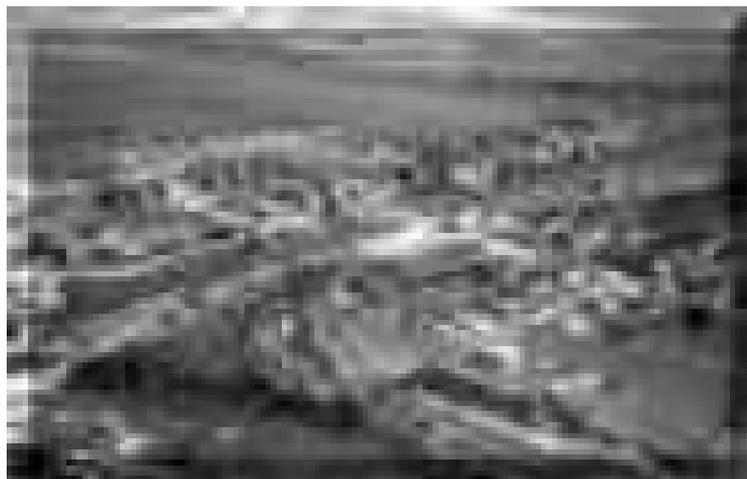






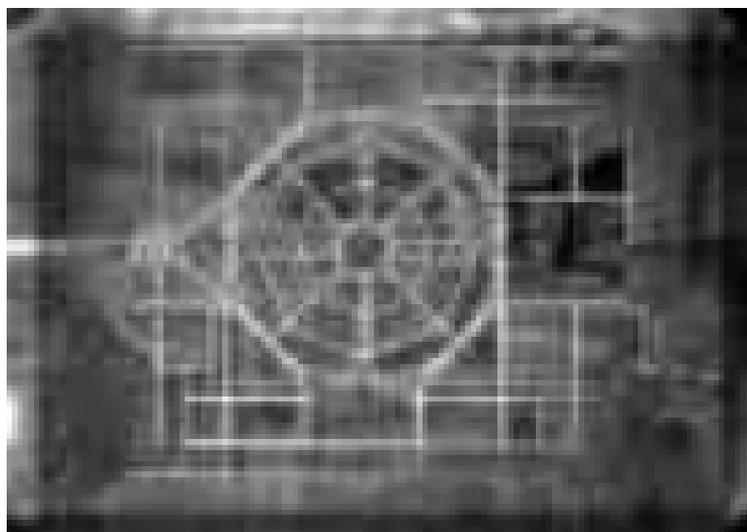








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