



Fort Worth Aviation Museum

2016 North Texas Aviation Landmarks and Historic Sites



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Background

During the North Texas Aviation Centennial celebration in 2011, the planning committee began listing significant local aviation landmarks and sites that had potential to be recognized by the Texas Historical Commission. The intent, at that time, was to generate awareness of the aviation history and heritage of North Texas. Through that effort the newly dedicated Texas Historical Commission (THC) marker celebrating the first powered flight in Fort Worth was conceived and realized.

Beginning in 2014, the Fort Worth Aviation Museum published a list of aviation related sites and landmarks relevant to the history of aviation in North Texas.

First Flight in Fort Worth

On January 12, 1911, Roland Garros of the Moisant International Aviators made the first powered flight in Fort Worth. The flight occurred at the Fort Worth Driving Park and 17,000 people were on hand to witness the event. The Driving Park was located in an area which is now occupied by the parking lot behind Montgomery Plaza on West 7th Street. [Lat: 32-45-17.06, Long: 97-21-07.73]



1928 aerial photo of the newly-completed Montgomery Ward Building on West 7th Street with remnants of the driving park in the background

A Texas Historical Marker commemorating the event was dedicated in 2014. The marker will be installed in a new Fort Worth city park being constructed at the corner of Carroll Street and Mercedes Avenue which is scheduled to open in 2016. The park is approximately 600 feet west of the first flight location.

Cal Rodgers and the First Transcontinental Flight

On October 17, 1911, Cal Rodgers landed his Wright Flyer, the “Vin Fiz,” in John Ryan’s pasture south of downtown. Rodgers left Sheepshead Bay, New York on September 17, 1911 and eventually landed in Pasadena, California on November 5, 1911 to complete the first transcontinental flight. John Ryan’s pasture is now the Ryan Place Neighborhood. The entrance is located at 8th Avenue and Elizabeth Blvd.

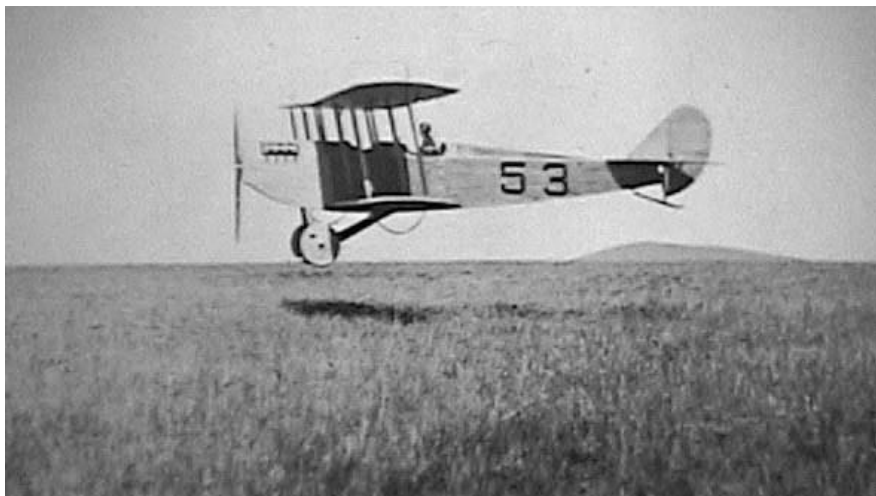
A local marker in Ryan Place Park at the corner of 5th Avenue and West Bowie Street commemorates the event. **[Lat: 32-47-27.24, Long: 97-20-20.17]**



Cal Rodgers departing Fort Worth October 19, 1911. 20,000 people were on hand to witness his departure.

The 1st Aero Squadron, US Army Signal Corps, in Fort Worth

On November 20, 1915, the 1st Aero Squadron landed in John Ryan’s pasture south of downtown. They were the first military aircraft to land here. The squadron left Post Field at Fort Sill, Oklahoma on October 19 on their way to a new flying field at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas and spent two days in Fort Worth. The squadron represented the entire aerial “combat” strength of the United States.



Lt Carlton G. Chapman landing the first military aircraft in Fort Worth on November 20, 1915

World War I Barron Field

One of three flying training fields around Fort Worth during World War I. The field was used by Royal Flying Corps Canada for training between November 1917 and April 1918. The munitions building has a Texas Historical Marker on Oak Grove Road, south of Everman Parkway. **[Lat: 32-37-32.89, Long: 97-18-17.16]**

The center part of Barron Field along Everman Parkway has yet to be developed. Building foundations for as many as four hangars and several buildings around the water tower may still be there in a wooded area on the south side of Everman Parkway. A field survey should be conducted to determine the extent of remains. The site could make an interesting park or interpretive center, but it is threatened by development in the area. **[Lat: 32-37-38.31, Long: 97-18-52.14]**



Barron Field in 1918 looking southwest

Placed on Historic Fort Worth's 2015 Endangered Sites list

World War I Taliaferro Field and School of Aerial Gunnery

Taliaferro Field was the first and largest of four aerial gunnery training schools in the United States during World War I. An 11,700-acre aerial gunnery range was located just west of the flying field and had a number of target features on the ground. Taliaferro Field was used by Royal Flying Corps Canada for training between November 1917 and April 1918.

The munitions building at Taliaferro Field - a concrete storehouse, like the one at Barron Field is the only World War I structure left on Taliaferro Field. Located at US 287 Business and Hicks Field Road north of Saginaw. **[Lat: 32-54-28.86, Long: 97-24-01.20]**

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Taliaferro Field looking north in 1918. The munitions building is the small structure just above the two temporary hangars in the lower right.

Placed on Historic Fort Worth's 2014 Endangered Sites list

World War I Taliaferro Field Aerial Gunnery Target

The aerial gunnery target, discovered in 2006, was one of several concrete-lined, water-filled targets on the range for air-to-ground gunnery training. It is the only known World War I gunnery target remaining in the United States. At some point, ranchers fenced in the site, presumably to keep cattle from wandering into area. The site is located in Fort Worth's Public Improvement District 12 which is now being developed into a multi-use housing and retail shopping area. The gunnery target is located on private rangeland west of US 287 Business. [Lat: 32-54-57.90, Long: 97-25-23.00]



The gunnery target is 32 feet long and has a wingspan of 40 feet

Placed on Historic Fort Worth's 2014 Endangered Sites list

World War I Carruthers Field

One of three flying training fields around Fort Worth during World War I. The field was used by Royal Flying Corps Canada for training between November 1917 and April 1918. Captain Vernon Castle, commander of No. 84 Canadian Training Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, died February 15, 1918 when he took emergency action on landing to avoid another plane and crashed on the field. Captain Castle and his wife Irene were super-star ballroom dancers and film stars in the years preceding World War I. There is a local monument at Vernon Castle Drive and Cozby West Street in Benbrook. **[Lat: 32-40-08.21, Long: 97-27-59.40]**



Carruthers Field looking north. The road on the right is now Winscott Road and the road between the hangars and buildings is now Cozby North Street. The three white concrete silos visible in the left center of the photo still exist and are located just south of the I-20 and West Loop 820 interchange.

Royal Flying Corps Cemetery, Greenwood Memorial Park

During their five-month stay in Fort Worth, Royal Flying Corps Canada lost 39 members due to airplane accidents and other causes. Eleven British, Canadian, and American airmen of the RFC and an infant child who died at the flying fields around Fort Worth are buried here. An American veteran of the RFC was also buried here in 1975. The site is part of the British Commonwealth Graves System - a piece of Fort Worth which will forever be England. A bi-annual remembrance service is held on Memorial Day. The next one will be in 2017 - the 100th anniversary of the site. A Texas Historical Marker is located at the site. **[Lat: 32-45-47.39, Long: 97-21-49.17]**

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2015 bi-annual remembrance service

Lt Ormer Leslie Locklear, US Army Air Service

Ormer Locklear was born October 28, 1891 in Como, Texas and grew up in Fort Worth. He joined the Army Air Service in 1917, trained at Barron Field, became a cross-country flying instructor and was noted for his antics on airplanes while in flight. In 1919, he formed a barnstorming team with two other pilots, Milton Elliott and Shirley Short, which soon led to a movie career performing his aerial stunts for the camera. Locklear and Elliott died in Los Angeles, California August 2, 1920 while filming their second movie, "The Skywayman." Over 30,000 people attended his funeral in Fort Worth. He is buried in Greenwood Memorial Park and a Texas Historical Marker is near the gravesite. [Lat: 32-45-47.39, Long: 97-21-58.22]



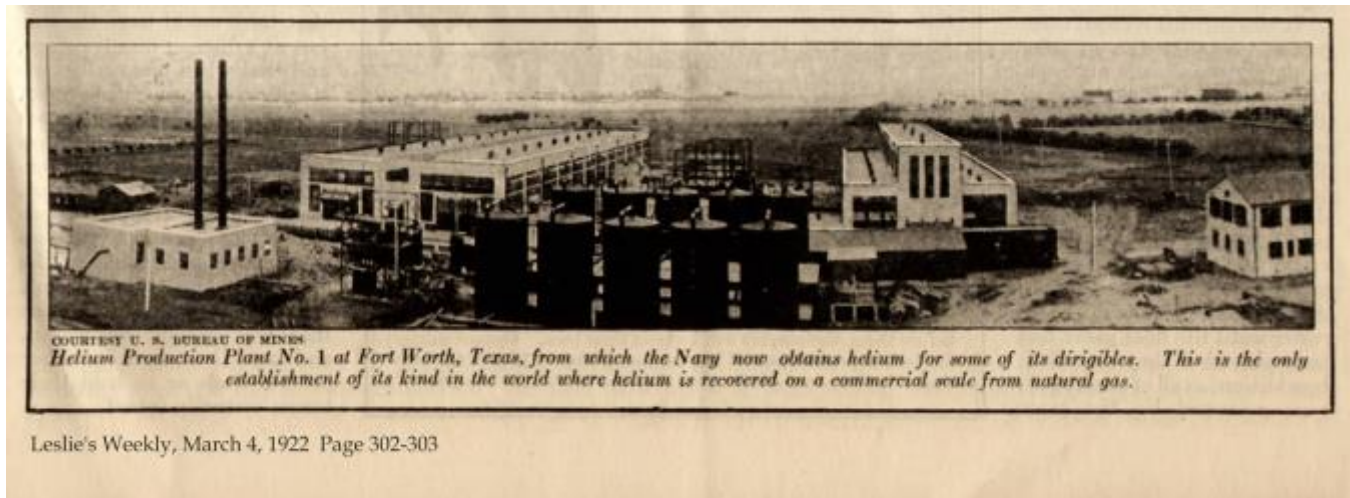
US Navy Helium Production Plant, Fort Worth

In 1918, the Army and Navy conducted experiments in Fort Worth to test the feasibility of extracting helium from natural gas. By 1921, the Navy had built a helium production plant and began a large-scale helium extraction program. The plant was the world's only source of helium. The facility remained in operation until

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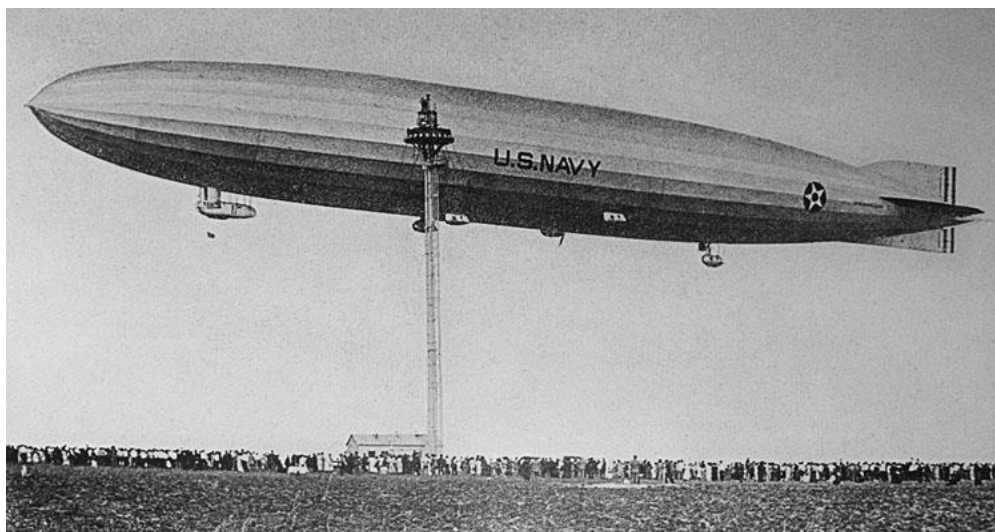
mid 1929 when helium-rich natural gas supplies in the Petrolia fields were depleted and a new helium-rich gas field was discovered near Amarillo, Texas.

The site was taken over by the Airways Division of the Department of Commerce Lighthouse Service where they developed early night navigation lighting systems and radios for airport and aircraft use. The plant was located on what is now Blue Mound Road near Meacham Blvd. [Lat: 32-49-24.44, Long: 97-20-32.42]



US Navy Dirigible Mooring Station, Fort Worth

In 1924, the Navy constructed a dirigible mooring station near the helium plant to service Navy and Army airships on cross-country flights. The half-mile square site was in operation from 1924 to 1929. Most notable airships to visit the station were the ZR-1, "Shenandoah" and the ZR-3, "Los Angeles." [Lat: 32-49-42.09, Long: 97-20-46.70]



US Navy airship ZR-1, "Shenandoah" departing Fort Worth October 9, 1924

American Airways Hangar, Meacham Field

American Airways was formed in 1930 through the consolidation of a dozen smaller regional airlines. Initially the airline operated through three divisions and in 1933, Amon G. Carter convinced them to move their Southern Division headquarters to Fort Worth. The hangar was dedicated on October 18, 1933. It is the oldest remaining building at the airport and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The dedication plaque originally mounted on the hangar is now on display at the Fort Worth Aviation Museum. **[Lat: 32-49-17.84, Long: 97-21-20.64]**



World War II Hicks Field Hangars, Fort Worth

In July 1940, the old World War I Taliaferro Field site was reopened and renamed Hicks Field. The W. F. Long Flying School and Texas Aviation Inc. conducted primary flying training under contract to the US Army Air Corps. Several of the World War I hangars were used and three double-arch steel hangars and other support buildings were constructed at the field. The field was deactivated July 20, 1944. **[Lat: 32-54-42.06, Long: 97-24-03.52]**

In the early 1950s, Bell Helicopter used the site for flight testing.



Hicks Field, 1942

World War II Fort Worth Seaplane Facility, Lake Worth

In November 1940, Consolidated Aircraft contacted Amon G. Carter outlining their immediate need for a seaplane facility and layover point to support delivery of 109 PBV-1 long-range maritime patrol aircraft purchased by the Royal Air Force from Consolidated's factory in San Diego to England. The first PBV-1 destined for the Royal Air Force landed on Lake Worth in the late afternoon of November 30, following a 9-hour flight from San Diego. Over the next five and a half years, Fort Worth's seaplane facility would make a significant contribution to the war effort in Europe and the Pacific. [Lat: 32-48-44.12, Long: 97-27-00.29]



Fort Worth seaplane facility on Lake Worth, looking west. The shore facilities and docks are in the left center. This area is now occupied by the Lake Worth Boat and Ski Club. The grassy and wooded area on the lake in the right center is now Fort Worth's Marina Park.

Globe Aircraft Corporation, Fort Worth

Founded in 1940 by two Fort Worth businessmen, the company initially developed a twin-engine eight passenger airplane (BTC-1) which proved unsuccessful, and a single-engine two place aircraft (GC-1). With the advent of World War II, the Defense Plant Corporation upgraded the facilities and during the war, Globe manufactured 600 Beech AT-10 advanced trainers and forward fuselage sections for the Curtiss C-46 transport. By late 1944, the company began to refine the design of the GC-1 into an all metal aircraft and went on to produce over 800 aircraft before the company closed its doors in 1947.

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In 1951, Bell Aircraft moved their helicopter division to Fort Worth and occupied the vacant Globe Aircraft site. They began manufacturing helicopters here until their new factory was opened in Hurst. Bell continued to use the Globe site for flight test, training, and modification work until the early 1990s.

The factory buildings were demolished in 2005 - the only remaining structures are a guardhouse and the water tower. The factory was located in the southwest corner of Blue Mound Road and McLeroy Blvd. **[Lat: 32-51-40.35, Long: 97-20-41.62]**



Globe Aircraft factory in 1943, looking west

Air Force Plant No. 4, Fort Worth

In January 1941, the US Army Air Corps selected a site on the west side of Fort Worth to build an aircraft assembly plant to expand aircraft production. The mile-long facility was allocated to Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego and by April 1942, the first B-24 “Liberator” bomber rolled out the doors. The facility has been in continuous operation since that first delivery and is now operated by Lockheed Martin building the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. **[Lat: 32-45-55.82, Long: 97-26-45.32]**

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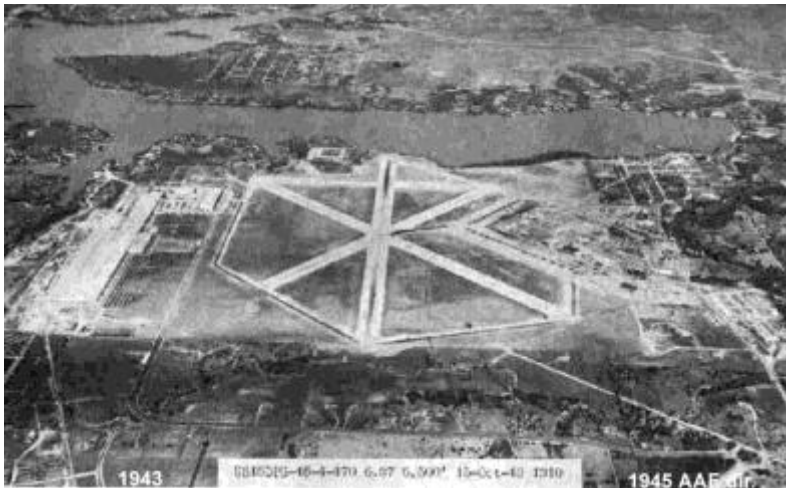
World War II Tarrant Field, Fort Worth

Tarrant Field (also referred to as the Lake Worth Bomber Plant Airport) was constructed on the east side of Air Force Plant No. 4 in 1941 to support deliveries of B-24 aircraft. On July 29, 1942, the name was changed to Fort Worth Army Air Field and assigned to the Army Air Forces Flying Training Command as a specialized pilot and aircrew training school for the B-24. In late 1944, the B-24 training program was phased out and the training program shifted to the B-32. In November 1945, jurisdiction was transferred from the Army Air Forces Training Command to the Second Air Force, and subsequently to the newly-created Strategic Air Command in March 1946. Units at the field went on to fly the B-29, B-36, B-58 and B-52 bombers between 1946 and 1993.

On January 29, 1948 the air field was renamed Carswell Air Force Base in honor of Major Horace S. Carswell Jr, a Fort Worth native and B-24 pilot who was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for action in China.

Beginning in the 1960s, several Air Force reserve units also operated from Carswell flying C-124 transports and F-105, F-4, and ultimately F-16 fighters. Through a series of base realignment and closure activities in the early 1990s, Carswell's mission evolved and in 1994, the base was redesignated Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base, Carswell Field when NAS Dallas was closed and their units transferred to Fort Worth. The air field has been in continuous operation for over 73 years. **[Lat: 32-45-52.72, Long: 97-25-16.73]**

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World War II Army Air Forces Training Command Headquarters

In January 1942, the US Army Air Corps consolidated their various flying training regions and technical training centers under a new command structure consisting of the AAF Flying Training Command and the AAF Technical Training Command. Between July 1, 1942 and February 25, 1946, the headquarters were located in Fort Worth and initially occupied the top four floors of the T&P Railroad Building. In July 1943, these commands were consolidated into the Army Air Forces Training Command. Eventually the headquarters would occupy the top nine floors of the T&P Building. The building is located on W. Lancaster Street between Houston and Throckmorton. [Lat: 32-44-45.72, Long: 97-19-39.87]



World War II Eagle Mountain Lake Marine Corps Air Station

The station was commissioned on December 1, 1942 and was used for glider pilot training and amphibious assault glider testing. The idea was to tow amphibious gliders to a release point near a Pacific island objective, release them and fly them to the shore where the combat Marines would dismount and fight ashore. An outlying landing field was also constructed near Rhome, Texas to support the glider training program, but it is doubtful it was used since it was not commissioned until April 1943. **[Lat: 33-03-07.97, Long: 97-31-26.86]** Fortunately the Marines finally realized the folly of this island hopping approach and the entire assault glider program was officially abandoned on May 18, 1943.

In July 1943, a Navy training task force moved into Eagle Mountain Lake and commissioned it as a naval air station. The task force tested the Interstate TDR-1 remote controlled aircraft using modified Grumman TBFs as the control aircraft. The TDR-1 eventually became the Navy's first unmanned aerial combat vehicle and they saw some service in the Southwest Pacific attacking enemy targets with 2,000-lb bombs.

On April 1, 1944, the station was re-commissioned as a Marine Corps Air Station. For the remainder of the war, the station concentrated on night fighter training using the two-seat Grumman F7F-2N. The Rhome OLF was used as a radar control site to direct the fighters to their targets. In April 1946, the station went into caretaker status and was eventually abandoned. Today the site on FM 1220 at the northeast end of the lake is owned by Kenneth Copeland Ministries. **[Lat: 32-58-53.81, Long: 97-29-07.38]**



Bristol XLRQ-1 amphibious assault glider



Interstate TDR-1 remote controlled aircraft