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**PREFACE TO STATION HISTORY OF FREEMAN FIELD, SEYMOUR, Indiana
1942 – 1 JAN 1944
DECLASSIFIED EO11652**

The compilation of the history of Freeman Field was done by authority and under the direction of letter, Eastern Flying Training Command, dated 6 September 1943, subject, "Historical Program of the Eastern Flying Training Command."

This unique and unfamiliar task has not been accomplished single handedly by any one individual at this station. Out sincere thanks are extended to all Squadron Commanders, Detachment Commanders, Department Heads and Civilian Employees for their cooperation and whole hearted support.

Special credit and thanks are due to Cpl. Harold L. Miller, 447th Base Hq. & Air Base Squadron, Pvt. Ormond L. Guyer, 447th Vase Hq. & Air Base Squadron, and Miss Joan McDonald, Secretary to the Intelligence Officer, for their work in collecting and assembling vast amounts of the historical data presented in these pages.

Many difficulties were met, chief of which was the securing of qualified personnel. When first confronted wit the problem, the Historical Officer began a search for personnel with college degrees. Several were found, but their duties were

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Such that they were kept from devoting much time to the historical program or, as happened in several cases, after securing their help, they were transferred to other stations. However, such incidents were to be expected.

If the information and data obtained in this volume will be of any value to future military staffs in any way whatever, then the difficulties met in its preparation will have been as nothing. It is in such spirit this history is dedicated and presented to the Army Air Forces.

**PAUL H. HARRISON,
Major, Air Corps,
Historical Officer**

FOREWORD

**STATION HISTORY FREEMAN FIELD, SEYMOUR, Indiana
PART II FOREWORD**

The actual history of Freeman Field is a record of true American enterprise, ingenuity, team work and enthusiasm – a record that can't be written in words as it has been in deeds and action.

The town of Seymour, Indiana, in the early part of 1942, was a small typical American community with its civic clubs, churches, schools and community pride. Suddenly it was confronted with the prospect of having to accommodate an Army Air Field in its vicinity with all the attendant housing, social, business and recreational complications.

Many farmers whose predecessors for several generations had lived in the same homes and tilled the same soil, almost overnight gave up their possessions to the government and started life anew in other places. Seymour and surrounding towns somehow absorbed the influx of construction engineers and Army personnel who began arriving in the early part of April, 1942.

The Business Men's Association of Seymour; to the Rotary Club; to the Professional Men of Seymour; to the churches who set up recreational centers for the military personnel of this station; to the schools that took in children of the military and the civilian personnel alike, and to the community as a whole, words of commendation in the history of this station are altogether fitting and proper. Without such cooperation, the tasks confronting us would have been made more arduous.

**STATION HISTORY FREEMAN FIELD, SEYMOUR, Indiana
PART II FOREWORD**

In dealing with Headquarters Eastern Flying Training Command it can be candidly stated that the relationships between the headquarters of this station and that of higher headquarters has from the beginning been one of a most cordial nature. In all instances where we have asked for aid or suggestions from them we have received prompt and helpful attention.

The accomplishment of the primary assigned mission of this station, that of the training of advanced students of 2-engine airplanes, has not been done without encountering some difficulties. However, the majority of these can be ascribed to weather conditions, rather than to inefficiency of personnel. Successive classes have been graduated on schedule in spite of bad weather in the winter months. Secondary phases of training have been carried on constantly in all squadrons and units. Many graduates of this field have made excellent records in combat areas. I feel that a great share of this is due to the loyal and efficient efforts of both Military and Civilian personnel of this station

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. T. Rundquist". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

**E. T. Rundquist,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding**

PART III, Chapter I

A. Selection of Site.

1. Efforts of Local Civilians

The site for Freeman Army Air Field at Seymour, Indiana was selected and set up by the Army during the intense national excitement following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Under such rapidly changing conditions and vast expansion of the Army Air Forces, little time was available to either the Army or local business men to have conferences regarding the location of the proposed site.

The Historian of this station interviewed several local business men in an effort to find out just who or what group of citizens advocated or assisted in helping to bring the airfield to this particular area.

Mr. William F. Topie ¹, a local insurance agent and Secretary of the Seymour Business Men's Association, stated that there was no definitely organized effort on the part of any Civic Clubs or Business Men's Club in Seymour. However, he said that the Business Men's Club had, in 1940, prepared

1. Interview with Mr. William F. Topie, November 4, 1943.

A brochure or statistical data for the War Department, ex -----rating all the advantageous features of the area surrounding Seymour, as a desirable site for the location of war industries. He also stated that Lt. Colonel Paul Preuss, of the Army Air Forces, a native son of Seymour, had, on many occasions, landed at the small local airport and had remarked that in the case of an emergency, Seymour would be an excellent site for the location of an Army airport.

“Colonel Preuss,” Mr. Topie stated, “came into Seymour in the early part of 1942 accompanied by some other Colonel. Later in the week an Army Engineer Officer came into town and had meetings with the local farmers relative to purchasing of the land for locating an Army airport.” According to Mr. Topie, the farmers were very incensed at him, thinking that he had advocated the Army taking over the site; however, at a later meeting of these farmers, they learned that the government would pay them good prices for their land, and they became reconciled to the idea and cooperated wholeheartedly.

It is Mr. Topie’s belief that the data prepared by the Business Men’s Association for the War Department had a great influence with the Department in the selection of this site. However, an extensive research revealed that the local

Citizens had little, if anything, to do with its actual selection.

Mr. John H. Conner², the editor of the Seymour Tribune, stated that he had little knowledge of the moves until the date of May 6, 1942, when Mr. Earl Wilson, Congressman of this District, informed him by telephone from Washington, D. C. that Seymour had been chosen as the site for the location of an Army airport.

Mr. Stanley A, Switzer³, a native of Seymour and also former mayor of the town, said that the first inkling he had that an Army airport might be located near Seymour was when he was invited to join a group of local civilians to meet with Captain Paul Preuss on April 1, 1942.

Captain Preuss, now Lt. Colonel of the Air Corps, is from Seymour, Indiana, being an army flyer was interested in the selection of Seymour as an Army Air Port. The group that conferred with Captain Preuss and Colonel Stranathan consisted of Mr. William Topie, insurance agent, Mr. George F. K___man, jeweler, Mr. Lawrence Kasting of the Seymour National Bank, Mr. Clarence G. Steinwedel of the Jackson County Loan and Trust Company, Mr. Martin W. Steinwedel, merchant, Mr. Walter Droage, Postmaster, and a few others

2. Interview with Mr. John H. Conner, Editor, Seymour Tribune, Seymour, Indiana, 4 November 1943.

3. Interview with Mr. Stanley A, Switzer, 13 November 1943.

Whose names were not mentioned by Mr. Switzer. However, according to Mr. Switzer, this group made no previous effort to secure the location of the field.

2. Army Action: Site Selection Board

On April 6, 1943, a board of officers consisting of Colonel W. A. Maxwell, A. C., Lt. Colonel C. P. West, A. C., Captain Charles E. Mehafer, M. C and Captain Herbert T. Knapp, C. R., accompanied by W. K. Peek, Staff Appraiser, Ohio River Division, C. E., met in Seymour to inspect a proposed site for a new airfield⁴ at Seymour, Indiana.

The Site Board found that the area contained a few farms and a very small airport. There was a small cemetery containing a few graves that had to be removed, and also a consolidated school building about twenty-five years old, evaluated at approximately \$25,000.

The area included sections 30 and 31, Range %E, township 6N, Jackson County, Indiana, and consisted of normal farm land, flat, sandy loam, tile drained.

3. Negotiations for Purchase of Property.

A meeting was held with the local farmers regarding the purchase of property. Apparently none of them were favorable impressed with the idea because they were afraid that they would be paid low prices for the land, as other

4. S. O. #90, pp. 12, 6 April 1942, Hq. SEAFTC, Maxwell Field, Ala.

5. Site Board Report dated 6 April 1942.

farmers had been in one instance of which they knew. Many of these farmers had lived on their farms all their lives and their people before them, in some cases for one hundred years. Naturally they were loath to give up their homes. However, a second meeting was held, and they were advised that they would receive one hundred fifty dollars per acre for their land, and the group went away satisfied.⁶

Later 2560 acres of the land was condemned and purchased at \$150.00 per acre. It was agreed that the new airport was to consist of one Air Base Group, seven School Squadrons, five hundred Aviation Cadets, twenty-five Nurses, two hundred fifty-six Air Corps and twenty-seven other officers, two thousand eighty-six enlisted men of the Air Corps and three hundred fifty in other areas, and two hundred AT-10 aircraft. There were no obstacles to flying operations within the prescribed zones which had to be removed at government expense. The estimated land acquisitions cost was \$521,900 which included:

Purchase of 2,560 acres at \$150 per acre.....	\$ 384,000
Easements and right-of-way for railroad construction into site	3,500
Cost of Cemetery Removal ,,	1,000
Value of crops	8,400

6. Interview with Mr. William F. Topie, dated 4 November 1943.

Consolidated School	25,000
Allowance of 10% for contingencies peculiar to land acquisition program for this size and character	45, 190
5% planning acquisition expense, approximately	24, 810
Total -----	\$ 521,900

B. SURROUNDING COUNTRY

1. Communications.

Seymour is served by both Western Union and the Postal Telegraph Company, and the majority of the homes have telephone service.

The Indiana State Patrol maintains a radio broadcasting station at Seymour which has proved of great value to the airfield and helped them to report by radio accidents occurring at distances from the field.

2. Transportation Facilities.

Seymour is located one-half the distance between Indianapolis, Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky, approximately sixty miles from each city, and is served by the Greyhound Bus Company and is also located on the Cincinnati to St. Louis and Chicago to Louisville Air Routes.

Part of the present air field is only a short distance from the Pennsylvania Railroad operating between Indianapolis, Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky, and switching facilities are easily provided.

It is also served by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, St. Louis Division, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, operating between Terre Haute, Bedford and West Port, Indiana.

There are several large truck lines operating on regular routes with terminals in Seymour. The U. S. #50, east and west Road #31 and alternate State Road #31 connect Seymour directly with principal cities of the country.

3. Water and Power Supply.

The water system in Seymour is excellent. The Seymour Water Company, a private corporation, supplies water to the city from its purification plant on the White River about one mile north of Seymour. This plant is inspected often and frequent checks on chlorine are made.

It is a modern plant, sanitary and efficient. Water is pumped from the river into a settling tank and alum is automatically added to cause more rapid precipitation.

The water is chlorinated and filtered by the rapid filtration method and then chlorinated again, and pumped into a stand pipe at the edge of the city. Daily samples are sent to the State Health Department for bacteria counts. The plant is ordinarily run by hydraulic power, and has in addition two electrical centrifugal pumps in case of hydraulic failure.

In the event both systems fail, there are two steam driven pumps. There are 900,000 gallons of water provided daily and this can be increased to three million gallons with existing facilities. ⁷ Approximately four miles of Light Rural Electrification Administration lines running north and south throughout the center of the proposed site were relocated without any government expense to country roads adjacent to the area. Alternating current is used 110 – 220 volts, with 6900 bolts at the airport, and is supplied by the Public Service Company of Indiana, which company also supplies natural gas, 1015 BTU, 2 ½ miles from the site.

C. Climate ⁸

1. General Climatic Conditions.

Climatic conditions of the Wabash Basin in which the site is located, may be summarized as follows: As a part of a large region in the eastern United States, it has strongly marked seasons, with hot summers and cold winters, frequent changes of weather due to the passage eastward of numerous cyclonic storms, high humidity and considerable rainfall. These characteristics are in response to the

7. Air Site Board Report Addendum #1, 28 April 1942.

8. Air Site Board Report Addendum #1, 28 April 1942.

basin's position in midlatitudes; in the interior of the great continent but not shut off from a great source of moisture, the Gulf of Mexico. About 120 cyclonic disturbances travel in a general west to east direction across the Wabash Basin each year.

2. Temperature.

The normal annual temperature in the vicinity of this site, based on a thirty-five year mean for the U. S. Weather Bureau Station at Seymour, is 55 degrees Fahrenheit. The average minimum temperature in January, the coldest month, is 23 degrees Fahrenheit, and the average maximum temperature in July, the warmest month, 89 degree Fahrenheit. Based on forty-seven years of record the extreme temperatures are 111 degrees Fahrenheit and minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit. The average interval between the last killing frost in the spring and the first killing frost in autumn is about one hundred eighty days, extending from the middle of April to the middle of August.

3. Precipitation.

The normal annual precipitation at Seymour, based on a thirty-five year period, is 42.56 inches. Snow fall averages about eighteen inches per year. Based on records of first order Weather Bureau Station at Louisville, Kentucky and Indianapolis, Indiana, the maximum twenty-four hour snow fall at the site during the last fifty years is estimated to

Be fourteen inches.

4. Wind

The prevailing direction of wind at Seymour is southwest for all months of the year. The average annual velocity at this site, based on records of the first order Weather Bureau Stations at Louisville, Kentucky and Indianapolis, Indiana is estimated to be ten miles per hour.

The average monthly velocities vary from a maximum of 11 1.2 miles per hour in March to a minimum of 7 1.2 miles per hour in August.

5. Dust Storms, Smoke, Fog and Rain Storms.

The site lie in the region that has not been subject to severe, or frequent dust storms. After spring plowing and planting and also, after fall plowing, local dust storms occasionally occur, but are of short duration and generally not of serious consequence. Smoke from the railroad yards and a few industrial plants at Seymour, which are the only appreciable sources, does not impair visibility. The prevailing wind direction causes smoke from Seymour to be carried away from the site. Dense fog, on the average, occurs only six days out of each year. Rain storms in the vicinity are rather frequent, occurring on the average of .01 inches or 106 days each year based on fifty-two years record.

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6. Ice Formations

Due to the sudden temperature changes in the vicinity, formations of ice on runways by freezing or rain on the ground or accumulations of sleet may be expected on the average of twice a year, with ice lasting several days at a time.

PART V, CHAPTER III

A. OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVATION OF STATION

1. Authority and Date

Freeman Army Air Field was activated on 1 December 1942, by General Orders (1) from Southeast Army Air Forces Flying Training Command. On that date, Colonel E. T. Rundquist assumed command of the new station (2), and began to formulate the organization of the post. (3)

2. Extent of Construction at Time of Activation

At the date of activation, the new post was about 75% completed. The sewage and water systems were approximately 88% complete, but other phases of the construction lagged somewhat, due to adverse weather conditions (4) and delays due to difficulties in procuring materials. Sidewalks and road surfacing were not done, and a great deal of grading and building work remained to be done, as of 1 December 1942.

3. Commanding Officer (5)

Colonel E. T. Rundquist, A. C., first Commanding Officer of Freeman Army Air Field, was sent to the new station in the capacity of Project Officer on 16 October 1942. Previous to his appointment at Freeman Field, Colonel Rundquist commanded the Air Forces Detachment at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.

Colonel Rundquist was born and raised at Harvey, Illinois, beginning his career as an aviator in the first World War. After taking ground training at his alma mater, the University of Illinois, in May 1918,, he received his flight instruction at Carruthers Field, Texas. From 1919 to 1924 he was a member of the Air Service Reserve, but in 1924 he joined the regular Army as a second lieutenant.

In 1924 and 1925 he was a student, first at Brooks Field, then at Kelly Field, Texas. He later became Assistant Operations Officer, and the Air Corps Supply Officer at Langley Field.

Fro June 1927 to July 1931 he served as assistant Post Engineering Officer at Kelly Field, then in August, ???? he went to France Field, Panama as Tactical Officer, acting in this capacity until May 1934. From this point his record of service included assignments at Marshall Field, Ft. Riley, Kansas, as Operations Officer from June 1934 to 1938, Kelly Field, Texas as Commanding Officer of the 61st School Squadron from 1938 to 1939.

In 1939 he went to the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field, Alabama. After completing his assignment there in September of that year, he returned to France Field, Panama as Operations Officer. In August 1941 he was transferred to Howard Field, Panama to serve as Operations and Administrative Inspector until December of the same year. His last assignment before his appointment at Freeman Field, Seymour, Indiana was at the Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.

Colonel Rundquist had had wide experience in civil engineering and construction work, as well as a wealth of training in army administration. His history closely parallels the history of Army aviation in this country.

4. Relations With Nearby Military Establishments

Relations with other military establishments during the early days of the Air Base at Seymour were confined to the basic functions of the Post, that is relative to the construction and maintenance of the new field. The military post with which officials at the air field site had the most dealings was Camp Atterbury, located at Columbus, Indiana.

Mr. Joseph Springer of the Land Acquisition Office at Camp Atterbury (6), Columbus, Indiana handled negotiations for a time in the purchasing of the land for the new field. After the arrival of enlisted personnel at the Seymour field, Lieutenant Morris W. Zoogman, who was detailed as Post Commissary Officer and Post Sales Officer at Freeman Field, contacted a Captain Frame, Post Sales Officer at Camp Atterbury, and made arrangements to draw rations for the men until shipment of food stuffs reached the new post. Captain Frame cooperated in every way possible, making it his personal business to see that the food necessary to maintain the men was issued.

Laundry facilities at Camp Atterbury were also made available to the personnel of Freeman Field.

Recapitulating, relations with other military establishments were of the most cordial nature, and might be considered an important factor in the early operation of the air field at Seymour, Indiana.

1. Housing for Married Officers and Enlisted Personnel.

The housing situation in the City of Seymour was acute from the beginning. In the Air Site Board Report (7), which studied the possibilities of the site at Seymour, the Board noted that the housing situation would be totally inadequate with the inevitable influx of population attending the construction of an air field at this location. Only about six vacant houses existed in Seymour (8) at the time that the new field was under construction, and the small towns adjacent to Seymour offered very little solution to the problem.

Three hotels are located in Seymour, two having 50 rooms each, and the other 25 rooms. In the survey conducted by the Business Men's Association Report, November 16, 1942 on housing conditions in Seymour, it was estimated that only 52 houses, 30 of which were not modern, would be available for rental during the months following (9). One thousand and eighty single rooms might be available also, but in light of the fact that civilian personnel alone at the field might be expected to exceed 1,280 persons, and with military personnel expected to grow by leaps and bounds, the situation was definitely bad.

When the field was activated, Officers and enlisted men began arriving with families, and a great many were forced to go from door to door seeking temporary

accommodations to house them until they could find something of a more permanent nature.

8. Air Site Board Report, Page 4, dated April 7, 1942.

9. Seymour Tribune, dated 9 Jan. 1943 (Clipping from Public Relations Scrapbook, Freeman Army Air Field, Seymour, Indiana).

2. Educational Facilities.

Educational facilities in Seymour include the Shields High School and the public grade schools. When it became apparent that the Army Air Field would be located at Seymour, Mt. H. J. Lasher, Superintendent of Schools, advised the Commanding General, Southeast Flying Training Command, Headquarters, Maxwell Field, Alabama that the local Board of Education ¹⁰ had rules that children residing outside of the corporate limits of the city might attend school in Seymour without payment of tuition. Children of the field personnel inside the city limits would, of course, be able to attend the schools without charge. In addition, the city boasts of a fine public library, in conjunction with which an art collection has been established that is unusual in town of this size.

3. Recreational Facilities.

On 8 December 1942, with the first cadres of enlisted men reached the city of Seymour, the only recreational establishments besides the commercial enterprises in the town was the Soldier's Hospitality Center, ¹¹ organized and conducted by the First Baptist Church at

10. Air Site Board Report, Letter to the Commanding General from Mr. H. J. Lasher, Superintendent of Public Schools, Seymour, Indiana.

11. Interview, Dr. A. A. Cohn, Pastor First Baptist Church, Seymour, Indiana, dts. 9 December 1943

Seymour, with the Rev. A. Cohn in charge, and the public recreational facilities provided by the city.

The city has two public parks, with supervised playgrounds containing facilities for tennis, volleyball, soft ball, croquet and horseshoes. ¹² A swimming pool, recently constructed at the cost of \$75,000.00 with modern bathhouse accommodations, is located in Shields Park. Emerson Field, operated under the public schools system, is equipped with a night lighting system, and is used for football, baseball and track meets.

4. Medical Facilities ¹³

Medical facilities in Seymour include a hospital containing modern equipment and supplies. The capacity of the hospital is fifty rooms, but provisions for extending this capacity had been made, and the hospital could be greatly enlarged to accommodate a considerably larger number of patients.

6. Development of Special Housing Projects.

As early as August, 1942, however, arrangements were being contemplated for the government to erect a number of civilian housing units on land adjacent to the new base, and negotiations went forward for such a project.

12. Air Site Board Report

13. Air Site Board Report

(INSERT)

3. Development of Special Housing Projects.

On February 10, 1943, the Tevell Construction Company was awarded the contract for the building of 330 housing units, together with a building to house the administration offices and recreational facilities of a Federal Housing Project. The project was to be built and administered by the Federal Public Housing Authority. ¹

Construction of the new project started on February 22, 1943 with preliminary surveying and location work, and on the day following, preliminary grading began. The work was under the Mr. Irving J. Palmer, the official representative of the construction company, while the firm of Behlem-McGuire & Sheck of Chicago, Ill., was designated as Architect Engineers for the project. Aside from the acquisition of the land, the cost of the project totaled approximately \$800,000. Twenty-seven acres of ground were purchased, the land adjoining Freeman Field at the north entrance to the post.

On August 13 of the same year, the new Federal Housing Project, now designated as Ridgeview, was ready for occupancy.

1. Construction Files, Administration Building, Federal Housing Project, Seymour, Indiana.

On August 26, 1943, a telegram was received by Mr. Irving Morris ², newly designated housing manager of Ridgeview, to the effect that U. S. Army personnel would be permitted to reside at the project, providing that civilian personnel were given first priority, and that no army personnel over the rank of captain be permitted to live there. By October of 1943, 345 of the 360 units were occupied.

Educational facilities for children whose parents resided at Ridgeview included the Clara D. Carter school, a township owned grade school, and the Emerson School of Seymour, both of which provided transportation to and from Ridgeview for the children, and the Shields High School of Seymour, where the high school age pupils attended, with their tuition paid by the township. A kindergarten room was equipped at Ridgeview for preschool age children, with a part-time instructor.

Recreation was provided by the project, with ping pong tables, billiards, and club rooms available to the tenants. Entertainments of various types were also held in the auditorium of the administration building.

2. Interview: Mr. Irving Morris, Housing Manager, FHA Project (Ridgeview), Seymour, Indiana dtd. 24 February 1944, Files, Intelligence Officer.

The situation was not altered by this movement until a much later date.

6. Development of USO Facilities ¹⁴

In August, 1943, when it became apparent that the field at Seymopur was to be built, a local USO board, including Mr. Arthur Kauffman, a merchant in Seymour, and Mr. Lawrence Kasting of the Seymour National Bank, began to function. Through correspondence and the National USO Council, the site for the Seymour USO was decided upon.

Major William Jobe of the Salvation Army was sent out as the first director for the new service men's center, it being decided by the National USO Council to have the Salvation Army placed in charge of the operations at the Seymour club. Major Jobe, with the aid of the local council, succeeded, by borrowing and by donations, in obtaining enough furniture and equipment to open the new establishment and provide for the comfort and entertainment of the soldiers at the air field when they came to Seymour. Games, reading material, and various other equipment were furnished by the Seymour Public Schools and city civic organizations.

The Girls' Service Organization and the Mothers' Service Organization were formed in connection with the USO, and were ready to perform their several functions when the

14 Interview, Mr. Bramwell Lundgren, Director, USO, Seymour, Indiana, dtd. 9 Dec 1943

New club opened on 12 December 1942.

The Reverend G. D. K. Wright, of Seymour, together with the local USO council and Major Jobe, also set up a USO club for colored soldiers.

C. AUXILIARY FIELDS ¹⁵

The acquisition of property to build auxiliary air fields was accomplished at the same time as was the land for the base field. The purpose of the land on which the base field and its satellite bases are now located began with the Land Acquisition Office at Camp Atterbury, Columbus, Indiana. Mr. Jos. W. Springer of that office handled negotiations for the buying and optioning of the land from the beginning of the project until June 18, 1942. At that time Frank H. Wolfe, of the Real Estate Section, Ohio River Division, U. S. Engineering Corps, opened the first land acquisition office in the High School Building at Seymour, Indiana. Later the office was moved to the Vehslage Building in Seymour.

Lt. Carl Howell, Robert Moss and Sidney H. Showalter were successively in charge of the office from September 7, 1942 until the date of completion of the fields with Mr. Showalter conducting the business of the office from November 16, 1942. Under his direction, the negotiations

15. Completion Report, Construction of Airfield, Buildings and Utilities for Seymour Air Field Advanced Twin Engine School.

For the base and auxiliary fields were carried through to completion, and the plans for the construction of the project were carried through.

1. Walesboro

The auxiliary field designated at Walesboro Auxiliary Air Field No. 1 is located in Bartholomew County, Indiana, four miles south of Columbus, Indiana near the little settlement of Walesboro. Sixteen air miles north of Freeman Field, it lies in a saucer-shaped depression, surrounded by ridges to the north, west and south. It covers 806 acres, being the third largest of the auxiliary fields.

In building the site up to specifications, it was necessary to clear and grub 52 acres of timber land, level the field, construct runways, bridges and culverts. Eight hundred thousand cubic yards of grading was accomplished and three and seven-tenths miles of ditches for drainage purposes were opened up.

1. St. Anne

St. Anne Auxiliary Field No. 2, located in the north central part of Jennings County, Indiana, covers 809 acres, and is the second largest of the auxiliary fields. It is the only satellite base on the project having concrete runways.

The construction of this field entailed the

Greatest amount of construction work of any of the auxiliary fields, in proportion to its size. The work included the removal of 173 acres of timber, 955,000 cubic yards of earthwork and the installation of 162,310 square yards of concrete pavement. The field is irregularly shaped, being a mile long and varying from a mile to a mile and a quarter in width.

3. Grammer.

Situated one-half mile south of the little hamlet of Grammer is the auxiliary field designated as Grammer Auxiliary Field No. 3. This field covers one section (640 acres) of Bartholomew County, and is approximately 23 air miles north of Freeman Field.

Ten percent of the land acquired from Grammer Field, or about 62 acres, was in timber, and had to be removed. Also 1,000,000 yards of earthwork was necessary to level the field and allow for drainage of the land.

4. Millport

The largest auxiliary field, Millport Auxiliary Field No. 4, is located in Jackson County, Indiana, near the Muscatatuck River, fourteen air miles southwest of the main base at Seymour. It is comprise of approximately 1100 acres of land, with two landing strips, each over a mile in length.

The construction problems for Millport included the clearing and grubbing of 250 acres of land, one and one-half miles of open ditches and 340,000 cubic yards of earthwork. Operations on the construction of the field began on 17 September 1942 and work went ahead rapidly until November. Adverse weather conditions hampered progress to an increasing extent through this month, and in December the weather became so bad that operations were completely suspended. Later the Millport field contract supervision was transferred from the Architect=Engineer to the Area Engineer for completion.

5. Zenas

The Zenas Auxiliary Air Field No. 5 is located in Jennings County, Indiana, 26 air miles northeast of Freeman Field. It is one of the two smallest satellite air bases on the project, being only one mile square in area.

Construction of the Zenas field began on 10 September 1942. As in the other auxiliary fields, it was remove timber from some portions of the land, eighty-three acres requiring the clearing and grubbing operations in this case. Two culvert bridges were required and 3480 feet of open ditches for drainage were constructed.

D. HISTORY OF PERSONNEL CHANGES.

In light of the fact that the field was activated

Only a short while, no changes in key personnel through this period were made. On 1 December 1942, in Special Order #1, Seymour Air Base, Seymour, Indiana, Colonel E. T. Rundquist appointed the following officers to their new responsibilities at the field as follows:

Lt. Colonel O. M Baldinger to duty as Post Executive Officer.

Captain George W. Weiland to duty as Assistant Post Executive Officer.

1st Lt. Rudolph Brannan to duty as Post Adjutant.

Captain J. J. Lucas to duty as Post Engineer and Fire Marshall.

2nd Lt. R. A. Wenzel to duty as Post Signal Officer, Post Signal Property Officer and AACS Officer.

2nd Lt. William Hartman to duty as Post Intelligence Officer, Post Public Relations Officer and Officer in Charge of Classified Documents.

1st Lt. C. W. Lundgren to duty as Post Ordnance Officer and Post Ordnance Property Officer.

Major J. Weilich to duty as Post Quartermaster.

2nd Lt. J. F. Landers to duty as Quartermaster Property Officer.

2nd Lt. Morris W. Zoogman to duty as Post Sales Officer

And Commissary Officer.

2nd Lt. H. J. Reuttinger to duty as Post Transportation and Motor Transportation Officer.

During the first month after the field was activated, the primary activities on the post were confined to the organization of the various units and the cleaning up of the area. Only one airplane was at the field, that being the plane assigned to the Commanding Officer. MSgt Dorman had the responsibility for the maintenance of the craft, and the other mechanics on the field aided in the cleaning up of the quadron areas.

A mechanics school was set up, with volunteer instructors and the line men kept abreast of the times in their field through these classes. Some basic training was accomplished, including gas mask training by the Chemical Warfare Department. ¹⁶

Men continued to stream into the new post. December 16, 1942 saw the cadres for the 35th Group ¹⁷ and the 1080th ¹⁸ Squadron arrive, and the squadrons steadily enlarged their personnel. On December 31, 1942, the field strength stood at 58 officers and 604 enlisted men. ¹⁹

16. Unit History, Chemical Department.

17. Unit History 35th TEFT Group.

18. Unit History, 1080th Squadron.

19. Strength Chart, Statistical Office, freeman Field, Ind.

INTERVIEWS

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Mr. Stanley A. Swi???, Chief Clerk, 365th ??? Sub-Depot, Freeman Field, Indiana dtd. 13 November 1943

Major George ?. ????????, A. C., Freeman Field, Indiana dtd. 18 November 1943

Captain ?. ?. McLeod, A. C., Freeman Field, Indiana dtd. 22 November 1943

?/Sgt Jerry Browning, ?47th ??? Headquarters & Air Base Squadron, Freeman Field, Indiana dtd. 8 December 1943

Mr. Bramwell Lundgren, Director, USO, Seymour, Indiana dtd. 9 December 1943

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907th Quartermaster Company (Service) Freeman Field, Indiana

Chemical Warfare Service, Freeman Field, Indiana

35th TEFT Group, Freeman Field, Indiana

1080th TEFT Squadron, Freeman Field, Indiana

Quartermaster Installation, Freeman Field, Indiana

CHARTS

Strength Chart, Freeman Field, Statistics Office, Freeman Field, Indiana

**INTERVIEW, CAPTAIN W. H. McLEOD
ADJUTANT, POST HEADQUARTERS
FREEMAN FIELD, INDIANA**

Captain W. H. McLeod was born in Marion, Florida January 10, 1890, to Angus and Inex McLeod. The occupation of his father was farming. He has a brother in the Marine Corps. Captain McLeod attended school at Marion, Florida and has been in Military service for the past sixteen years. His hobbies include golf and swimming.

In 1929 he enlisted in the Air Corps and has done administrative work in different capacities. His first duty assignment in the Air Forces was at Nichols Field, Philippines in March, 1940. The type of work he has done in the Army has been mostly personnel work.

He first came to this field in August, 1942, as a 2nd Lieutenant. Colonel R. L. Wynn was the first Project Officer and Major Weiland was Assistant Project Officer. Major Weiland acted as Project Officer when Colonel Wynn was absent.

Upon his arrival at Freeman Field, there was a BOQ area and also some black warehouses – Quartermaster warehouses. There was also some grading and drainage going on all over the place. Major George W. Weiland was the only Air Corps Officer here besides Captain McLeod. Some of the Engineering Officers were Captain Jean P. Case and Lt. Baskett.

Some of the difficulties were procurement of critical supplies and railroad track. These did not prevent completion of construction on schedule. Severe snows and rains during the month of December 1942 delayed completion of the runways for one month, otherwise the field would have been ready one month ahead of schedule.

In naming the field, somebody mailed in two or three folders that were believed to have been made up at West Point, giving a brief history of Captain Richard Freeman, and also his picture. It was believed to have been mailed by some individual in Indiana. The American Legion of Indianapolis, Indiana, submitted some various names, and Captain Richard Freeman's name was submitted along with other ads. The field was named for Captain Freeman, who was killed in an aircraft accident returning from Alaska.

There were quite a few obstacles to be moved, trees, houses, dirt, etc. when he arrived, according to Captain McLeod. The field had some dealings with Camp Atterbury. The housing facilities were bad. They were as bad as when the military personnel moved in. It was one of the easiest places to get in operation and activated in Captain McLeod's experience, this being the fifth station he had helped to activate.

The first cadres that arrived here were enlisted personnel – MSgt Dorman, Sgt. Sundberg, seven or eight cooks, Mess Sgt., etc. Colonel E. T. Rundquist was the first Commanding Officer.

Freeman Field was activated on December 1, 1942 with the following officers constituting the initial staff:

Commanding Officer – Colonel R. T. Rundquist

Executive Officer – Lt. Colonel Ora M. Baldinger

Assistant Executive Officer – Capt. G. W. Weiland

Adjutant – Capt. R. Brannan

Post Engineer – Capt. J. J. Lucas

Personnel Officer – 2nd Lt. W. H. McLeod

Signal Officer – 2nd Lt. H. A. Wensel

Public Relations – 2nd Lt. W. Hartman

Ordnance Officer – 1st Lt. C. W. Lundgren

Quartermaster – Major J. Heilich

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. H. McLeod". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

**W. H. McLeod, Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant**

**INTERVIEW, F/SGT JERRY BROWNING, 447TH BASE HQ & AIR BASE SQUADRON,
FREEMAN FIELD, INDIANA**

F/Sgt. Jerry Browning was born January 10, 1920, to Mr. J. C. Browning and Mrs. Ann F. Browning. His father was a railroad detective.

He was graduated from St. John's College at Washington, D. C. in 1938, and on September 3 of that year enlisted in the District of Columbia National Guard. On February 10, 1941 he was inducted into Federal Service at Ft. Meade, Maryland, in the Corps of Engineers, U. S. A. In May of 1942 he transferred to the Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet. He was eliminated from Cadet training in November of that year and sent to Craig Field, Alabama, where he became a member of the 447th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron cadre.

On December 8, 1942, he arrived with the cadre at the Air Field at Seymour as First Sgt. There was snow on the ground at the new field when the cadre arrived, construction work was in progress, and the field generally presented a very unfinished appearance. They were assigned to six barracks in the 447th area, and began the work of building up the squadron units.

