

City of Schertz

Remembrances Special Edition Article 2015-4

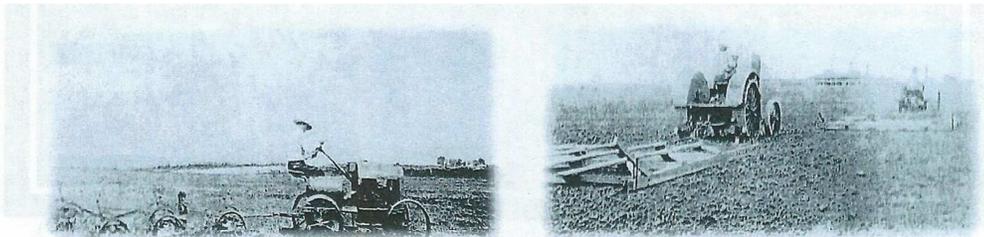
Presented by: Schertz Historical Preservation Committee

Source: Joint Base Randolph History Office

The Origins of Randolph Air Force Base, 1926-1931

The Air Corps Act of 1926 provided for, among other things, the establishment of a new Air Corps Training Center. Brig General Frank P. Lahm was assigned as the first commander of the new organization. Lahm recommended to the Chief of the Army Air Corps that a new training facility be opened somewhere in the San Antonio area since the existing facilities at Brooks Field and Kelly Field were inadequate for the training tasks being assumed by the new organization. Several cities showed interest in acquiring the new flying training center. 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. Based on assurances from city officials that land would be made available for the new field, Lahm appointed a board of Air Corps officers to inspect available sites. In the fall of 1927, the board narrowed the choice of location down to a single 2,300-acre tract adjacent to Schertz, Texas. At the eleventh hour, the San Antonio city officials and the Chamber of commerce worked out some imaginative financing arrangements with local banks to raise approximately \$555,000 to buy the land from local farmers and made it available to the Army Air Corps as a gift.

On August 4, 1928, Governor of Texas, Dan Moody, signed a deed of cessation and two weeks later the Secretary of War accepted the land. On September 27, 1928, the War Department named the new base Randolph Field.



Randolph Field land surface preparation work (circa 1928)

The design of the Air Field 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. Lt. Harold L. Clark drafted the design that included architecture that matched the Spanish colonial Revival style.

On June 30, 1930, with construction only half completed, Randolph Field was dedicated. A crowd of 15,000 attended the dedication ceremony. Mrs. William M. Randolph raised the first flag over the installation. The program included a 233 aircraft flyover that was said to have been the largest assembly of aircraft in the world.



Randolph Field was dedicated on June 30, 1930, before a crowd of about 15,000. Highlights of the ceremony included the passing in review of 233 aircraft and the raising of the flag by the widow of Captain William M. Randolph.

(Photo: Randolph Air Force Base History Office)



(Above photos: Randolph History Office Publication "A History of Military Aviation in San Antonio")
Randolph Air Field flightline showing the PT-13 aircraft trainer (circa 1936)

A month after the dedication General Lahm, who became known as "The Father of Randolph Field", turned command of the Air Corps Training Center over to Brigadier General Charles H. Danforth. The first pilot training class, composed of 210 cadets and 99 student officers, began training on November 2, 1931.