

Chanute Air Force Base
(Chanute Field)
(Chanute Technical Training Center)
East of Route 45 and south of Rantoul
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1185

HABS
ILL
10-RAN.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
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P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Chanute Air Force Base
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HABS No. IL-1185

- Location: East of Route 45 and South of Rantoul
Rantoul Vicinity
Champaign County
Illinois
- Present Owner: United States Air Force
OL B, AFBCA
501 East Sopwith, Suite A
Rantoul, Illinois 61866
- Present Occupant: Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) closed on September 30, 1993. As of May 1994, most of the buildings at the installation remain temporarily unoccupied. Except where noted, individual HABS records will indicate "Vacant."
- Present Use: Most of the buildings at the installation are temporarily unoccupied. Except where noted, individual HABS records will indicate "Vacant."
- Significance: From its establishment in 1917 as a military aviation school, until its closure on September 30, 1993, Chanute AFB has served almost continuously as a technical training center for the United States Air Force. As one of the oldest military installations in the Air Force inventory, Chanute AFB has played an important role in the development of the American air defense system. Since its construction, the area of the Chanute AFB Historic District has served as the installation's administrative core. The design and construction of the buildings and structures within the District reflect the extraordinary growth of the installation just prior to and during the early years of World War II. It was during that period that the base was rapidly transformed from a collection of neglected, wooden, World War I-era buildings into the permanent brick and steel features that remain as the Chanute AFB Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Early American Military Aviation

Although the history of American military aviation begins with the Civil War and the Army's use of balloons and dirigibles for reconnaissance, interest in "air machines" for military use did not seriously develop until 1890 when Congress gave the Signal Corps the duty of collecting and transmitting Army information. Even after the development of fixed-wing aircraft, the use of lighter-than-aircraft (LTA) continued well into the twentieth century, with their place in the development of the United States air defense system well documented in the histories and photographs of early military bases; e.g., Fort Meyer, Virginia; Fort Omaha, Nebraska; Langley AFB, Virginia; and Scott AFB, Illinois. The impact of LTA activity on the built environment of these bases became unmistakable as the presence of their enormous hangars dominated installation landscapes.

Because LTAs were highly combustible, slow, and always at the mercy of the wind, it became apparent that fixed-wing aircraft would soon replace airships as the essential tool for air defense. Inspired by the work of early aviation pioneers such as Samuel P. Langley and Octave Chanute, Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully made the first flight of a power-driven, heavier-than-air machine at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in 1903. It was not until 1907, however, that the Signal Corps recognized its application within the military and placed an order for the first American military aircraft. The Wright Army plane was delivered to Fort Meyer in August 1908.

Provoked by the use of submarine warfare to prevent supplies from reaching Allied forces in France and Great Britain, the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, thus entering a war that had been raging in Europe for three years. Although the new "air arm" of the Army was beginning to take form, only a few planes and trained pilots were available in 1917, and compared with European air forces, American air power was grossly inadequate [1]. In order to assist the Allies and meet the new demands imposed by the war, Congress appropriated \$640 million to form the Army Air Corps. In 1917, 27 flying fields were established to train new pilots. Among those that were built and still exist today are: The Flying Field at Anacostia (now Bolling AFB, Washington, DC); Kelly Field #5 (now Brooks AFB, San Antonio, Texas); Camp Kelly (now Kelly AFB, San Antonio, Texas); Langley Field (now Langley AFB, Hampton, Virginia); Scott Field (now Scott AFB,

Belleville, Illinois); Wilbur-Wright Field (now Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio) and Chanute Field (now Chanute AFB, Rantoul, Illinois).

The Establishment of Chanute Field - 1917

By the time the War Department realized the important role that aviation would play in military strategy, the United States was already at war and, from an aviation standpoint, it was unprepared. There were few airplanes, even fewer experienced pilots, and no aircraft factories of consequence. With the Allied forces clamoring for more "aeroplanes" and pilots, construction of air fields and factories, and the training of pilots began at a frantic pace. Appealing to the automobile industry for help, the War Department was able to obtain the assistance of Howard Coffin, inventor of the Hudson motor. He was soon made chairman of the War Department's division for construction of military installations [2].

Once the government announced its criteria for new air field sites, a committee from the University of Illinois in Urbana and a group of businessmen from Champaign set out to find suitable land for a possible new air field. William Wheat, then president of the First National Bank in nearby Rantoul, suggested his town (15 miles north of Champaign) to the University committee. The Champaign businessmen offered a tract of land south of Bondville, Illinois (just west of Champaign). The Rantoul tract was eventually chosen on May 21, 1917; it was selected because it was large (640 acres), level, and close to the Illinois Central Railroad [3].

Champaign contractors, E. C. English and J. W. Stipes, along with R. S. Bassett of the Alexander Lumber Company, went to Washington to lobby for the construction award at the field near Rantoul. On May 22, the War Department awarded the contract to them to build Chanute Field.

The plan for Chanute Field was developed by the Office of the Quartermaster General (OQMG) in Washington, D. C., and modified by Detroit architect Albert Kahn. The design (that of a 1,000-man, two-squadron aviation field containing 51 wooden buildings, none extant) was the same standardized design that was used for many other American air fields being built at that time and for at least one field built in France. Plans included twelve hangars, one aero repair plant, one motor test building, one bakery, one fire engine house, sixteen barracks, and an assortment of buildings that provided ancillary services.

Construction officially began on June 4 and, for about five weeks, continued at a rapid pace. Speed, not permanency, was the emphasis. Finished ahead of schedule on July 22, 1917, the new field was accepted by the War Department on July 31, 1917, and officially named in honor of Octave Chanute, a pioneer aeronautical engineer and friend/advisor to the Wright brothers [4]. Mr. Chanute made experimental models of gliders from bamboo splints and balloon silk and conducted more than 2,000 flights during the summers of 1890 and 1897 without serious accident. This aviation pioneer helped devise and use wing-warping and aileron principles for laterally stabilizing aircraft in flight. These developments later proved to be greatly useful to the Wright brothers.

1917-1918 - World War I

Shortly before Chanute Field was completed, the first two companies of troops arrived from Springfield and Kelly Field, Texas. The 150-man Company B, 6th Illinois Regiment of the National Guard, was assigned to guard the field. The 159-man 10th Aero Squadron was a support group of mechanics and drivers. The first planes (a 23-man squadron of "Curtiss Jennies") arrived from Ashburn Field, Chicago with the 16th Aero Squadron on July 9, 1917. Flight training officially began on July 18 and on September 24 Chanute graduated its first 24 pilots.

During the remaining months of 1917, and most of 1918, Chanute Field settled into the routine of training pilots. Most students entered three-stage, eight-week courses which resulted in certification as a Reserve Military Aviator (RMA) and a recommendation for commission as a First Lieutenant. Aero Squadrons were added or reassigned during this period and personnel were routinely shuffled about to accommodate the needs of the war. Severe winter weather suspended flight training after early December. By Christmas 1917, only the 38th Squadron remained at the Field. With the Field disabled by snow storms, technical training replaced flight training and the medical corps and bakers unit were expanded. In an attempt to make Chanute more comfortable, additional wooden buildings were erected and wooden sidewalks were laid. The wooden structures only aggravated a situation that would plague Chanute for many years; however, as a number of fires were caused by overheating stoves. During this same period, principal streets were macadamized, coal was stockpiled, and the flying field in front of the hangars was given a solid gravel surface.

In the spring of 1918, flying training began again with the assignment of new Aero Squadrons from Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and Kelly Field, Texas, and the organization of the 203rd Mechanics Squadron. A pigeon section, similar to the one at Scott Field, Illinois, was also organized to train pigeons for messenger service in France. To accommodate these new squadrons, barracks were enlarged to increase the Field's capacity from 1,000 to 2,000. To bolster morale, shrubs were planted and a baseball diamond was built. By mid-year, Chanute was receiving a steady supply of new cadets, a Security Police unit had been added, more airplanes had arrived, and a site had been chosen for an auxiliary landing field. The auxiliary field was leased from John Collison a nearby farmer and used as a gasoline depot. It enabled pilots to practice landing from one field to the other.

Chanute Field continued to train pilots and mechanics until the Armistice on November 11, 1918. During its short history, it hosted 18 Aero Squadrons, ten of which served in Europe. Three of its aviators became World War I aces. On November 19, the War Department closed Chanute Field to flying.

1918-1921 - Post-War Decline

At the time of the Armistice, the United States had more than 3.6 million men in uniform, nearly 200,000 of them in active service with the Air Corps [5]. The War Department began to immediately demobilize, and as a part of reorganization, the Army began to dispose of surplus facilities and materiel. Primary flying training that had been given at fields such as Chanute was consolidated at Carlstrom, Florida, and March Field, California. All of the early flying fields then became temporary storage depots. As a result, Chanute fell into a period of post-war obsolescence; buildings were neglected, equipment deteriorated, and personnel dwindled to less than 400 men by 1919. In August of that year, Chanute Field was little more than a deteriorating storage area for airplane engines and paint, and was recommended for closure. Two hundred of the remaining men were reassigned to the balloon field at Fort Omaha in September 1919, and an additional 174 were transferred to Kelly Field. Only twenty-two officers and four enlisted men remained at Chanute Field by November 1919, the same month that a fire destroyed Hangar Number 2 and six of the remaining planes. Between 1919 and 1921 Chanute Field remained inactive with its physical state continuing to decline.

1921-1938 - Chanute's First Revival

In early January 1921, the Army Enlisted Mechanics School at Kelly Field was directed to move to Chanute and a new cycle of development began. Courses were first offered in parachute rigging, airplane and machine gun servicing, map making, and military tactics. The new technical training facility soon added the Air Service Photographic School from Langley Field (1922) and the Air Service Communications School from Fort Sill, Oklahoma (1923). Merging in 1926, the three schools were renamed the Air Corps Technical School (ACTS) and their three functions, mechanics, photography, and communication became the symbol of the Chanute coat-of-arms and, eventually, the United States Air Force Air Training Command (ATC) (represented in the coat-of-arms by three feathers).

Even though Chanute's mission was resurrected, the period between 1921 and 1938 was one of highs and lows. Its built environment, like other military facilities nationwide, was in disrepair from the post-World War I period, and the War Department was not inclined to alter that situation. The long lines of hangars that had been so essential in Chanute's early years were extensively modified and converted into classrooms and nine new steel hangars (to be built on the south edge of the original 1917 airfield) were authorized by Congress in 1922. The completion of Hangar [Building] 100, on June 1, 1923, represented the last major construction at Chanute until 1938. The wooden structures, erected so hastily in 1917, were in significant disrepair and they were a perennial fire hazard, causing disastrous fires during these years. The Secretary of War, after a visit in 1931, argued that the neglected installation was antiquated, a fire hazard, and generally unfit for occupancy. Transfer of the flying field to Wright Field and Chanute's new use to be that of a hospital for defective and delinquent prisoners [6] was announced at that time. The communities of Rantoul, Champaign, and Urbana, objecting to trading an aviation school for a federal prison, stalled this action; however, and the plan was never carried out. A vote by Congress in 1936 kept the ACTS at Chanute, but two of its major units were transferred to Lowry Field (now Lowry AFB, Denver, Colorado [Lowry is scheduled for closure in September 1994; its flying mission ended in July 1966]).

1938-1941 - Pre-World War II Growth

The years preceding World War II carried nearly the same indifference toward American air power as they had prior to World War I. Proven demonstrations of the potential of aircraft in warfare failed to impress military leaders, and apathy toward the effectiveness of a national air defense program prevailed. Fortunately, men such as Arthur S. Dudley of Sacramento, and Congressman Mark Wilcox of Florida, among others, were able to generate enthusiasm in Washington for a strong air defense program. They were convinced that the Air Corps would have to massively expand to meet the demands of the impending war, which they felt would be decided in the air [7]. In 1935, Congress passed the Wilcox Bill authorizing the construction of six new Air Corps facilities: Sacramento (now McClellan AFB, Sacramento, California), Mobile Air Corps Depot, Alabama (no longer in existence), Ogden Air Depot (now Hill AFB, Salt Lake City, Utah), McChord (now McChord AFB, Tacoma, Washington), MacDill (now MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida), and Westover Field (now Westover AFB, Springfield, Massachusetts), as well as the expansion of numerous existing, outmoded installations. Public Law 18 officially provided for overall large-scale expansion of the Air Corps that included construction for the flying and technical schools at Chanute, Kelly, Lowry, Maxwell, and Randolph Fields [8]. These bases are still active today, although all of them do not currently retain their original flying mission.

While the War Department was beginning to prepare for war, the OQMG in Washington was planning for the construction effort that would accompany mobilization. Site layouts and building plans were quickly developed for each installation under the supervision of the Chief of Construction, Brigadier General C. D. Hartman. Each installation's Constructing Quartermaster was given most of the responsibility for actual construction. Designs came from Chief Architect Luther Leisenring and his staff, and standardized specifications were available for everything from flagpoles to 500,000 gallon water storage systems [9].

Despite time constraints and strict planning requirements, some designs from this period reflect a deviation from the standard plans associated with this era of building. It is unclear why this deviation occurred, but it is largely confined to large, multi-functional troop barracks (e.g., Chanute AFB Building 3) and to a few headquarters buildings. The

uniqueness occurs only in the shape of the structure; there was no deviation from standardized construction techniques, style, materials, and function.

On July 1, 1938, when World War II military expansion officially began, Chanute Field consisted of its original 640 acres, the old temporary buildings constructed during World War I, and no runways. The Post Plan, Quartermaster General Drawing 6627-102, Layout Plan, dated July 16, 1938, revised Chanute Field to include numerous permanent structures within this area. In 1939, an additional 276 acres of land were added west of the Field and east of U. S. Route 45 to accommodate a large number of temporary buildings. Throughout the expansion of the base, frequently referred to as its "Great Renaissance," construction was supervised by Major B. F. Vanderwoort (Constructing Quartermaster) and a field staff of about 49, including an architect, an engineer, and a Works Progress Administration (WPA) Superintendent [10].

The first construction at Chanute consisted of four large hangars (Buildings 1, 2, 7, and 12), a headquarters building (Building 6), several warehouses (Buildings 61 and 62), a fire station (Building 43), and a network of concrete runways. By 1939, new chapels (e.g., Building 533), a post exchange, a hospital (Building 4), and a 329,480-square-foot (exclusive of porches) multipurpose barracks building (Building 3) designed to house 2,200 men, were under construction. The built environment of Chanute was now changing from that of a neglected World War I field into a centralized, subdivision-type collection of brick and steel buildings. More than 200,000 military students would graduate from its various technical schools between 1940 and 1945.

At the end of 1940, Chanute's population had grown to approximately 13,000 and many new temporary and permanent structures had been built. The Air Corps Weather Service School moved to Chanute Field from Scott Field at about this time and, in 1941, Chanute, along with the other two military technical training schools (Scott and Lowry), had a cadet enrollment of about 9,000. For a brief time, Chanute became the Air Corps Technical Training Command headquarters, but by October 1941, it had been moved again, to Tulsa, Oklahoma [11].

By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), most of the massive permanent military construction effort was complete nationwide. Temporary housing was still being built throughout the early years of the war, however, to accommodate the large-

scale training of additional troops for combat, tent cities were built, where necessary, to accommodate troop overflow. The Corps of Engineers (COE) had replaced the OQMG and officially became responsible for all military construction projects.

The World War II Years

Between 1941 and 1945, technical training continued at Chanute, Scott, and Lowry Fields. Chanute trained airplane mechanics and welders, parachute riggers, weather observers and forecasters, and Link Trainer instructors. Scott was predominantly responsible for radio operators and mechanics, and Lowry trained aircraft armorers, photographers, and bombsight maintenance crews. At Chanute, combat pilot training began on the B-17 and B-25 in 1943; fixed-wing training was terminated at the Field, however, in 1944, and transferred to the Mobile Air Corps Depot, Alabama [12]. From December 1, 1944 until June 1945, Chanute Field also hosted the Army Air Force Helicopter Pilot School, but it was transferred to Sheppard Field (now Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas) when Chanute's jet propulsion training program began.

By 1945, the War Department terminated all funds for new construction and only those projects necessary for the protection of life and property continued to be funded. For this reason, there were structures proposed for Chanute that were never actually constructed. Some construction funds were authorized to remodel housing, recreation, and support facilities, but, generally, building ceased and, once again, Chanute's built environment began to decline.

Post World War II to 1993

On September 17, 1945, Chanute Field was established as a military separation center [13] and, before closing four months later, had discharged over 30,000 men. The activity that surrounded this mission soon quieted, however, and a year later the field began to see an increase in student enrollment. Jet propulsion had become a primary concern to the Air Corps during the war years and in 1947, a 20-week basic jet plane maintenance course began at Chanute for P-51s and P-80s. During that year, approximately 2,000 jet engine mechanics graduated, and the Field became the primary maintenance training facility for jet aircraft. In January 1948, three months after official establishment of the United States Air Force, Chanute Field was renamed Chanute Air Force Base.

Although the purpose for the base had again been revived, the built environment was still in decline. By 1949 it had decayed to a point where the physical condition of the base was believed to be the worst in the Air Training Command. Officers and enlisted men openly complained about the dilapidated, inadequate state of facilities contributing to low morale. Chanute Field had, once again, become a concern to Air Corps leaders. The situation was not alleviated until October of that year, when Brigadier General Byron Gates took command of the Field.

The focus for General Gates, after taking command, was improvement on every front and his primary goals were to rejuvenate the base physically and to boost morale. To accomplish these tasks, General Gates took advantage of the large numbers of trainees awaiting reassignment from his post to other programs (part of the military build-up for the Korean War), and instituted interim programs in carpentry, plumbing, wiring, painting, and landscaping. Within a "short period of time", buildings had been upgraded and painted and the grounds had been planted with more than 1,000 trees and shrubs [14].

Holding the longest term of any commander in the history of the base, General Gates had an effect upon the built environment of Chanute that cannot be overemphasized. Under his command (1949-1955), barracks were extensively remodeled or newly constructed, two complexes of Wherry-style housing were built, classrooms and training facilities were added or renovated, and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of landscaping was done. In addition, he directed upgrades to parking areas and roadways, initiated several new services (dry cleaners, day nursery, bus shelters), and opened numerous recreation facilities, including a youth center, a bowling alley, a hobby shop, two nine-hole golf courses, 40 volleyball courts, and two swimming pools. Precipitated by General Gates' desire to improve the military quality of life, Chanute Field became, under his command, an example of the concept of incremental, peacetime construction.

Subsequent commands have provided additional family housing (the Capehart-style and Ash-style areas), dormitories (Gates Hall and several other 200-man and 1000-man dormitories), and technical buildings for bomber and missile system support training. In the 1960s, a missile training facility was completed, hangars were remodeled to keep pace with technological advances, and several of the World War II permanent buildings were remodeled and converted into classrooms or office space. Most notably, the 2,200-man, multipurpose, troop barracks built in 1940 was gradually renovated throughout the 1950s

and 1960s. In 1959, the installation was officially designated the Chanute Technical Training Center (CTTC).

CTTC was credited with training Air Force personnel in the following specialties during the conflict in Southeast Asia: jet engine maintenance, general aircraft maintenance, electrical, instrument, and pneudraulic repair, weather observing and forecasting, liquid oxygen production, fire protection, and motor vehicle maintenance.

In June 1971, Chanute's runways were closed to air traffic and, for the third time, the base was threatened with closure. The possibility of this closure affected the base for nearly eight years, while restricting funds and inhibiting any type of facility improvement. Late in 1979, the Department of Defense (DoD) finally decided to allow Chanute to remain open and placed the base under the command of Major General Norma Brown.

General Brown was as morale-oriented as General Gates, and used the opportunity of Chanute's latest revival to expand community support and recreational facilities. Under her command, a new hospital was built and the dental facilities were substantially renovated. A new base exchange and commissary were also built, along with theaters, tennis courts, banking offices, and other support facilities. Many of the renovations were designed to keep the appearance of the base harmonious with existing World War II brick structures.

Up until its closure in September 1993, under the command of Major General Lawrence E. Day, Chanute AFB retained its original mission as a military technical training facility. It provided training to civilians, as well as military personnel, in the areas of aircraft and missile maintenance, jet mechanics, fire fighting, and weather forecasting. The host unit was the 330th Technical Training Wing.

A Brief History of U.S. Military Base Closure

To reduce military overhead during the 1960s and 1970s, hundreds of military installations throughout the United States were closed. An outpouring of public sentiment ensued and along with the widespread belief that base closures were being used by the executive branch to punish uncooperative legislators, Congress passed Section 1687 of Title 10, United States Code (USC), to require the DOD to notify Congress if an installation became a closure candidate (Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, 1991). This statute,

combined with Congress' reluctance to close military bases and the additional requirement to also apply the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to base-closure recommendations, effectively halted the closing of any major military installations in the late 1970s and throughout most of the 1980s.

By 1988, the direction of the armed forces had begun to change significantly and, to meet evolving needs, the basic structure of the military needed to be modified. In May of that year, the Secretary of Defense chartered the Commission on Base Realignment and Closure to conduct an independent study of domestic military base structure and recommend installations for realignment and closure. In October of the same year, Congress passed, and President Reagan signed, Public Law 100-526, the Defense Authorization Amendments and the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BCRA). These actions, along with the newly formed commission's recommendation to close 86 bases and realign 59 others, were designed to generate savings to DOD in excess of \$693 million. Among those bases recommended for closure was Chanute AFB, Illinois.

Subsequent to closure notification, the Air Force initiated the Environmental Impact Analysis Process for the disposal and reuse of Chanute AFB and began preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. As a part of that process, and to fulfill its obligations to the National Historic Preservation Act, the Air Force concurrently initiated investigations to identify significant cultural resources that might be affected by the disposal and reuse process. Ultimately, these studies resulted in the preparation of a Historic Evaluation (December 1991) and a formal Determination of Eligibility to the National Register (May 25, 1993) for the Chanute AFB Historic District. A Programmatic Agreement with Preservation Covenants has been prepared (November 1993) among the Air Force, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Illinois SHPO and all buildings and structures within the District are currently being protected by the Air Force from alteration, demolition, and deterioration.

The Village Of Rantoul, Illinois

The Illinois Central Railroad, across Illinois, was completed in 1854. Grain elevators were built approximately every five miles along the line, to store and provide train access to the produce from the Midwest's grain fields. Small towns, called "elevator" towns, began to develop along with silos, serving as community trading centers and destinations for men

and horses transporting the grains. One such elevator town was Mink Grove, now known as the Village of Rantoul.

Elevator towns rarely grew to more than a few hundred people; but in 1917, when the U. S. Government decided to establish Chanute Field along its southern boundary, Rantoul lost its role as an elevator town and began to rapidly develop as a garrison town. Garrison towns are defined as small urban centers that become complexly tied, socially and economically, to the development of the military installation with which they are associated; historically, Rantoul is such a town.

In the early years, after Chanute was established, the focus of development was the rail station (located at Grove and Kentucky Avenues) and its function of providing goods and transporting troops. The original residential area of the town developed northwest and southeast of this area, and most of the business district developed to the east. Streets were laid out in a checkerboard pattern, east/west to the train track, which bisects Illinois southwest to northeast. Because lumber was in short supply, a brick kiln was built and the entire original business district and its streets were constructed of that material.

Housing in the Village of Rantoul is a mixture of frame and brick with most of the frame homes dating from either the turn-of-the-century or the period between 1920 and 1940 when both the Village and Chanute Field were experiencing their greatest growth. Housing has consistently been in short supply since the early days, but became the most critical in 1940 with the influx of trainees for World War II. Several new housing projects were built about that time, including Mitchel Court and Chapman Court, a federal project which provided 270 additional residential units for noncommissioned officers and civilian workers on the base [15]. These facilities were continuously used until 1990 when they were abandoned because they were in disrepair. There has also been a supply of mobile homes and small temporary houses available to help meet base demands.

Throughout most of its history, Chanute AFB has been Rantoul's largest employer. Recent years, however, have seen the Village develop its commercial sector with a variety of manufacturing firms. The Village of Rantoul currently encompasses seven square miles and supports companies producing such items as electronic components, wooden frame doors, and motorcycle accessories; it is actively seeking new industries for the Chanute AFB facilities.

The Chanute AFB Historic District

Although Chanute AFB has a long and colorful history, very little of its built environment remains to convey association with events that occurred prior to 1938. However, just prior to World War II, Chanute experienced its "Great Renaissance" and between 1938 and 1941 the base was transformed from a collection of neglected, wooden, World War I-era buildings into the permanent brick and steel facility that remains today. At the heart of this transformation, both physically and symbolically, was an administrative core consisting of 38 buildings and two structures; it is this portion of the installation that has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) as The Chanute Air Force Base Historic District and it is the District only that is the focus of this Historic American Buildings Survey documentation. A National Register Registration Form has been completed for the District.

Building types within the District include an administrative (Headquarters) building and flagpole, four hangars with training classrooms attached, a large multipurpose troop barracks, 15 housing units, a hospital, a fire and guard house, a water tower, and several warehouses and maintenance buildings. The predominant building material is brick and the predominant architectural style is Early Twentieth Century Georgian Revival. The buildings are one, two, or three story, boxy buildings covered with side facing gable or hipped roofs. The facades are symmetrical with central doors surrounded by elaborate crowns and surrounds, and multi-light, double hung windows in symmetrical patterns. The Office of the Quartermaster General produced the plans for all the buildings.

The buildings within the District are laid out in a campus-like setting. The topography is flat and there are many large trees lining the streets. Even though some of the buildings are large, all are set back from the street, resulting in a pedestrian scale to the District. At roughly the center of the District is a diamond-shaped area enclosed by Galaxy Street on the northwest, Curtiss Street on the northeast, Sentry Street on the southeast, and Senior Officer Row on the southwest. The western half of the diamond is occupied by the Headquarters building (Building 6), the hospital (Building 4), and the Base Personnel Office (Building 16) in a park-like setting with open space at the center of the three buildings. The large multipurpose troop barracks (Building 3) dominates the eastern half of the diamond and contains three interior courtyards.

Outside the diamond on the two eastern sides are four large hangars. The training school portions of the hangars face Curtiss and Sentry Streets and the hangar bays face the runway apron and air field (east). On the western side of the diamond is officer housing. There are ten duplex buildings (Buildings 5, 8-11, 86-90) immediately adjacent to the diamond and five duplexes (Buildings 70-74) farther to the northeast on Curtiss Street. North of the central diamond is an industrial area with maintenance buildings (Buildings 54, 55, 56, 63), warehouses (Buildings 61, 62), the fire and guard house (Building 43), and the water tower (Structure 44).

Building 16 and most of the non-residential buildings have adjacent paved parking lots; the three courtyards of Building 3 are also paved. The residential buildings have small parking areas and garages to the rear. Much of the ground within the District is lawn and there is a park between Building 6 and Building 3 with benches. There is a children's play area on the southwest corner of Curtiss and Galaxy Streets.

There have been few changes to the District since the pre-World War II period and only one substantial building has been added — Building 16, which was built in 1951; all other non-contributing buildings within the District are small support buildings and structures.

NOTE TO READERS

Subsequent to closure of Chanute AFB, street names were changed in several areas of the installation, including some streets within the Chanute AFB Historic District. To retain consistency in historic documentation, the new street names are not used within this document. For future reference, a table is provided below that cross references old street names with new street names.

CHANUTE AIR FORCE BASE HISTORIC DISTRICT Cross Reference Table for Old and New Street Names

OLD STREET NAMES	NEW STREET NAMES
Canberra Street	Thunderbird Drive
Challenger Street	No Change
Destroyer Street	International Avenue
Extender Street	Waters Drive
Flying Fort Street	Flessner Avenue
Galaxy Street	No Change
Hercules Street	Rayburn Drive
Jolly Green Street	Commerce Drive
Senior Officer Row	Arrends Boulevard
Sentry and Curtiss Streets	Pacesetter Drive
Sopwith Street	Condit Drive
Vinson Circle	Lucy Goff Drive
Warhawk Street	Eagle Drive

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Development of American Military Installations

An evaluation of Chanute AFB's built environment could not be accomplished without an understanding of the factors that cause military installations to develop as they do. It is these factors which have determined the type, placement, and design of all the standing structures now being evaluated. The following text emphasizes the importance of these factors and their place in the development of Chanute AFB and other military bases with which it is compared.

Throughout the history of American military installations, primary construction has been the responsibility of the OQMG and/or the COE; both were established in 1775. Over the years, heated debates occurred over which organization should have full responsibility; but, even though the COE tried several times to obtain control, it was not until 1941 that they finally emerged as the sole Army builder [16].

One of the primary functions of military builders, from the earliest years, has been to provide standardized construction plans. A standardized plan is defined as one that is used at more than one post, either as a result of a formal, organized program, or because plans have been passed back and forth in an informal manner. This planning concept existed as early as the Civil War and grew to be an established program by about 1890. From that time, a long series of designs began to appear for housing, barracks, headquarters, recreational facilities, hospitals, warehouses, chapels, and many other facilities commonly found on military bases. The concept also extends to designs for overall site layouts and landscaping techniques with a combined effect that has caused American military installations to develop with a uniform character that is reflected in uniform building types. Functionally, military bases are small, self-sufficient communities linked by a common goal: national defense.

Military landscapes develop and change either abruptly (usually provoked by war, depression, or technological advances in weaponry, communications, or transportation) or more gradually during peacetime, from a desire to improve the military quality of life; rarely do they evolve as civilian cities with a continuous, gradual, progression of change over time. As well, they are affected by five additional factors [17]:

- **The primary mission of the base** - The use of military property generally falls into four functions: defense, logistics, administration, and training. The continued performance of one or more of these functions is the single most important force which shapes the landscape, and each requires a unique spatial arrangement.
- **Established military policies of social stratification** - Officers and enlisted personnel are routinely quartered in spatially separate areas and residential patterns develop along those lines.
- **Utilitarianism** - Utilitarianism is characterized by the military's preference for uncomplicated designs and, with few exceptions, has been the hallmark of military planning.
- **Isolationism** - This factor relates to the need to isolate and separate installations from the surrounding community. Isolationism is enforced through the use of fences and controlled-access gates.
- **Centralization** - The need to express the presence of authority is demonstrated in the built environment of military landscapes by the placement of the most powerful decision-makers at both the symbolic and, usually, geographic center of the base.

Historic photographs and site plans of military facilities illustrate how standardized plans and the factors that control military landscapes affect their layout and look. Early air fields have striking similarity to one another, so much so, that if photographs are not identified, one field can be difficult to tell from another. An additional series of photographs demonstrates the same principal for individual structures and shows that such similarities are expressed not only in local or regional contexts, but across the country.

In summary, military bases tend to express many standardized qualities in their overall design and in the design of both individual and groups of structures. Although some installations do possess unique or unusual qualities or structures, e.g., Randolph AFB, Texas, individuality is the exception, and is usually reflected in only one or two structures on a given installation.

Chanute Air Force Base Development

As its history reveals, Chanute AFB has developed along lines that are typical of United States military installations. The primary and original mission of Chanute AFB has always been that of a technical training center. Even during periods when it was temporarily designated as a storage depot and separation center, it retained its training facilities and characteristics and maintained some of its original functions. The base has physically developed abruptly through war times and incrementally through peacetime, into a self-contained community whose built environment reflects its military mission. Its focus of authority is a well-defined, mission-related administrative area that has uniformity of style and materials and that presents the type of cohesive appearance often associated with a planned subdivision or college campus. Its residential areas have developed along lines that are commonplace on American military installations. In all respects, Chanute AFB has developed, along with many other American military installations, into a community that reflects military uniformity of planning, construction, design, and purpose. As described by Kreger (1988), Chanute AFB is an example of a military place characterized by chain link fences and guard houses, the use of military missiles and flags as gateway symbols, and the uniformity of construction and painting schemes on buildings seemingly standardized and orderly.

Footnotes

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5. Maurer, M. Aviation in the U.S. Army, 1919-1939. Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1987, p. 3.
6. U.S. Air Force. "The Early Days at Chanute." in Chanute Technical Training Center: 50 Years 1917-1967. 1967. Chanute AFB, IL, p. 7.
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8. Welborn, M. C. Construction for the Army Air Forces in Continental United States and Foreign Countries, 1939-1945. 18 February 1983, p. 6.
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10. Chanute Field, Illinois, Office of the Constructing Quartermaster, ca. early 1941. Chronological Report of Construction Program, from its inception on July 1, 1939 through December 27, 1940, on which Date was Transferred to the Corps of Engineers, 1941, p. 79.
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14. Kreger, R. D. The Making of an Institutional Landscape. Doctoral Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, 1988, p. 137.
15. Borman, E. "Dedicate Housing Units at Chanute" in Champaign Illinois News-Gazette, 2 September 1941, p. 1.

16. Grashof, B. C. A Study of United States Army Family Housing: Standardized Plans 1866-1940, Vols. 1 - 6, 1986, p. 1.
17. Kreger, R. D. The Making of an Institutional Landscape. Doctoral Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, 1988, p. 16.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings for the buildings on Chanute AFB are currently housed in Building 62, Chanute AFB, Illinois.

B. Historic Views:

A large collection of historic photographs is located in the Museum Building (Hangar 4), Chanute AFB, Illinois.

C. Bibliography:

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

National Register and HABS documentation for the Chanute AFB, Illinois, Historic District is the culmination of the Section 106 process initiated during the preparation of the Disposal and Reuse Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Chanute AFB. The EIS was precipitated by the Congressional decision to close Chanute AFB, and directed by the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) of 1988. A Memorandum of Agreement among the U. S. Air Force, the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Eastern Division, has been drafted.

Prepared by:

Paige M. Peyton, Historian
The Earth Technology Corporation
1461 East Cooley Drive, Suite 100
Colton, California 92324

Ana B. Koval, Architectural Historian
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94111

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