

ACRP Problem Statement No. 15-01-04

Evaluating the Historic Significance of WW II Era Airfields

****Note: This problem statement has been withdrawn by FAA.****

Evaluating the Historic Significance of World War II-Era Airfields

Background:

Thousands of airfields were developed or modified in the U.S. between 1940 and 1945 as part of the national defense effort. Most of these were declared surplus at the end of the war and transferred to cities, counties or states for civilian use. Some of these airfields have been redeveloped for other purposes, but many remain in aviation use. When the FAA funds or approves projects at these airfields, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires an evaluation of their historic significance, including airfield components such as paving and navigation aids as well as terminals, hangars and other buildings.

Compliance with Section 106 for pavement or other minor airfield projects can be burdensome for the airport sponsor. Each project can require a considerable amount of original historic research to identify airfield components that date to the historic period. Because the historic significance of WW II-era airfields has not been well-documented, it can be challenging to reach consensus with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on the eligibility of an airfield or of airfield components for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, Section 106 consultation on the treatment of these airfields can be more difficult if the SHPO and other consulting parties are unfamiliar with this type of resource.

Because the overall historic background for any one of these airfields is substantially the same and most airfields developed during this era share common design and construction features, a national "historic context" could be used in identifying the attributes that an airfield must have in order to be eligible for the National Register. Use of a national historic context would result in a more consistent evaluation of these airfields' historic significance. Identifying management, treatment and mitigation options for historic airfields would facilitate consultation with SHPOs and other consulting parties, reducing the time needed to negotiate any necessary mitigation measures.

Objective: To develop a tool for assessing the historic significance of airfield components and identifying appropriate mitigation measures.

Proposed Tasks:

1. Historic Context: Using a format recognized by the National Register of Historic Places (e.g., a Multiple Property Documentation Form) research and document a national historic context for the development of airfields between 1940 and 1945.
2. Develop a tool (e.g., a checklist or Q&A) to allow an airport project manager to quickly assess whether an airfield project might have an effect on historic resources subject to Section 106.
3. Identify management, treatment and mitigation options for historic airfields that have been successfully negotiated with SHPOs.

Estimated Funding: \$100,000

Estimated Research Duration: 1 year

Related Research:

1. *Multiple Property Documentation Form for World War II-Era Aviation –Related Facilities of Kansas*, prepared by Susan Jezak Ford, Citysearch Preservation, 2012 for the Kansas Historical Society; approved by the National Register of Historic Places on September 25, 2012. It.

This study includes a historic context for the Development of World War II Air Bases in Kansas (1939-1945) based on research in published material and state archives; identifies associated property types; and lists known extant resources.

2. *Abandoned and Little Known Airfields*, Paul Freeman, 2002, 2013. Available at <http://www.airfields-freeman.com>.

This web site contains descriptions and images of 1,770 vanished or abandoned airfields, organized by state.

3. *The Use in 1995 of World War II Army Air Fields in the United States*, Scott D. Murdock, 1997. Available at <http://www.airforcebase.net/aaf/grphtml.html>

This study began as a graduate research project submitted to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in April 1997; it was updated by the author in 2002. The study documented the continuing use of World War II Army Air Fields as civil or military airports.

4. *Historic Context for Department of Defense Facilities World War II Permanent Construction*, prepared by R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc., for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, May 1997. Available at http://aec.army.mil/Portals/3/preserve/ww2_pc.pdf

This study provides a background of the military World War II permanent construction program, including Army Air Force installations and Navy and Marine Corps Air Stations, evaluation methodology and application to DOD airfields and air stations.

Process Used to Develop the Problem Statement:

Submitted by: