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# Base originally chose Clovis because of climate

The Clovis Army Air Base of 1944 embraced a tract of approximately 2,000 acres of federally-owned land located on the Santa Fe Railroad on Highway 60, some six miles west of Clovis, the third largest city in the state of New Mexico.

The site was chosen because of its mild, dry, healthful climate and level terrain for hundreds of miles in every direction. This was essential for best results in training crews for large planes.

From early 1943 until May 1944 the base was used in training crews for B-24 bombers. In 1944 it was converted into a B-29 bomber field. The B-24 crews, trained until May 1945, were largely assigned to the African and European theaters.

The 6,500 B-29 crew members were sent to the Asiatic-Pacific theater. Many took part in the bombing of Okinawa, the Philippines, Burma, Japan, and other Pacific points.

The good judgment used in selecting the site was reflected in the fact that the health of the personnel had been far above the average, there have been no plane accidents in the area traceable to bad weather or rugged terrain, the weath-



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Local Columnist

er has been so nearly perfect that training crews have been in the air 96 out of every 100 days. All of this contributed to the record of performance which the Clovis Base established and holds over all other B-29 bases.

The government expended millions of dollars in making the base one of the most modern in the nation. In fact, it is a city within itself with its water works, sewage system, light and power lines, paved streets, churches, theaters, gymnasiums, fire department, hospital, shops, day rooms, and officers club.

The field has two runways 10,000 feet long. There are many auxiliary strips for coasting to and from takeoffs and landings. The four permanently constructed hangars are so huge one who has not been inside cannot appreciate their

dimensions. Large buses run on 20-minute schedules, affording cheap and rapid transportation to and from the city of Clovis.

Static military personnel averaged 4,500. Civilian personnel averaged 1,500. Crew members in training in B-29s since May, 1944, were 6,500. Total base personnel average was 6,300. Highest total military personnel was 6,500.

Immediately adjacent to the base and for the accommodation of military and civilian housing, the government constructed a modern housing project, consisting of hundreds of bachelor and two and three-room apartments. The project has its own cafeteria and recreation room.

Clovis welcomed the location of the base. It has been a pleasure to open our homes, our clubs, our schools, our churches, our social functions to the base personnel. It has also been a joy to cooperate in all field programs and activities, and to contribute money and otherwise help out with all USO and Red Cross activities.

There has been no friction whatever between base and city. In fact, we have all come to feel as though we are a part

of one great family.

With the average payroll of \$900,000 per month, the base has paid out more than \$10,000,000 annually at Clovis. A goodly portion of this huge sum has remained in our city, among our merchants, our cafes, our hotels, our clubs, churches, and various businesses.

Clovis appreciates what this has meant to our city and has put forth every effort to serve to the best of its ability.

*This information was published in 1944 in a small tract named "Interesting Facts About Clovis Army Air Base," compliments of the Clovis Rotary Club.*

*(The first airfield at the site of present CAFB was established by Charles Lindbergh in 1929 for commercial trimotor planes crossing the American continent. Clovis Army Air Base was established June 1, 1942, after the U.S. got involved in World War II. The base was named Cannon Air Force Base on June 1, 1957, for the late Gen. John K. Cannon.)*

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BRAC

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Deadline for submitting items for this section is 1 p.m. on Wednesday.

*Clovis News Journal Sunday 5-22-05  
I urge you to remove Cannon AFB from the BRAC list.*

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