

EO. 11593

219316

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION
National Register of Historic Places
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

Name of property: The Old Airmail and Postal Service Bldgs.

Location: Hines, Cook County

State: IL

Request submitted by: VA G. Mollenhoff

Date received: 6/2/80

Additional information received:

Opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer:

Eligible

Not Eligible

No Response

Comments:

The Secretary of the Interior has determined that this property is:

Eligible

Applicable criteria: A

Not Eligible

Comments: These two buildings are rare survivors of the earliest days of aviation; they may be the earliest surviving mail airport structures in the United States. They served the U.S. Postal Service between 1922 and 1927, when the Maywood Government Field served as the terminus for all government flights in and out of Chicago. Charles Lindbergh inaugurated air mail service between Chicago and St. Louis on April 15, 1926, from this site, and was on leave from his duties on this route when he made his historic trans-Atlantic flight.

Documentation insufficient

(Please see accompanying sheet explaining additional materials required)

Sally G. Gilham

Keeper of the National Register

Date: AUG 8 1980

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | |
| DATE ENTERED | |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC The Old Airmail and Postal Service Buildings

AND/OR COMMON

Buildings 20 & 21 - V.A. Medical Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Veterans Administration Medical Center

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Hines,

VICINITY OF

6

STATE

Illinois

CODE 17

COUNTY

Cook

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (If applicable) U.S. Veterans Administration

STREET & NUMBER 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20420

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Land Management Service / Office of Construction / V.A.

STREET & NUMBER 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

D.C. 20420

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE V.A. Historic Sites Survey

DATE continuing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS V.A. Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C. 20420

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Buildings #20 & #21 were constructed about 1921-22 for the Airmail and Postal Service. They served this purpose until 1927. Building 20 is 100' x 300', built of reinforced concrete and brick. Designed as a warehouse type of structure, the airplane hangar is two stories in height, both outside as well as in the high inside space. It has a massive hip roof that runs the length of the building and has "WELCOME" painted on it. The large multi-paned windows with small operable panels extend full height. The large hangar door openings have been filled in with similar windows. The original engraved stone plaque, an integral part of the exterior wall at the front, still reads: "U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICE". Building 21 is very similar in architecture, however it is square and only about 100' long. It is the same height and has the same construction, style of roof and type of windows. Originally, a long extensive wing, which served as a Postal Depot, extended out from the building, in the opposite direction of Building 20. The two buildings are separated by about fifty feet.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT 7

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Airmail and Postal Service Buildings were used as the Airmail terminal of the U.S. Post Office Department between 1922 and 1927. Charles A. Lindbergh inaugurated Airmail service between Chicago and St. Louis on April 15, 1926, from this site.

HISTORY:

The Checkerboard Flying Field was opened in 1919, by David L. Behncke and Bert J. Hassell, in the Forest Preserve meadows. It was a shipping center from which they delivered clothes to retail merchants for Alfred Decker and Cohn, Chicago clothing manufacturers. When the clothing company discontinued airplane delivery service in 1920, Behncke bought the company's two Curtiss Jennies and equipment and together with Bert J. Blair and Lutz Myers, operated the field as a commercial airport. Three years later, Behncke sold the field to Wilfred Alonzo Yackey, a former military and airmail pilot. From 1923 until Yackey's death in an airplane crash five years later, the Yackey Aircraft Company and Checkerboard Field were the center of aircraft manufacturing activities in the Chicago area.

In 1920, after remaining in Grant Park for two years, the airmail terminal of the Post Office Department was moved to Checkerboard Field at the edge of Maywood. During the 1920's, the manufacturing and repair depots for the airmail service were gradually concentrated in Chicago. Less than a year after the Chicago - New York route opened, the Chicago Airmail terminal was shifted from the congested Lake Front District to Checkerboard Field, a commercial airport operated by David L. Behncke in Maywood. The next year operations were moved across First Avenue to the grounds of Edward Hines, Jr. Memorial Hospital, where they remained until the Post Office turned over transcontinental routes to private contractors in 1927. The landing strip ran North and South. From May 1, 1922, until all operations shifted to the Chicago Municipal Airport in December, 1927, the Maywood Government Field served as the terminal for all airmail flights in and out of Chicago on the transcontinental route.

On April 15, 1926, a slender Kelly Field graduate, who worked his way up to a Captain in the Army Air Corps Reserve, made the first airmail flight from the Government Air Field on the hospital grounds to St. Louis. The plane used for this inaugural mail run was a De Haviland. The pilot was Captain Charles A. Lindbergh.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

? In the southeast corner of the Hines reservation, and south of the main Depot building, two of the three original buildings operated by the Post Office Airmail Service, two hangars and an aircraft manufacturing and service building, are still in use. These airport buildings were transferred to the Veterans Administration, reconditioned and used for warehouses. Currently the Depot uses the old service building (Bldg. No. 20) for miscellaneous overflow storage and records, and one of the two old hangars (Bldg. No. 21) for the storage of inflammable items.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | | | | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Roughly, a triangle, bounded on the East by First Avenue, on the South-south-west by the Illinois Central Railroad tracks, and on the North by the roadway to the Main V.A. Supply Depot.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| NAME / TITLE | Gjore Mollenhoff - Historic Preservation Officer Karen Tupek - Architect | |
| ORGANIZATION | Veterans Administration | DATE 2/6/80 |
| STREET & NUMBER | 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. | TELEPHONE (202) 389-3447 |
| CITY OR TOWN | Washington, D.C. | STATE D.C. 20420 |

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES___ NO___ NONE___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

| | |
|---|------|
| TITLE | DATE |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |
| | DATE |
| DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION | |
| ATTEST: | DATE |
| KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |