

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LEE COUNTY

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA

June 6, 1941

Office of Chief of Army Air Corps,
Munitions Building,
Washington, D.C.

RE: Fort Myers Airport
Lee County, Florida

Gentlemen:

We are respectfully submitting, for your information, the following data concerning the new Fort Myers Airport, now nearing completion, in the belief that you will find it to be ideally and uniquely located for the accommodation of some type of permanent training center for the Army Air Corps.

CLASS OF AIRPORT

The Fort Myers Airport was designed as a class three airport, with three 150' x 4,000' paved runways, flush lighted, but on recommendation of the Civil Aeronautics Authority, steps are being taken to extend all runways sufficiently to classify as a class four airport and to grade the field for future installation of five additional runways as indicated on the attached plan. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners has an option on 320 acres adjacent to the south side of the field and 260 acres on the north side. Either or both of these parcels could be made available for cantonments if desired. In collaboration with Mr. Glenn Gibson, County Engineer, the airport was designed by Frank W. Bail & Associates, Architects & Engineers, a nationally prominent firm which moved its home office from Cleveland to Fort Myers in 1937.

DATE OF COMPLETION

Two runways will be completed on July 1st and the entire airport, with the exception of the contemplated extensions, will be completed on September 1st.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF LOCATION

The Fort Myers Airport appears to be ideally located for training cadets in bombing because it is on the western border of the vast, almost uninhabited Everglades section of Florida which extends from the airport ninety miles eastward and one hundred and sixty miles toward the southeast. It is also within ten miles of the Gulf of Mexico.

It is uniquely located as a port of departure and arrival for land plane traffic to Havana and South America. Because of the fact that meridian 81° and 55' passes through Jacksonville and Fort Myers, while Miami is one hundred miles to the east and Havana fifty-one miles west of that meridian, Havana bound traffic from all states east of the Alleghenys can be saved fifty-five air miles by using Fort Myers rather than Miami as a port of departure, while traffic from states west of the Alleghenys can be saved considerably more in air miles.

SURROUNDING TOPOGRAPHY

The terrain to the north, east, and south, for a distance of one hundred miles, is flat. The soil is of sandy nature and well drained in the vicinity of the airport. Emergency landing fields are readily available to the north and south and fifteen miles eastward to the border of the Everglades. A considerable portion of the land to the east and south, for a distance of fifteen miles, is studded with second growth pine.

WEATHER

United States Weather Bureau temperatures for the past year were as follows:

January ---	61.8	July -----	83.0
February --	60.4	August ----	83.2
March -----	63.8	September ----	81.2
April -----	72.4	October -----	74.1
May -----	75.3	November -----	69.0
June -----	81.4	December -----	69.1

The annual average was 72.9. The highest recorded temperature was 97.0 and the lowest was 34.0.

Rainfall:

January	-----	3.02	July	-----	3.50
February	--	3.82	August	-----	8.69
March	-----	6.88	September	---	13.02
April	-----	7.66	October	----	0.61
May	-----	0.73	November	---	0.13
June	-----	10.52	December	----	5.42

The annual average was 64.0.

VISIBILITY

During the past year the days on which visibility of one-half mile or less was recorded were:

January	-----	1
March	-----	1
October	-----	2
November	-----	2
December	-----	4
Total		10

Days on which visibility of zero was recorded were:

October	---	1
December	--	2
Total		3

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

The airport is bordered on the west by the Tamiami Trail, State Highway No. 27, and on the south and east by a paved County road. Both the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (Fort Myers-Naples division) and the Seaboard Air Line Railway Company parallel the east border of the airport within a distance of approximately 300'. In addition to the Tamiami Trail, State Highway No. 27, the City of Fort Myers is also served by State Highway No. 25, an improved highway which runs across the peninsula from Fort Myers to West Palm Beach on the east coast.

POWER

Electric power is available from a 66 kilovolt line of the Florida Power & Light Company, which line can be supplied from any one of several inter-connected power plants, thus reducing the danger of power plant failure to a minimum. There is also located in Fort Myers a stand-by power plant of sufficient capacity to take care of any needs of the airport in case of emergency.

GAS

Artificial gas manufactured in a plant owned by

the city of Fort Myers can be made available if desired.

WATER SUPPLY

The City of Fort Myers is in a position to supply soft water of the finest quality from its municipally owned water plant. However, if it seems preferable wells, approximately 90' x 125' deep may be drilled which will yield an ample supply of water of good quality but careful study of local factors that may influence the mineral quality of the supply will be required.

SEWERAGE AND SEAGE DISPOSAL

The elevation is sufficiently high and the topography favorable to the construction of collection sewers. Sandy soil may increase the cost of trenching. Complete treatment will be required.

POPULATION

The City of Fort Myers, three miles to the north, has a population of approximately 11,000 and the total population of Lee County is approximately 18,000.

HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS

The City of Fort Myers has sufficient vacant apartments and furnished homes to provide for approximately 250 families of officers or enlisted men who might be attached to the post, and Fort Myers Beach - ten miles to the southwest - can offer like accommodations for 100 families. Rentals of such accommodations range from \$25.00 upward depending upon location, size of home or apartment, and type of furnishings. A fair average would be \$35.00 or \$40.00. In addition, approximately 600 rooms are available in City hotels.

Two local firms, engaged in low cost housing developments, propose to erect, within a period of ninety days, as many low cost homes as may be warranted by the demand.

RECREATION

Lee County is renowned for its fishing, both fresh and deep sea, and its fine Gulf beaches - the latter only ten miles distant from the airport. In addition, the City Recreation Department maintains a fine eighteen hole golf course, two tennis courts, seventeen shuffle-board courts, two roque courts, four horseshoe courts, card rooms, and a municipal swimming pool. The City owned Town Club houses the

public library as well as a dining room and ballroom for use at banquets and parties. The lounge and other facilities are free to all guests of the City. Fishing boats with guides may be hired at varying prices depending on the type of boat and extent of the fishing trip. During the hunting season quail, duck, turkey, and deer are abundant within a few miles of the airport. A riding academy maintains fifteen horses for hire. Three first class, air conditioned theaters - two now under construction - will be available by September 1st.

LABOR AND MATERIALS

An adequate supply of labor is available locally for projects ranging from \$00,000 to \$500,000 in cost. It would be necessary to augment local labor with labor from the Sarasota, Bradenton, and Tampa districts for the construction of larger projects. Local labor rates are about 85% of the union rates prevailing in the Tampa district. Sand is available at \$1.00 per yard. A limited amount of crushed stone is available locally at about \$2.80 per yard but large quantities must be shipped in at about \$3.20 per yard. A limited amount of good quality Lee County pine is available at prices somewhat less than similar quality pine in the northern portion of the State, but materials in general cost about 10% more delivered to this site than similar materials delivered to Tampa and Jacksonville - the reason being the additional haul.

SUMMARY

We believe you will agree that the above mentioned features of the Fort Myers Airport in Lee County, Florida, make it peculiarly suitable for the location of a permanent training organization.

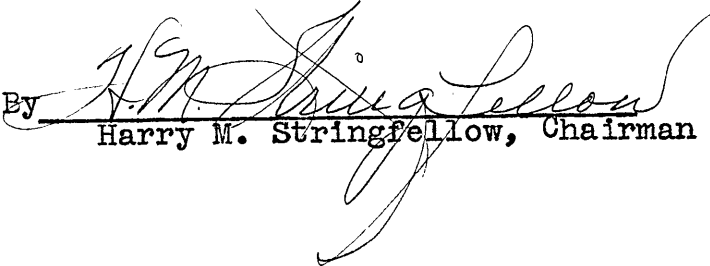
Should you desire additional information, we will be glad to obtain it promptly or if you desire to have a board of officers inspect the airport and surrounding territories, a short notice in advance of their arrival will enable us to arrange accommodations and facilities for inspection. We can assure you that the Board of County Commissioners, Lee County, as well as the Administration of the City of Fort Myers and all of our keenly patriotic citizens, are willing and anxious to make any sacrifice or

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perform any service which can be helpful toward the obtaining of a permanent training organization at our new airport, for it is our desire to assist you in making this community serve to the best of its capacity as an element in our National Defense Program.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Lee County Commissioners,

By  Harry M. Stringfellow, Chairman