

FACT SHEET

Robert Gray Army Airfield



Robert Gray Army Airfield at Fort Hood should not be confused with [Gray Army Airfield](#) at [Fort Lewis](#). Fort Hood is served by Robert Gray Army Airfield and Hood Army Airfield (RGAAF and HAAF). Both Robert Gray and Hood Army airfields are restricted areas for security reasons. There are two paved, non-instrumented airstrips used for training at North Fort Hood. Longhorn Strip is 3,350 feet in length and is primarily for nonstandard (emergency) maneuver training. Both strips (Longhorn and Shorthorn) primarily serve as summer training sites for National Guard and Reserve aviation units.

Robert Gray Army Airfield is located at West Fort Hood, southwest of the main post, approximately eight miles from main Fort Hood and 10 miles from Killeen. The airfield is named in honor of Captain Robert M. Gray, United States Army Air Corps and a Killeen native. Capt. Gray, and Sgt. George Larkin, for whom the airfield Deployment Terminal is named, were members of the famous "Doolittle Raid" on Tokyo in April 1942. They were both subsequently killed when their B-25 crashed in Burma in October 1942.

RGAAF is a fully instrumented airfield tasked with the primary mission of providing training and deployment of III Corps and Fort Hood personnel and equipment. The airfield is capable of handling the world's largest military and civilian aircraft, covering approximately 3,800 acres within the fenced area. The airfield has one 10,000' x 200' runway with an equal length parallel and four connecting taxiways to the west side and a 2,500' parallel and two connecting taxiways to the east. The Larkin Terminal, Aerial Port of Embarkation (APOE) was dedicated July 1986. This modern deployment facility provides timely processing and seating for more than 400 personnel and includes administration and processing stations for both Army and Air Force operations.

Robert Gray AAF is located within Houston Center, however, the tie-in ATC Center is Fort Worth Center. The installation ATC Radar Approach Control (ARAC) is also located on the airfield, providing air traffic control services for Robert Gray AAF, Hood AAF, civilian facilities and assigned airspace.

Tenant aviation units at Robert Gray AAF include the 504th Military Intelligence Brigade, Texas Flight Detachment and the 1st Cavalry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade. Airfield operations and services include the Base Flight Operations, Operation Support Airlift (OSA) Military Flight scheduling office, USAF Weather Operations, Alert/Services and Airfield Security Operations. Each of these sections are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The City of Killeen proposed moving air carrier operations from Killeen Airport to Fort Hood's Robert Gray Army Airfield. A Joint-Use Agreement with the Army will create a shared facility - in effect - a major new regional airport, accommodating both military and civilian air traffic. The existing Killeen Airport will remain after the air carriers move to the joint-use facility and will serve light private and business aircraft. Central Texas College also has a Career Pilot Training Program utilizing two large hangars and almost two dozen aircraft.

The construction and improvements required for a project of this magnitude will provide long term benefits for the entire central Texas region. Access to a longer runway and full air traffic control services would allow for larger turbo prop and jet aircraft. Expanded accommodation for future air carriers and passenger growth would include a new terminal building, aircraft parking apron, east parallel taxiway, fueling facilities, and vehicle parking.

The March 2000 House passage of a federal aviation bill put at Robert Gray Army Airfield in a prime position to secure federal funding and get the joint-use airport off the ground. Robert Gray Airfield received a major boost with passage of the Aviation Investment and Reform for the 21st Century Act

(AIR-21). The measure increased the amount of funding and the number of available slots from 12 to 15 for the Military Airport Program (MAP). The MAP program provides an additional source of funding for airport projects that use either closed military bases or joint-use facilities such as the Robert Gray Army Airfield/ City of Killeen project.

On January 8, 2001 the U. S. DOT's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) selected Robert Gray Army Airfield in Killeen , Texas ; March Inland Port , Riverside , California ; and Mather Airport , Sacramento , California , to participate in the Military Airport Program (MAP). MAP, a set-aside of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), provides financial assistance to the civilian sponsor of military airfields being converted to, or that have been converted to, civilian or joint-use airfields. The selections were made pursuant to authority granted in the Wendell H. Ford Aviation and Investment Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR-21) which increased the total number of airports to participate in the MAP from 12 to 15, including one general aviation airport authorized to receive MAP funding.

Converting military airfields to civilian use enhances airport system capacity and reduces flight delays. The MAP enhances airport system capacity by providing financial support for the development of civilian aviation facilities at joint-use and former military airfields in or near major metropolitan areas. MAP funds facilitate the addition of civilian airport capacity at relatively low cost. MAP funds may be used for projects not generally funded by AIP that aid in the conversion process for civilian use such as building or rehabilitating parking lots, fuel farms, hangars, utility systems, roads and cargo buildings.

Robert Gray AAF, a joint-use airport, will provide a larger airport for regional jets serving the Killeen , Temple and Fort Hood areas of Texas with a 10,000-foot runway.

Gray AFB was established to support Killeen Base. Killeen Base, still used by the Army for munitions storage, was one of the early (1948-1969) U.S. National Stockpile Sites for storing nuclear weapons. This site, also known as "Baker" held both Army and USAF special weapons.

In early 2001 the FAA selected three military airports for conversion to civil-only or joint-use status as part of a program designed to increase system capacity and reduce air traffic control delays. The airports are Gray Army Airfield in Killeen , TX ; March Inland Port , Riverside , CA ; and Mather Airport near Sacramento , CA . All will receive an unspecified level of federal funding under the FAA's Military Airport Program (MAP).

The selections stemmed from the AIR-21 legislation signed into law in early 2000, which increased the total number of airports eligible for federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding from 12 to 15. Robert Gray AAF has a 10,000-foot runway which the FAA sees as a possible hub for Atlantic Southeast Airlines regional jets serving the Fort Hood / Killeen area.

Planned for the Year 2004 is the joint military and civilian use of Robert Gray Army Airfield, elevating local air transportation to a regional status. Located just four miles east of Copperas Cove , the airport houses a 70,000 square foot terminal to complement the 10,000-foot runway capable of landing a Boeing 747. The target date for opening the airport is 2003. Central Texas is counting on the new airport to be an economic development tool in recruiting new businesses. The estimated annual impact of the regional airport will include 824 permanent jobs, \$48 million in increased gross product, \$30 million in increased personal income, and \$13 million annually in increased retail sales.