

412TW-PA-24179



**HISTORICAL REPORTS, MUROC
JAN 47 TO JUN 59 – INFORMATION ON
SIGNA GILKEY**

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**MUROC ARMY AAF
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE,
CALIFORNIA**

JAN 47 – JUN 59

**RELEASED
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**AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA
AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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COMMAND

Muroc Air Force Base is an exempted station of the Air Materiel Command. It is administered by the 2759th Experimental Wing and four (4) tenant organizations, namely: Detachment 10/13L; 10th Weather Squadron; Detachment 1907-1 AACCS Squadron; 3208th Strato Bomb Squadron; and the 9301st Aberdeen Bombing Mission. During this reporting period the base was commanded by Col. Signa A. Gilkey and staffed with an average of 1407 military and 450 civilian personnel. The organization in effect at the beginning of this period consisted of the 2759th Air Base Group. All personnel (1324) were assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of this group and were carried on one morning report. The singleness of this organization presented a serious problem in expeditious strength accounting of the assigned military personnel, since the numerous daily changes required on the morning report made it unduly cumbersome. To solve this problem, Headquarters, AMC, by General Orders No. 41 on 20 May 1949, redesignated the 2759th Air Force Base the 2759th Experimental Wing and established the following TD units: Hq & Hq Squadron, 3076th Air Base Group assigned to 2759th Experimental Wing; Hq & Hq Squadron, 3077th Experimental Group, assigned to 2759th Experimental Wing; 2996th Air Police Squadron assigned to 3076th Air Base Group; and 2997th Base Service Squadron assigned to 3076th Air Base Group. Personnel were assigned to the new units according to their duty assignments and are accounted for on six (6) separate morning reports and administered by five (5) separate orderly rooms.

Captain H. E. Fitch assumed the duties of March of Dimes Project Officer, and the annual campaign was conducted on the Base through the month of January and the first part of February. The following is a list of contributions:

Squadron "A"	\$78.75
Squadron "B"	53.15
Squadron "C"	7.81
Squadron "E"	6.12
Attached Organizations	38.22
MAFB Women's Club	59.27
NCO Club	6.08
Officers Club	67.03
NCO Wives Auxiliary	5.00
Civilian Contractors	16.08
Civil Service Employees	11.23

The total contribution was \$348.74 in comparison with last year's total contribution which was \$277.19.

On 20 July 1948 the Interim Training Course for Officers, which was initiated at Muroc Air Force Base on 21 October 1947, finished its bi-weekly classes and gave final examinations. The grades were entered on the Form 66-2 of each individual officer and course completion certificates were sent to the Officer's Section to be placed in their 201 File.

For the quarterly period of October, November, December 1947 the 3208 Strato Bomb Test Squadron, then known as Squadron "C" of the 608th AFBU, was awarded the B-29 White Pennant Flying Award by the Office of Flying Safety, Winston Salem, North Carolina. This penant was presented with ceremony to 3208th Strato Bomb Test Squadron on 12 May 1948 at Muroc Air Force Base by Colonel Gilkey, Commanding Officer.¹¹

On 12 February 1948 the announcement was made of the redesignation of Muroc Army Air Field to Muroc Air Force Base.¹²

¹¹. Photograph of Presentation, Appdx. #7

¹². Gen. Order #3, Appdx. #6

MASTER PLANNING

With the beginning of a new calendar year, Muroc Air Force Base had high hopes of having the Master Plan approved so that the much needed permanent facilities would be provided. However, there were no Fiscal Year 1948 military construction funds appropriated.

On 8 January 1948, Lt. Colonel Earl C. Paulas, Executive Officer, District Engineers, Los Angeles and Mr. William Leen, Chief, Operations Division; District Engineer, made a visit to the new housing unit site.

Captain E. Penrod, Muroc Air Force Base Chaplain, was briefed on the Master Plan and concurred with the future requirements for the chapel in the Five Year Construction Program. The layout of the proposed chapel had been approved by Captain Penrod since the previous chaplains had been transferred.

A meeting was held on 13 January with Mr. S. Cundiff, Commercial Engineer, California Electric Power Company, Riverside, California, and Muroc Air Force Base Planning Office to discuss more fully the anticipated increase of power requirements. The Air Force Rocket Static Test Station, New housing, increase in aircraft projects and contemplated new construction are factors for the demand in the immediate increase of power facilities.

On this same date a meeting, concerning the AF experimental rocket engine test station, was held with Mr. John Cowan, representative of Air Materiel Command for General Tire and Rubber Company and Aerojet Engineering Corporation, Mr. B. F. Rose, Aerojet Engineering Corporation, Mr. Lester Morey, representative of Corps of Engineers at Los Angeles; and Commanding Officer, Colonel S. A. Gilkey, together with representatives of the Muroc Planning Office. A tour of the site for the AF Rocket Engine Test Station was made and a discussion of the over-all design for the Test Station followed.

representatives. Subsoil survey and excavation of site was discussed in detail.

On 1 February Muroc AFB was faced with a possible power strike at the California Electric Power Company. This station procured standby power units from the Engineering Depot. Utility strike was settled on 3 February.

Mr. Ellmaker, District Engineer's Office, Los Angeles, arrived at Muroc AFB on 5 February to coordinate all electrical projects at this station.

Mr. H. Haberton, Photographic Laboratory, Air Materiel Command, arrived 12 February for several days to work on details of the proposed photographic laboratory. Preliminary floor plans were drafted in coordination with the Commanding Officer, Planning Office and Base Photo Officer.

Mr. G. Summers and Mr. G. LeTourneau of the R. G. LeTourneau Company, Longview, Texas, made a visit to the new housing site and conferred with the Commanding Officer and planning officials at Muroc AFB on 19 February.

A meeting was held on 20 February, with representatives from Muroc Air Force Base, Aerojet Engineering Corporation and the Resident Engineer to discuss the progress made at the AF Rocket Engine Test Site during the past month.

On 3 March, representatives from Air Installations Division, Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, Captain Trumble and Mr. Westerfield, arrived to make a study on soil erosion and landscaping.

Mr. Ellmaker, electrical engineer at District Engineers Office, Los Angeles, and Mr. Heath from Southern California Edison Company conferred with Colonel S. A. Gilkey and Planning Office as to probable source of power from the above utility company. Southern California Edison Company will

submit a proposal for power supply to Muroc Air Force Base.

Assistance was requested by the Muroc Air Force Base Air Installations Office for personnel from Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, for detailed construction planning at Muroc because there were no qualified personnel at this station. Due to lack of funds, Air Materiel Command could not comply with this request to send someone to this station on temporary duty, but they would assist Muroc AFB if an outline of requirements were sent to AMC to be worked out.

A construction directive dated 29 March from Office of the Chief of Engineers was received authorizing advanced planning only for construction of proposed swimming pool at this station. This work is to be accomplished by District Engineer, Los Angeles.

Studies were made and will continue to be made of Preliminary Design Criteria for the AF Experimental Rocket Engine Test Station at Muroc as submitted by Aerojet Engineering Corporation. Preliminary Design Criteria are studied by various staff members for comments and suggestions and then forwarded to Aerojet Engineering Corporation so that they may be incorporated into the final design criteria.

On 1 April, Captain G. Van Wingerden and Mr. Hill, Electronics Section, Air Materiel Command, arrived for an extended stay to work on the alignment of the All Altitude Speed Course. From the tests conducted, a firm requirement for acquisition of land for All Altitude Speed Course was decided.

Major G. Bunze, Office of Research & Development, Headquarters, USAF, and Mr. A. Brelsford, Research & Development Office, Air Materiel Command, made a visit to coordinate matters regarding the AF Experimental Rocket Engine Test Station Site.

General Joseph T. McNarney, Commanding General, Air Materiel Command,

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and Lt. Colonel S. Lutz, AAF Liaison Office with the District Engineer, to inspect facilities at Muroc. Mr. Poorman was very helpful with suggestions in connection with Master Planning difficulties at this station.

Colonel Gilkey, Base Commander, met with District Engineer Personnel and Aerojet Engineering Corporation representatives, on 19 November, to further discuss the Rocket Static Test Project.

Colonel Dwight F. Johns, the Division Engineer, San Francisco, made an informal visit to Muroc to inspect the housing project and other base construction, on 19 November.

Colonel Gilkey, Base Commander, made a trip to Air Materiel Command, on 7 December to inquire about the status of the Master Plan, and confer with members of the command on the justification of the plan for Muroc.

Word was received on 17 December 1947, through the District Engineers, that the Chief of Engineers had been instructed to conduct a "site sale" of 301 surplus buildings. This will eliminate unused, sub-standard buildings, that create a fire hazard, an exorbitant amount of maintenance, and are only of war-time construction, built out of unseasoned lumber and covered with tar paper, and have been very unsatisfactory from the time they were constructed.

Among some of the official visitors at Muroc Army Air Field, who made inspections of facilities at this station in regard to Troop and Family housing, and Research and Development projects for the future were:

President Truman's Air Policy Commission, who after visiting this base stated in their report, "Survival in the Air Age", "The Air Force

On 17 June Mr. W. H. Shapley, Bureau of the Budget, Executive Office of the President, arrived for a general inspection of the base and facilities at Muroc AFB.


On 28 June Colonel Gilkey and Major Gawelko proceeded to Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, to discuss approval of Aerojet Engineering Corporation proposal of the AF Rocket Engine Test Station.

Need for facilities and utilities were also discussed.



CHAPTER V

MASTER PLAN



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MASTER PLAN

The Master Planning Board has been doing considerable work on the future planning and requirements for Muroc Army Air Field. The following is a chronological synopsis of the problems encountered by this Board. The preliminary Master Plan immediately follows Page 39 of this Section.

On 24 January 1947, information was received that the Preliminary Master Plan should be prepared and submitted to the War Department 1 May 1947.

On 31 January, information was received by TWX, at Muroc Army Air Field, that planning for Very Heavy Bomb Groups was not applicable to Air Materiel Command stations. Planning will be on the basis of present mission, which is Flight Testing at Muroc Army Air Field.

On 21 February 1947, the Muroc Army Air Field Master Planning Board met and discussed the following: Water Rehabilitation System; Need of a new power line from Kramer, California, to replace existing line; Land acquisition; Possible new runway location; Housing and utilities locations in the proposed new area; and the approval of the Electrical Rehabilitation System. The Planning Board was also informed that plans on a new Chapel were submitted to higher headquarters for consideration under funds available from Army Welfare Funds.

On 25 February 1947, Colonel S. A. Gilkey proceeded to Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, for a meeting with Major General Craigie, Chief of Engineering Division, Brigadier General Carroll, Acting Deputy Chief of Engineering Division, Colonel Sillin and Lt. Colonel Payne, Engineering Division Facilities, Colonel J. J. Griggs, Mr. Nees and

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Mr. Courtney from Air Installations Division. At this meeting proposed runway location was affirmed and approved.

On 20 March 1947, the Preliminary Master Plan was submitted to Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, Wright Field, for approval.

On 14 March 1947, information was received for the submission of WD AGO Forms 726 in accordance with AF 210-20, WD Memo 210-20-1 and changes thereto. Subject report is on Long Range Construction Program which was forwarded on 27 March 1947.

On 17 March 1947, Muroc Army Air Field submitted a formal request for recreational facilities accomplished from Army Central Welfare Funds. The following recreational facilities were requested: Recreation Building; Hobby Shop; Golf Course; Portable Bleachers; Swimming Pool; Tennis Courts; Outdoor Theater; Dance Pavilion; and Field House, together with Baseball Field, Softball Field, and Track.

On 18 April 1947, a meeting was held of the Master Planning Board, for the purpose of considering the consolidation of the Master Plan from a fifteen-year program to a five-year program, as proposed by higher headquarters. The following subjects were discussed: Leuhman Ridge, as site for Rocket Static Site; Review of needs for Technical Engineering; Review of needs for Navy; Feasibility of using facilities at Mojave Naval Air Station; Setting up construction program "C", revised 19 April 1947.

On 8 May 1947, a meeting was held of the Master Planning Board, with the objective of recommending to the Office of the District Engineer, the type of construction and structure desired for one hundred (100) Muroc Army Air Field temporary quarters. Prior to this meeting, members of the Planning Board conducted visual inspection of actual construction of Normac

units at Tona, California, where weather conditions are similar to Muroc, and also Le Tourneau units at Longview, Texas. Also discussed at the meeting, was price and dimensions of each; different construction methods employed in building each type; possible expansion of each; undesirability of car port in this climate; and teletype from South West Division Engineer, concerning Le Tourneau units. Planning Board members unanimously selected the Normac Unit as the most desirable for Muroc Army Air Field Housing, inasmuch as the additional floor space in the Le Tourneau unit did not off-set the quality of design and construction apparent in the Normac unit. The Planning Board recognized the fact that the Normac unit being pre-fabricated at a central plant site, with uniform control, and workmanship, quality would be insured. Whereas, the Le Tourneau unit would be experimental, particularly in this very hot, dry climate. The Normac unit has good insulation as well as uniformity of surface finish. The above recommendation was submitted on 8 May 1947 to the District Engineer, Los Angeles, California.

Base Commander, Colonel S. A. Gilkey, was summoned to Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, on 26 May 1947 for a discussion of the Master Plan. From there, Colonel Gilkey, together with Colonel J. J. Griggs, Chief, Air Installations Division, Hq, AMC, proceeded to Headquarters, AAF, on 27 May 1947 for a meeting with Major General E. Powers, Major General Gardner, Brigadier General Crawford, and members of Air Installations Division. Brigadier General Kauch was unable to be present, since he was sick in the hospital at the time. During these meetings, the Master Plan was approved by Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, as well as Headquarters, AAF. Base Commander, Colonel S. A. Gilkey, brought back the

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information that the Master Plan would be defended by Headquarters, AAF, through the War Department, and the Chief of Engineers' Office. Colonel Griggs left the Land acquisition request and file in Headquarters, AAF at that time, since action could only be expected on that subject, after the Plan had been accepted.

On 10 June 1947, a Master Planning Board Meeting was held, the purpose of which was to decide what recreational facilities, to be obtained from non-appropriated funds, are desired. Selections are to be made from a list submitted for consideration by Wright Field, Headquarters, Air Materiel Command. It was brought out during this meeting that Wuroc Army Air Field family housing would be constructed by the Le Tourneau method. The contractor's original plan was modified at our request. A softball field, and outdoor theater are not desired, as this money is urgently needed as additional amount to cover the cost of a swimming pool. It was felt that \$55,000 was an insufficient amount for the construction of a swimming pool. It was recommended that the \$23,300 for the softball field and outdoor theater should be spent in building the swimming pool, in addition to the \$55,000, making a total of \$78,300. A swimming pool, dance pavilion, and tennis courts are desired.

On 4 June 1947, work started on reconstruction of the electrical system at a total cost of \$154,791. Replacement was effected of existing temporary electrical facilities with a permanent looped underground system, including substation capable of meeting load requirements connected with testing of new type aircraft. Work is being performed by R. E. Diebarth & Company, Long Beach, California.

