



Props and Jets: The Shifting Relationship Between the United States Air Corps and a Major Industrial City from 1925 to 1948

Quentin L. Hartwig

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Merriam Press Aviation History. First Edition (2013). June 25, 1925, inauguration of Rodgers Field marked the beginning of Allegheny County Commissioners' investment into commercial aviation. A modest acquisition of 40 acres that has with time evolved to the presence of the 1500 acre Pittsburgh International Airport across town. This book chronicles the dreams, successes, failures, promises, and fatalities in the intervening events from 1923 to the opening of the commercial terminal at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport (GRP) in 1952. Over time, Rodgers Field, the first field, could not be enlarged, expansion of Allegheny County Airport, the second field, proved too expensive, with GRP, the third field, finally large enough to fill the needs of the commercial and military needs. In the 1920s and 1930s the political leadership of Allegheny County struggled to craft the best aviation facility to attract military and commercial interests. Experience with the shortcomings of Rodgers Field provided guidance in the design of the Allegheny County Airport. During World War Two, Pittsburgh lay in the flight path of immense numbers of thirsty military aircraft being flown from one area of the United States to another. The breadth of the Greater Pittsburgh Airport provided the necessary space for runways and parking areas to accommodate the impressive traffic landing for refueling, maintenance and repair. In that time period, the media devoted most of their attention to the battle arenas, in foreign lands and on distant oceans. Conflicts won meant yet another step to victory when the United States service men and women could return home. But the success 'over there' was totally dependent upon the war production system 'over here.' In addition to the military history of Rodgers Field, this work details the worthy participation 'over here' of the two Allegheny County airfields. Contents: Rodgers Field: Pittsburgh's First Municipal/Military Airport (Doomed From The Start); One Of The Best; Only A Presidential Intervention Could Save This Local Airman; ACA: A Push For Prominence In The Air; The 575th Of The Air Transport Command Begins At ACA; An Approaching Storm; Tora! Tora!; Conversion Of The Bell Farm Into A CAA National Defense Airport; Further Sources Of Delays In Construction Of The Moon Township Defense Air Field During 1943-1944; The 575th Begin Operations At The Greater Pittsburgh Airport; Luftwaffe Sorties Over Pittsburgh; Personal Recollections About The Army Air Base: Greater Pittsburgh Airport; Donuts; Heroes Past Always Present; Looking Back: It Never Happened; A New Mission In Response To An Iron Curtain: Soviet Threat Always a Dubious Ally; Auxiliary Reserve Training Sites; and six Appendices: Commanders of the 575th Base Unit, 6th Ferrying Station (ACA) and the 444th Base Unit, Reserve Training, Air Defense Command, Grp; Major and Minor Military Aircraft Accidents at Rodgers Field, ACA, GRP, or Nearby; Military Personnel Stationed at ACA and/or GRP at Some Time During the Time Span 1942-1950; Air Traffic Controllers at ACA During World War II; Members of the 324th Observation Squadron, 99th Division, US Army 3rd Air Corps, Rodgers Field, Aspinwall, Pa, and Allegheny County Airport; Aviation Mechanics at Rodgers Field in 1928; and Abbreviations; Index; 162 photos, illustrations, drawings, documents.

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