United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

tional Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NR 10/2/08

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

Name of Property					•				
storic name Erwin Au	kiliary Army	Airfield							
her names/site number	Site #JA05	519							
Location					-				
reet & number Norther	ast of the AR	14 and J	ackson Ro	ad 917 interse	ction			not for	publication
ty or town Newport									vicinity
ate Arkansas	code	AR	county	Jackson		code	067	zip code	72112
State/Federal Agency C	Certification								
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Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfi Name of Property	eld	Jackson County, Arkansas County and State			
Classification					
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) Category of Property (Check only one box)		Number of Resources (Do not include previously lis			
□ private□ public-local⋈ public-State□ public-Federal	□ building(s)□ district□ site⋈ structure□ object	Contributing	Noncontributing 2	buildings sites structures	
		1	2	objects Total	
(Enter "N/A" if property is not par	Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WWII Homefront Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946		ng resources previousl er	y listed	
6. Function or Use					
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instruc	ctions)		
TRANSPORTATION/air-re	elated	AGRICULTURE/SUBS	SISTENCE/agricultural	field	
DEFENSE/air facility					
7. Description					
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) N/A		Materials (Enter categories from instruction N/A) walls N/A	ctions)		
		roof N/A other ASPHALT			

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield Name of Property	Jackson County, Arkansas County and State		
8. Statement of Significance			
plicable National Register Criteria ck "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	Levels of Significance (local, state, national) Local		
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Military		
■ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	Transportation		
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or			
represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance c.1942-c.1958		
□ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.			
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates c.1942-c.1958		
Property is: A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.			
B. removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)		
 C. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance. D a cemetery. 	Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)		
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.			
☐ F a commemorative property	Architect/Builder		
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.			
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)			
9. Major Bibliographical References			
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	or more continuation sheets.)		
Previous documentation on file (NPS): preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register Previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	Primary location of additional data: State Historic Preservation Office Other State Agency Federal Agency Local Government University Other Name of repository:		
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	=		

. 7	Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield		Jackson County, Arkansas						
am	ame of Property County and State								
0.	Geograp	hical Data							
	eage of P	roperty	Approximately 430 acres.						
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	M Refere e additional		es on a continuation sheet.)						
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Des	cribe the bo		iption property on a continuation sheet.)						
		ustification e boundaries w	ere selected on a continuation sheet.))					
11.	Form Pi	repared By							
ıan	ne/title	Ralph S. W	ilcox, National Register & Su	rvey Coordinator					
org	nization	Arkansa	s Historic Preservation Progra	am		date	July 19, 200	7	
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street			telephone		(501) 324-9787				
city or town Little Rock		ber	O Tower Building, 323 Cente	er Street	tel	epnone	(301) 324-9	/8/	
				er Street		AR	zip code	72201	····
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with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

timated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, thering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

Erw	in Auxiliary	Army	Airfield

Name of Property

United States Department of the Interior

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY

The Erwin Auxiliary Airfield is a c.1942 airfield located southeast of Newport, Jackson County, Arkansas, at the northeast corner of AR 14 and Jackson Road 917. The airfield consists of two asphalt runways and two asphalt taxiways, oriented northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast. In addition to the airfield, the nominated property consists of three buildings, which are non-contributing, that are associated with the current agricultural use of the property.

ELABORATION

The Erwin Auxiliary Airfield is a c.1942 airfield located southeast of Newport, Jackson County, Arkansas, at the northeast corner of AR 14 and Jackson Road 917. The airfield consists of two asphalt runways and two asphalt taxiways, oriented northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast. Each of the runways measures 40-46 meters wide and they are 1,375 meters long. The taxiways are 14-16 meters wide and 1,375 meters long. The taxiways are connected to the runways at each end and additional connectors are located near the fortheastern or southeastern end of each runway and taxiway.

In addition to the airfield, the nominated property consists of three buildings, which are non-contributing, that are associated with the current agricultural use of the property.

Integrity

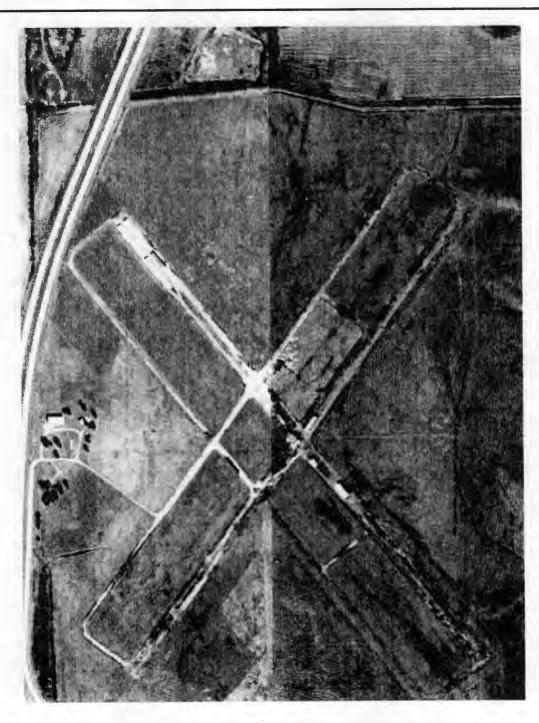
Overall, the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield retains good integrity. Given the fact that the field has been abandoned for over 40 years, the asphalt has deteriorated in some areas and grass has started to grow through the runway and taxiway surfaces. However, the layout of the runways and taxiways is still discernible on the ground and readily apparent from the air. Although the construction of U.S. 67 to the west of the field involved the construction of a chain-link fence across the northwestern end of the taxiway to mark the edge of the highway right-of-way, the impact to the airfield itself was minimal. Also, the three non-contributing buildings that have been constructed to support the current agricultural use of the property are small in scale when compared to the size of the airfield. In addition, the area of Jackson County where the airfield is located has retained the rural feel from the time of its construction c.1942.

County and State

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Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield Aerial Photograph

Erwin Auxiliary	Army Airfield
Name of Property	

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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SUMMARY

Located to the southeast of Newport, the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is an asphalt airfield that was built c.1942 as a satellite field for the Newport Army Airfield. Consisting of two runways and two taxiways, the Erwin Airfield was important to the World War II efforts in Arkansas, notably in training pilots for the war, and it is also important in illustrating the development of aviation facilities around Arkansas during World War II. As a result, the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A for its associations with Arkansas's military and aviation history. The Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WWII Homefront Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946."

ELABORATION

Little is known about the early settlement of Jackson County other than the first settlers arrived in the area prior to 1830. The population was sizable enough that Jackson County was created on November 5, 1829, by the territorial legislature. Originally, Jackson County also included almost all of Woodruff County as well until it was separated in 1862. The original county seat was established at Litchfield in 1832, but in 1839 it was moved to Elizabeth. In 1852 it was moved to Augusta and then on to Jacksonport in 1853. The county seat was moved to Newport, its current location, in 1891-1892.

Newport remained a small village until the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, & Southern Railway completed its line through the area. Once the railroad was finished, Newport quickly became a thriving community. By 1889, when the *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas* was published, Newport boasted "two banks, eight general stores, ten family grocery stores, five drug stores, two hardware stores, an undertaking store, a harness store, a merchant tailor store, a music store, two jewelry stores, two book and stationery stores, a photograph gallery, ...a telephone system, ... [and] two weekly newspapers, both Democratic in politics." It was also considered to be "a flourishing town, very advantageously located for manufacturing purposes..." Of course, becoming the county seat in the 1890s, further cemented Newport's place as the center of Jackson County affairs.

As the twentieth century came to Jackson County, the flat land around the area, which had been perfectly suited for farming, also was found to be useful for other pursuits, specifically aviation. Although the Wright Brothers took their historic first flight in North Carolina in 1903, it appears that there was little if any activity surrounding aviation in Arkansas before the mid-1910s. Many of the early efforts were related to the military, although a few private citizens were prominent in Arkansas's early aviation history. Two of the earliest aviation facilities in the state were Eberts Training Field, established in Lonoke in 1917 for the

² *Ibid*, p. 839.

¹ Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas. Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 832.

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purpose of training cadets for World War I, and the Little Rock Aviation Supply Depot established in 1918 as a distribution point for raw materials needed for air services and finished products and parts needed by airfields. However, when World War I ended in 1918, both facilities were no longer needed. Eberts Field closed in 1918 and the Little Rock Aviation Supply Depot closed in the early 1920s.³

Even though it was the military that took the lead in many early aviation efforts in Arkansas, there were also private citizens involved in the newfangled technology. For example, Professor J. S. Zerbe, who arrived in Fayetteville in 1918, had been involved in the development of aircraft since at least 1910 when he participated in the Dominguez Air Meet in California. He brought an experimental airplane, and an account of its performance stated that "Professor J. S. Zerbe brought out his curious appearing multiplane and attempted to take off. As it clattered down the field amid the cheers of the crowd, a front wheel hit a hole nd collapsed throwing the machine to one side and damaging a wing..." Zerbe later tried his plane again, his time at the Washington County Fairgrounds, after he arrived in Fayetteville. Pilot Tom Flannerty flew the plane for approximately 1,000 feet, the plane's only known flight.

However, Arkansas's most prominent aviator was Louise McPhetridge Thaden, who was born in Bentonville in 1905. She was introduced to aviation after traveling to Wichita and spending a lot of time around the local Travel Air airplane factory, where she met the company's owner, Walter Beech. Beech was impressed with her desire to fly and gave her a job at his dealership in Oakland, California. As part of her salary, she received free pilot's lessons and received her pilot's certificate in 1928. Among her many accomplishments as an aviatrix were the holding of the altitude, solo endurance, and speed records simultaneously, and the founding of the Ninety-Nines in 1929, an international organization for female pilots that she founded with Amelia Earhart, among others. By the time she retired from aviation competition in 1938, she was one of the most prominent aviatrixes in the country.⁵

The prominent aviation history that the state had during the early part of the twentieth century, and the role that aviation played in Arkansas during World War I, meant that when World War II began in the early 1940s, Arkansas was poised to play a role again. Eastern Arkansas, with its miles of flat land, which in *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas* was described as "...a tablelike surface...broken only by a long, narrow strip

³ Bransford, Johnnie Carolyn. "Eberts Training Field" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* found at: http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1184 and McAlexander, William E.,

Ir., "Little Rock Aviation Supply Depot" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* found at: http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=4234.

⁴ Sawyer, Nathania. "Zerbe Air Sedan" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* found at: http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=3671.

⁵ Seibert, Rob. "Louise McPhetridge Thaden (1905-1979)" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* found at: http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=30.

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of hills called Crowley's Ridge, which runs from the Missouri line some 150 miles to Helena," was ideal for developing airfields and other aviation facilities.6

The geography of eastern Arkansas did not go unnoticed when the U.S. military began looking for places to place Army Air Force training schools. An article in the May 9, 1942, Arkansas Gazette reported:

> Location of an army aviation training school to give basic training to 700 students and to be located about six miles northeast of Newport was announced in Washington today by Congressman Wilbur D. Mills. Six weeks ago a group of engineers and army officers made an inspection of the proposed site spotted by the United States Engineers Office in Little Rock two months before.

> At a mass meeting held here recently, it was agreed rents would be frozen, recreational facilities would be provided, a right of way for the spur railroad track to the field secured and the highway leading from U.S. Highway 67 to the site paved. It also was agreed the students and soldiers at the camp would be given free access to the golf course, the swimming pool and tennis courts in the park. That no tuition would be charged for children of those brought here by the government as result of the project.

> A pledge was made that a housing campaign would be started as soon as the project had been officially announced and the area placed in a national defense area to allow building.

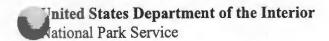
Col. J.R. Crume, executive officer of the United States engineers office in Little Rock, announced today that Maj. John C. Pritchard will be in charge of the project here. Colonel Crume secured quarters here Monday. Work will begin within two weeks.

In addition to the air training school, several auxiliary flying fields will be located within a radius of 20 miles to be used for training purposes. Each of the auxiliary fields will require 640 acres while the main field will exceed 2,500 acres. The site of the main field lies between state highways 14 and 16.7

⁶ West, Elliott. The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987 reprint of 1941 publication,

[&]quot;Army Air School for Newport." Arkansas Gazette. 9 May 1942, p. 11.

Erwin	Auxiliary	Army	Airfield	
Name o	f Property			



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Once the site was chosen for the school, no time was wasted in constructing the facility. On November 4, 1942, the *Arkansas Gazette* reported that "The Newport airfield became the Tuckerman Army Air Forces Basic Flying School today on orders of the War Department as the officer in charge, Col. Daniel A. Cooper, activated the post, which, before this time, has been merely a project with the United States Engineers Office in charge." The paper further reported that "...although the cantonment is not completed, many of the buildings are in use." (Although there was disappointment that the school originally referred to Tuckerman, the name was changed to Newport by the end of 1942.⁹)

The Erwin Auxiliary Airfield was one of several satellite airfields that were built to be utilized by the Newport Army Airfield and its pilot training programs. Although the exact date of the field's construction is unknown, it is known that it was built sometime between 1937 and 1944, likely c.1942 when the Newport facility was built. The Airport Directory Company's 1937 Airports Directory did not list the Erwin Airfield, but it was referenced in the 1944 US Army/Navy Directory of Airfields, which noted that it was "Aux to Newport AAF." The directory also noted that the field had a 4,500-foot long hard-surfaced runway. 10

At least one other airfield, the Milltown Auxiliary Army Airfield, located east of Tuckerman, was built to serve the Newport Army Airfield. Like the Erwin Airfield, the Milltown Airfield consisted of two runways and two taxiways, oriented northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast. Also like the Erwin Airfield, Milltown's runways were described as being 4,500 feet long and hard-surfaced. Unfortunately, this airfield has virtually disappeared.¹¹

Although the Erwin Airfield was apparently mainly used for military training and exercises, especially practice landings in B25 bombers, it also was apparently open to civilians. The October 1945 Little Rock Sectional Chart depicted the field as an auxiliary airfield, and did not indicate any type of military use. (It is possible that once the War ended in 1945, the Army no longer used the field, therefore opening it up to civilian use.)¹²

Even though the Army apparently stopped using the Erwin Airfield in 1945, the Air Force apparently reactivated the field sometime between 1946 and 1949. The exact use of the field by the Air Force is unknown, as is exactly how long they used the field. Sometime between 1956 and 1964, the Erwin Airfield was abandoned, since it was labeled as "Abandoned airport" on the July 1964 Little Rock Sectional Chart. 13

⁸ "Tuckerman New Name of Flying School." Arkansas Gazette. 4 November 1942, p. 2.

[&]quot;Air School's Name Now Newport" Arkansas Gazette. 30 December 1942, p. 2.

¹⁰ Information on Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield found at: http://www.airfields-freeman.com/AR/Airfields AR SE.html.

¹¹ Information on Milltown Auxiliary Army Airfield found at: http://www.airfields-freeman.com/AR/Airfields-AR-SE.html.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

Erwin	Auxiliary	Army	Airfield

Jackson County, Arkansas

County and State



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After the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield was abandoned, the land was used by the University of Arkansas as an agriculture experiment station. Currently, the land that houses the airfield is leased to a local farmer for cattle grazing, and a few small agricultural buildings have been built to support the agricultural use. Although the field has been abandoned for approximately 45 years, the asphalt of the runways and taxiways has remained in surprisingly good condition.

The Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield remains an interesting relic of Arkansas's support of World War II on the homefront. Serving as an airfield used for training exercises, the facility played an important role in training pilots for the front lines in Europe and Asia during the War. Today, the field is mainly forgotten, but still an important reminder of Arkansas's role in World War II.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located to the southeast of Newport, the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is an asphalt airfield that was built c.1942 as a satellite field for the Newport Army Airfield. Consisting of two runways and two taxiways, the Erwin Airfield was important to the World War II efforts in Arkansas, notably in training pilots for the war, and it is also important in illustrating the development of aviation facilities around Arkansas during World War II. As a result, the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A for its associations with Arkansas's military and aviation history. The Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WWII Homefront Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946."

Erwin Auxiliary	Army	Airfield
Name of Property		



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Information on Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield found at: http://www.airfields-reeman.com/AR/Airfields AR SE.html.

Information on Milltown Auxiliary Army Airfield found at: http://www.airfields-freeman.com/AR/Airfields AR_SE.html.

McAlexander, William E., Jr., "Little Rock Aviation Supply Depot" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* found at: http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=4234.

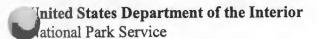
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Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield	
Name of Property	



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ADDITIONAL UTMs

- 5) 15 657690E 3937201N
- 6) 15 657685E 3937535N
- 7) 15 657912E 3937820N
- 8) 15 657644E 3938166N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the northeast corner of the intersection of Jackson Road 917 and the drainage ditch just to the north of AR 14, proceed northwesterly along the northeast side of Jackson Road 917 for 945 feet to the treeline, thence proceed northerly along the treeline for 1,150 feet, thence proceed northeasterly parallel to the ortheast-southwest taxiway for 1,315 feet, thence proceed northwesterly parallel to the northwest-southeast axiway for 1,270 feet to the eastern edge of U.S. 67, thence proceed northeasterly along the eastern edge of U.S. 67 for 1,805 feet to the drainage ditch, thence proceed easterly along the south side of the drainage ditch for 3,360 feet to the farm road/fence line, thence proceed southerly along the farm road/fence line for 5,250 feet to the drainage ditch, thence proceed westerly along the north side of the drainage ditch for 3,570 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary contains all of the land historically associated with the Erwin Auxiliary Army Airfield that retains integrity.











