

**FINDING AID FOR THE
ELLINGTON FIELD RESEARCH COLLECTION, (#2016-0003)**

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Descriptive Summary

Repository: University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives and Special Collections

Collection Number: 2016-0003

Title: Ellington Field Research Collection

Creator: Larsen, Bill

Inclusive Dates: 1912-1998

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Language: English

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation: Ellington Field Research Collection (#2016-0003), University of Houston-Clear Lake Archives.

Acquisition Information (541) Materials donated by William A. Larsen.

Processing Information

The collection is primarily composed of research files and information contributed by NASA Johnson Space Center Historian William A. Larsen for a publication written by author Erik Carlson in an official NASA publication NASA/CR-1999-208921 in February 1999, entitled *Ellington Field: A Short History, 1917-1962*. Carlson was a 1998 NASA/ASEE Summer Faculty Fellowship, who used his research and the help of Larsen to author this report. This publication details the chronological history of Ellington Field, an air field in Southeast Texas that currently serves as an adjunct to NASA Johnson Space Center as well as a civilian/military air field.

Processed by: Erin Henry, circa 2014; finding aid updated by Matthew Peek, August 2022

Arrangement (351)

The collection is arranged in seven series thematically, with chronological organization within each series in folders. The series are as follows: US Army; Eric Lamar Ellington; Ellington Air Force Base; US National Guard; Periodicals; Manuscripts; and Thesis Research.

Historical Note

Ellington Field was officially opened November 27, 1917, as the United States' largest pilot and navigator training base, and the nation's first aerial bombing school during World War I. It was constructed on 1,280 acres of Texas prairie 18 miles east of Houston, Texas (now in Pasadena). The base was named in honor of Lt. Eric L. Ellington, who was killed in an aircraft crash in San Diego, California, in 1913 in the early days of U.S. military aviation operations. By the end of World War I, Ellington Field had grown to the size of a small city, housing 20,000 men and 250 aircraft. Like most bases, it was closed after WWI

The Ellington Field was closed as an active U.S. military base in 1920. By 1930, the only remains of the WWI base were the concrete water tower and some concrete slabs on which small hangars once stood. In 1940, the U.S. Congress authorized a program to rebuild Ellington Field. During WWII Ellington Field was rebuilt as one of ten strategic defense bases in the United States—the only strategic defense base on the Gulf Coast. The new base was occupied in the spring of 1941. The location of the field was crucial to the defense of the Houston Ship Channel, the ports of Galveston, and Houston and one of the United States' largest oil refining centers.

Ellington Field trained thousands of pilots, navigators, and bombardiers for the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. The base was made inactive from March 1946 until 1947, when it became Ellington Air Force Base, serving as a navigator-training school. The navigator-training wing of the U.S. Air Force was phased out in 1958. From

the 1950s through the 1970s, the former Ellington Field was engaged in pilot and navigator training for Texas State Guard air reservists and air guardsmen; as well as navy, marine, and foreign students.

NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center (later Johnson Space Center) became a tenant in 1962. In 1984, the base was turned over to the city of Houston to be operated as a municipal airport, which was once again named Ellington Field. It continued to provide support for military reserve and guard units, as well as NASA and the Grumman Corporation for its aerospace activities. From 1976 to 2007, Ellington Field was partially owned and managed by the Houston Airport System. It also served as home to a U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue unit.

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Defense recommended retiring Ellington Field's 147th Fighter Wing F-16 Falcon fighter jets. The aircraft were replaced with MQ-1 Predator unmanned drones, and the unit was re-designated as the 147th Reconnaissance Wing. The ANG 272nd Engineering Installation Squadron was also relocated to Ellington Field.

[Information for this historical note was taken directly from Art Leatherwood, "Ellington Field," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed August 02, 2022, at <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/ellington-field>; finding aid for the Ellington Field research collection, 1917-2009, MS 547, Woodson Research Center, Rice University, Houston, Texas, viewed online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/ricewrc/00510/rice-00510.html>; and Erik Carlson, *Ellington Field: A Short History, 1917-1962*, 1999, viewed online on the Internet Archive, at https://archive.org/details/nasa_techdoc_19990045904]

Scope and Content (520)

The collection contains organizational histories, newspaper articles, manuscript drafts, photographs, memos, correspondence, copied items, newsletter issues, and miscellaneous materials, compiled as research materials by NASA Johnson Space Center historian William Larsen for author and NASA summer fellow Erik Carlson to write the NASA publication *Ellington Field: A Short History, 1917-1962*, in February 1999. It appears that Larsen had begun a manuscript for this history, but Carlson finished it and it was published under Carlson's name. The materials in the collection pertain to the history and operation of Ellington Field (also known as Ellington Air Force Base) near Houston, Texas. The field has been used since 1962 by NASA Johnson Space Center for test flights and other aviation-based research related to human space flight.

Index Terms (6xx):

Personal Names

Ellington, Eric Lamar
Larsen, William
Carlson, Erik

Corporate Names

Ellington Airforce Base
Ellington Field
US Army
US National Guard
US Naval Academy

Subjects

United States--National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
Ellington Field (Houston, Tex.)
Ellington Air Force Base (Tex.)

Places

Houston (Tex.)

Document Types

Correspondence
Histories
Photographs
Reports
Research

Collection Inventory

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folde</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
	r		
1		Series I: US Army	
	1	Excerpt Souvenir of the Encampment of US Troops, Fourth and Sixth Brigades, Second Division at Texas City, Texas 1913: Views of Texas City" By JM Maurer	1913
	2	Articles: US Army, Texas City, TX	1913-1976
	3	US Army Aviation: First Aero Squadron Texas City, TX	1915-1993
	4	US Army Aviation: San Diego, CA	1923-1964

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folde</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
	1	Series II: Eric Lamar Ellington	
	5	Personal Background	1913-1986
	6	Death Certificates	1889-1913
	7	US Naval Academy Records	1905-1965
	8	USS California (AKA San Diego)	1912-1952
		Series III: Ellington Air Force Base	
	9	Book Excerpt (Photocopy): "Ellington, 1918" By Joe Stack	Undated
	10-11	JSC Documents	1963-1990
	12	Fact Sheets	1960-2000
	13-15	Photograph Indexes	1962-1998
	16	Photograph Indexes	1991-1998
		Series IV: US National Guard	
2	1	Book Excerpt (Photocopy): Historical & Pictorial Review, National Guard of the State of Texas	1940
	2	Declassified Documents: 111 th Fighter Squadron	1951-1952
	3	Excerpt (Photocopy): "The Ellington Period, 1923-1927: The Early History of the 111 th Squadron" By Mitchell Hail	
	4	Unit History: 147 th Fighter Group 111 th Fighter Squadron	1988
	5	Excerpt (Photocopy): "No Mindus De Murkus: A History of the Air National Guard Jet Instrument School" By Lt. Col. Robert H. Taylor	Undated
	6	Excerpt (Photocopy): "111 th Squadron History, Nov. 25, '40-May 8, '45"	1940-1945

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folde</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
	<u>1</u>	Series V: Periodicals	
	7	<i>Space News Roundup</i>	1961-1989
	8-13	<i>Houston Chronicle</i>	1917-1962
	14	<i>San Diego Union</i>	1913
	15	<i>Louisville Carrier Journal</i>	1913
3	1	<i>Houston Post</i>	1955-1961
		Series VI: Manuscript	
	2	Manuscript Draft: "Ellington Field: A Short History, 1917-1962" by Bill Larsen	Undated
		Series VII: Thesis Research	
	3	Thesis Draft: "Ellington Field – The Early Years" by Cecil Dorsey	March 1994
	4	Photographs: Ellington Air Force Base	1966-1969
	5	Excerpts (Photocopies): Ellington Air Force Base	1960-1993
	6	Civil Engineering Report, 1975-1984: Memos/ Correspondence	1974-1979
	7	Civil Engineering Report, 1975-1984: Pg. 1-G-2	1975-1984
	8	Civil Engineering Report, 1975-1984: Pg. H=66, articles	1975-1984