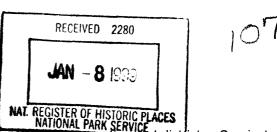
NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90) OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



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 any 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.

======================================	
historic name: Kingman Army Air Forces Flexible Gu	
other names/site number: Kingman Army Air Field Rac	dio Tower; Storage Depot #41 Radio Tower
======================================	
street & number: 7000 Flightline Drive city or town: Kingman state: Arizona code: AZ county: Mohave	not for publication: _N/A_ vicinity: _N/A_ code: 015 zip code: 86401
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	#=====================================
x nomination request for determination of properties in the National Register of Historic Places and 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the propertyx recommend that this property be considered significant sheet for additional comments.)	Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering d meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. It nationally _x_ statewide locally. (See continuation
Signature of commenting or other official	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form KAAF Radio Tower Mohave County, Arizona

4. National Park Service Certification				
4. National Park Service Certification				
I hereby certify that this property is: entered in the National Register See continuation sheet determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register other (explain):				
Signature of Keeper		Date	e of Action	
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply private private public-local public-State public-Federal Category of Property (Check only one box) building district site X structure object	ly)			
Number of Resources within Property				
Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total				
Number of contributing resources previously listed	in the Nati	onal Register0)	
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A"	" if property	is not part of a mu	ultiple property listing.)N/A	

	=======================================	==========	
6. Function or Use			
Category: Current Functions (I	Enter categories from instructions DEFENSE TRANSPORTATION Enter categories from instructions VACANT/NOT IN USE	Subcategory:	Military facility (radio tower) Air traffic control tower
7. Description	=======================================		
	ication (Enter categories from in Iradio tower		
foundation: roof: walls: other:	gories from instructions) CONCRETE METAL/Sheet metal METAL/Steel GLASS Windows; WOOD cab		
8. Statement of Sign			
Applicable National Register listing)			for the criteria qualifying the property for National
X_ A Property is as	sociated with events that have m	ade a significant	contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is as	sociated with the lives of persons	s significant in ou	r past.
work of a mas			od, or method of construction or represents the ts a significant and distinguishable entity whose
D Property has	yielded or is likely to yield informa	ation important in	prehistory or history.
A owned B remove C a birth D a cerr E a reco	ons (Mark "X" in all the boxes that by a religious institution or used yed from its original location. Inplace or a grave. Instructed building, object, or structed building, object, or structed building, object, or structed building, object, or structed structed building, object, or structed building, object, or structed building, object, or structed structure.	I for religious pur	

Mohave County, Arizona
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) MILITARY TRANSPORTATION
Period of Significance 1943-1948
Significant Dates 1943 (Construction date)
Significant Person N/A
Cultural Affiliation N/A
Architect/Builder Army Corps of Engineers/Airdrome Company/Del Webb Corporation
Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS)
9. Major Bibliographical References
Bibliography (SEE 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 # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
Primary Location of Additional Data State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University X Other

Name of Repository: Mohave County Historical Society, 400 W. Beale St., Kingman, AZ 86401

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __less than 1___

UTM References (See accompanying USGS map for point references)

Zone 12 232180E 3905510N

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the property corresponds to the 23 \times 23-ft base of the tower. The boundary/tower base is readily discernible by the four steel legs of the tower, which are set in concrete piers in a 23 \times 23-ft area.

Boundary Justification

The boundary, corresponding to the base of the tower, includes the entire area that was historically part of the KAAF Radio Tower.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Pat H. Stein

organization: Arizona Preservation Consultants date: April 1998

street/number: 2124 N. Izabel St., Suite 100 telephone: (520) 214-0375

city or town: Flagstaff state: AZ zip code: 86004

Revised from a draft nomination prepared by Loren Wilson in 1996

Additional Documentation

Continuation Sheets (pages 1-9)

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location (Figure 1).

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property (Photos 1 and 2). Historical photo showing Storage Depot #41 in the post-war years (Photo 3)

Additional items

A map showing the KAAF facility during World War II (Figure 2).

A sketch map showing the profile and bracing pattern of the tower (Figure 3).

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: City of Kingman

street & number: 310 North 4th Street telephone: (520) 753-5561

city or town: Kingman state: Arizona zip code: 86401

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Page _1_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The nominated property is a radio tower built in 1943 to control air traffic at the Kingman Army Air Forces (KAAF) Flexible Gunnery School. The structure is a 54-ft high Airdrome Traffic Control (ATC) tower with a 14 x 14 ft cab. It includes a 4-ft wide catwalk, five flights of stairs, K-bracing, and a hip roof. Other character-defining elements include two steel rods that project 14 ft above the cab roof to support lights, a weather vane and an anemometer, and one steel rod that projects 3 ft above the cab roof to support additional lights. The structure possesses good integrity. The only changes have been the removal of radios and other instruments from the cab, the replacement of two broken window panes with glass from the same era, and the erection of a 6-ft cyclone fence around the base of the stairs to prohibit entry to the now-vacant tower.

Location and Setting

The KAAF Radio Tower is located six miles northeast of Kingman in Mohave County, Arizona, along U.S. Highway ("Route") 66 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (completed through this area in 1882 as the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad). The tower is situated in Hualapai Valley at an elevation of 3385 ft. Hualapai Valley is bounded by the Cerbat, Hualapai, and Peacock Mountains and normally receives from six to ten inches of precipitation annually. The soils and rainfall of the valley support a desertscrub vegetation consisting mostly of galleta grass, catclaw, and creosotebush. The radio tower is situated on the west side of what was Runway No. 1 of the KAAF base. The former base is now the Kingman Airport and Industrial Park (Figure 1).

Description

During World War II, Hualapai Valley became the site for one of the nation's six aerial gunnery schools. The military authorized the facility on May 27, 1942, began a program of "crash" construction in June, and received approval from the U.S. Traffic Control Board on August 4 to begin operations. Less than eight months after construction began, the Kingman Army Air Forces (KAAF) Flexible Gunnery School started training pilots in the art of aerial gunnery (Figure 2).

By the spring of 1943, more than fifty aircraft were stationed at the school (see Section 8). The busy facility had a critical need for ground-to-aircraft radio communication. This function was first performed by a temporary, wooden radio tower, placed in operation by February 10, 1943. The wooden tower was replaced by a steel one placed in operation by mid-April of 1943. The Army Corps of Engineers was in general charge of base construction, and contracted erection of the tower (as well as many barracks) to Del Webb, a baseball-player-turned-contractor who had recently completed Luke Field west of Phoenix.

Del Webb assembled the tower from a prefabricated kit shipped by the Air Service Command (a division of the Army Air Forces) out of Roswell, New Mexico. Declassified military documents refer to the structure as an Airdrome Traffic Control (ATC) tower of "Standard" type (Model No. OCE15758B) that cost a total of \$5,400 to build. Markings on the

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Page _2_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

tower itself (still visible) indicate that this type of tower measured 54-ft high from its base to the deck of the cab and had a 14 x 14-ft cab. Measurements taken during the preparation of this nomination confirm that the tower was assembled to these specifications (Figure 3).

The tower is composed nearly entirely of steel angle-iron that is bolted together, with very few welds (Photos 1 and 2). The four legs of the tower are anchored in concrete piers a foot tall. The primary bracing system of the legs consists of K-bracing — that is, with braces arranged in a pattern of downward-point "K's." Secondary bracing consists of V-shaped bars that connect the legs of the K's to the legs of the tower. The tower legs taper slightly inward from the base to the top. Within the structural skeleton formed by the legs and their bracing are five flights of stairs containing a total of 67 steps. Each flight terminates at a small landing; the landing at the top of the fourth flight is slightly larger than the others because it was built to also accommodate a Chrysler "Airtemp" model air conditioner. The air conditioner is still present but not in working order. The fifth flight terminates at a trap door that opens onto the floor of the catwalk. The catwalk surrounds the cab and measures 4-ft wide. It has a 3.5-ft high balustrade consisting of two horizontal rails.

Although classified as a 14 x 14-ft cab, this figure is an average dimension that does not reflect the fact that the cab is battered, with walls flaring from 13 ft at their base to 15 ft at their top. The lowermost 2.5 ft of the walls are metal, while the upper 4.5 ft are glass. Most of the glass panes measure 18.5 x 12 inches, but the northeast and southeast walls of the cab -- facing the runways -- also contain much larger panes that provide unbroken views of the skies and runways. The floor of the cab consists of wooden planks covered with linoleum; there is a 7-inch step-up from the floor of the catwalk to the floor of the cab. The door from the catwalk to the cab is steel with 18.5 x 12-inch panes of glass. The cab has no ceiling; from inside the cab, the viewer peers upward to see the inside of the hip roof, which is of sheet metal insulated with 1-inch-thick fiberboard. All radios and other instruments were removed from the cab circa 1948. Only the remnants of fuse boxes remain, with manufacturers' plates reading "FA Switchfuz" and "Trumbull Electric Manufacturing Company/Connecticut."

A series of three poles extending upward beyond the roofline are strong character-defining elements of the historic structure. The two longer poles are mounted to the catwalk and project approximately 14 ft above the top of the roof. The north pole contains a weather vane and two red lights, while the south pole contains an anemometer (to measure wind speed) and two red lights. Mounted to the tip of the hip roof and projecting about 3 ft above it is a third pole, supporting two red lights. Still in working order, these instruments and lights have been rewired to relay information to the current traffic control office, located in a modern one-story building about 100 yds northwest of the KAAF tower.

Integrity

The KAAF radio tower has changed little since historic times. Instruments were removed from the cab when the structure was no longer used as a radio tower, around 1948. In the mid 1980s the Kingman Airport Authority installed a 6-ft chain-link fence around the base of the stairs to prevent unauthorized persons from entering. In 1989 a severe storm dislodged and broke two window panes of the cab. They were replaced with identical ones found in storage in an aircraft hangar at the airport. Instruments mounted on poles projecting above the roofline were rewired to relay information to the modern air traffic control office. These are the only changes that have occurred to the structure. Currently used only to measure wind speed and direction, the KAAF radio tower today is in good structural condition and possesses good integrity.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _	8	Page _3_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The nominated property is significant under Criterion A for its association with an important World War II training base (the Kingman Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School) and with a major post-war aircraft surplus yard (Storage Depot #41). The structure provided air traffic control that successfully guided aircraft at the two sequential facilities during the 1940s. Under Criterion A, the property's level of significance is "local" because the structure controlled air traffic in the locality of northeastern Arizona. In addition, the structure has statewide significance under Criterion C as a unique example of its type in Arizona.

Historic Context 1: Significance Associated with KAAF (1942-1945) and Storage Depot #41 (1945-1948)

Even before the United States entered World War II, the government announced that it was searching for sites on which to instruct servicemen in the techniques of aerial gunnery. In the summer of 1940, an astute Mohave County Chamber of Commerce wrote to Franklin Delano Roosevelt to inform the President about all that Hualapai Valley had to offer: clear skies, favorable climate and winds, vast open expanses, and unbeatable proximity to both an intercontinental railroad (the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe) and a major highway (U.S. Highway "Route" 66). Just five months after the nation entered the war, the military concluded that the valley would indeed provide an ideal setting, and authorized the Kingman Army Air Forces (KAAF) Flexible Gunnery School.

The school included a base measuring nine square miles and an adjacent gunnery range of approximately half a million acres. Related to the school were five emergency landing fields, at Red Lake (called Site 1 by the military), Hackberry (Site 3), Topock (Site 5), what is now Lake Havasu (Site 6), and Yucca (Site 7), all in Mohave County.

Construction of the school started immediately following authorization on May 27, 1942. The Army Corps of Engineers utilized a "crash" program of construction to get the school's runways, machine shops, offices, barracks, radio tower, and hangars completed in record time. Buildings and structures were pre-cut and had only to be assembled on-site by specialized teams of framers, welders, roofers, sheet-rockers, and so forth. Although out-of-state firms did some of the work -- for example, Morrison Knudsen of Boise built the runways -- the government used state and local contractors as much as possible. These included Kingman contractor Brice Covington, who constructed the railroad spur from the Santa Fe main line to the warehouses, and Phoenix contractor Del Webb, who erected the KAAF steel radio tower and the base barracks.

Late in December of 1942, the runways were completed and the first training aircraft landed: thirteen North American AT-6 Texan advanced trainers out of Las Vegas. Flexible training squadrons and aviation squadrons in charge of instruction also arrived: the 1120th, 1121th, 1122nd, 1123rd, and 334th. When the first class of 200 students arrived in March of 1943 to begin six weeks of intensive training, the on-base aircraft count had risen to 36 AT-6s, 32 Martin AT-23 Marauders, 4 Beechcraft AT-11 Kansans, 13 Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses, 3 Bell P-39 Cobras, a Vultee L-1 Vigilant,

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Page _4_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

and at least one Lockheed-Vega AT-18 Hudson. The school grew rapidly in the following months, and on May 7, 1943, was redesignated as the Kingman Army Air Field, a name it bore through the end of the war. During the two and a half years of its existence, over 15,000 personnel would be assigned to KAAF and over 35,000 airmen would train there.

KAAF students advanced through a regimen that included ground school, range firing, and finally, firing from combat aircraft. All manner of weapons from BB guns to .50 machine guns were successively used in the program. State-of-the-art simulators called Waller Trainers used motion pictures to give student gunners the sensation of shooting at a moving target from a moving base. Successful completion of the program meant promotion to sergeant or staff sergeant status and the privilege of wearing the gunner's wings

Such a busy school had a critical need for air traffic control. This was accomplished by personnel assigned to the KAAF Radio Tower. Historical photographs indicate that at least two and usually three controllers were on duty in the tower at any time. One controller would inspect the skies visually with binoculars while colleagues would operate the ground-to-aircraft radios and the monitoring instruments. Unfortunately the exact types of radios and other instruments used in the tower are not known. A good indicator of the tower's effectiveness, however, is the fact that although the training school had its share of crashes and other mishaps, few were attributable to faulty traffic control. The most fatal crash occurred on January 13, 1943, when 28 servicemen were killed. Ironically, the tragedy involved no aircraft but rather a bus and train that collided at the Santa Fe RR crossing.

About a month after Germany's surrender to the Allies (V-E Day, May 8, 1945), the Kingman Army Air Field was placed on temporary inactive status. Less than a month after Japan's unconditional surrender (V-J Day, August 14, 1945), the air field was redesignated as Storage Depot #41, a facility under the War Assets Corporation. Nationally, Storage Depot #41 was the largest of five depots, the function of which was to store and dismantle war-time aircraft.

The first aircraft arrived at Storage Depot #41 on October 10, 1945. By December of 1945, one would arrive every few minutes. Some were flown by their own combat crews directly from overseas. The veteran warbirds might arrive with bullet-ridden fuselages, splintered propellers, and coughing engines representing dozens of missions. At the other extreme were aircraft right off the assembly line, their only flying time being their trip to Kingman.

By April, 1946, the "Arizona Graveyard Air Force," as it was dubbed by the press, presented an amazing sight: more than 7,000 bombers, fighters, and other craft lined up row on row for six and a half miles along Route 66 (Photo 3). The *Los Angeles Times* and the *Arizona Republic* devoted front-page spreads to the happening, the world's greatest concentration of aircraft in one place at one time. Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-29 Superfortresses, Consolidated Vultee B-24 Liberators, Douglas A-20 Havocs, Republic P-47 Thunderbolts, Curtiss P-40 Warhawks, North American AT-6 Texans and B-25 Billy Mitchells, Lockheed P-38 Lightnings and P-51 Mustangs, Northrop P-61 Black Widows, and Bell P-39 Cobras, were among the thousands of aircraft that awaited uncertain futures at Storage Depot #41.

Hundreds of nearly new B-24s were treated for protection against erosion, placed in outdoor storage, and left in a state of near-readiness from which they could be deployed in a matter of hours. A few fighters and light bombers -- relatively

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Page _5_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

small craft economical enough for private use -- were sold to American citizens at incredibly low prices (the going price for a P-38 was \$1,250). However, most aircraft were cut up, stripped down, and sold for the scrap metal and instruments.

Contractors conducted the actual salvage and dismantling work. Successful bidders were allowed fourteen months to remove material from the field. Most of the aircraft (5437 of them) were sold to Martin Wunderlich of Jefferson City, Missouri, for a total bid of \$2,780,000. He built a smelter near the airfield and melted the aircraft mainly for their aluminum content. Before he did that, however, he siphoned the fuel they contained, and it was said that Wunderlich made more from the sale of the fuel than he paid for all 5437 planes. Another successful bidder, "Buck" Sheldon Lowery, developed a lucrative cottage industry from the opportunity afforded by Storage Depot #41. He got neighbors to strip cockpit panels of their instruments, some of which he then repackaged and sold in Los Angeles and New York. Lowery eventually made a small fortune by selling parts back to the government during the Korean War. The last salvage work was completed at Storage Depot #41 during the winter of 1947-1948. On July 1, 1948, the airfield and surrounding land were turned over to the county for eventual use as an airport.

As it had in wartime, the radio tower played an important role in the post-war effort. The tower guided approximately 7,000 aircraft containing an estimated 21,000 crew members into Storage Depot #41, and it did so without a single fatal accident. The only known accident associated with the entire salvage operation occurred in October, 1947, when a privately-owned B-18 taking off from the airfield stalled about 150 ft above the runway and crashed, killing its two occupants.

The radio tower is important as the best-preserved element from the days of KAAF and Storage Depot #41. Hundreds of buildings and structures existed on the base in the 1940s (see Figure 2). All but a small handful were razed, salvaged, or moved to Kingman in modern times; concrete pads mark their former locations. Today the only World War II-vintage elements still standing are the KAAF radio tower and two hangars. Of these, the radio tower is the best preserved. Despite the removal of its radios and other instruments, the KAAF Radio Tower maintains remarkably high integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its setting has changed, but in a minor way; the adjacent airfield is no longer a military base but rather a municipal airport.

Historic Context 2: Significance as a Unique Example of Its Type in Arizona

Towers are typically described in terms of a combination of four major attributes: height, dimensions of cab, manufacturer, and bracing pattern. The KAAF Radio Tower is classified as a 54-ft high Airdrome tower with a 14 \times 14-ft battered cab and a "K-brace" pattern.

Although a comprehensive inventory of historic radio towers has not been undertaken, United States Air Force cultural resource personnel believe that the KAAF Radio Tower may be one of only two examples of its type remaining in the nation. According to Mary Ann Nabor, Cultural Resource Manager at Bolling Air Force Base, the other known tower is

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Page _6_	KAAF Radio Tower
			Mohave County, Arizona

located at a former World War II base in Florida. While the KAAF tower may not be unique in the nation, it does appear to be unique in Arizona; no radio tower of its type occurs elsewhere in the state. For that reason, the KAAF tower has a "state" level of significance under Criterion C

Only in the most general sense does the KAAF Radio Tower resemble a fire lookout tower. In 1987 the Southwestern Region of the USDA Forest Service prepared a comprehensive survey and nomination of its fire towers. The project succeeded in listing 31 historic lookouts on the National Register of Historic Places. None of the lookouts comes close to matching the KAAF tower in terms of the combination of traits mentioned above (height, cab dimensions, manufacturer, bracing pattern). In the case of the historic fire lookouts, those with cabs having the dimensions of the KAAF tower (14 x 14 ft) invariably occur on much shorter towers (not exceeding 30 ft). Historic fire lookouts having a height equal to or greater than the KAAF tower (54 ft) invariably have much smaller cabs (7 x 7 ft). Although "K-bracing" occurs on some of the fire lookouts, none were manufactured by Airdrome; *Aermotor* was the manufacturer of most historic fire towers in the Southwestern Region. These data support the contention that the KAAF Radio Tower is a unique structural type in Arizona and eligible under Criterion C at a state level of significance.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section __9_ Page _7_ <u>KAAF Radio Tower</u> <u>Mohave County, Arizona</u>

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OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section __9_ Page _8_ <u>KAAF Radio Tower</u> <u>Mohave County, Arizona</u>

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(8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _Photos_ Page __9_ <u>KAAF Radio Tower</u> <u>Mohave County, Arizona</u>

Photographic Information

- 1) Kingman Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School Radio Tower
- 2) Mohave County, Arizona
- 3) Pat Stein
- 4) April 1998
- 5) Arizona Preservation Consultants, 2124 N. Izabel St., Suite 100, Flagstaff, AZ 86004
- 6) View southwest, showing KAAF Radio Tower.
- 7) Photo 1
- 1) Kingman Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School Radio Tower
- 2) Mohave County, Arizona
- 3) Pat Stein
- 4) April 1998
- 5) Arizona Preservation Consultants, 2124 N. Izabel St., Suite 100, Flagstaff, AZ 86004
- 6) View southeast, showing KAAF Radio Tower.
- 7) Photo 2
- 1) Kingman Army Air Forces Flexible Gunnery School Radio Tower
- 2) Mohave County, Arizona
- 3) Photographer unknown
- 4) Circa 1946
- 5) Mohave County Historical Society, 400 W. Beale St., Kingman, Arizona 86401
- 6) Direction of view unknown. Surplused aircraft at Storage Depot #41.
- 7) Photo 3

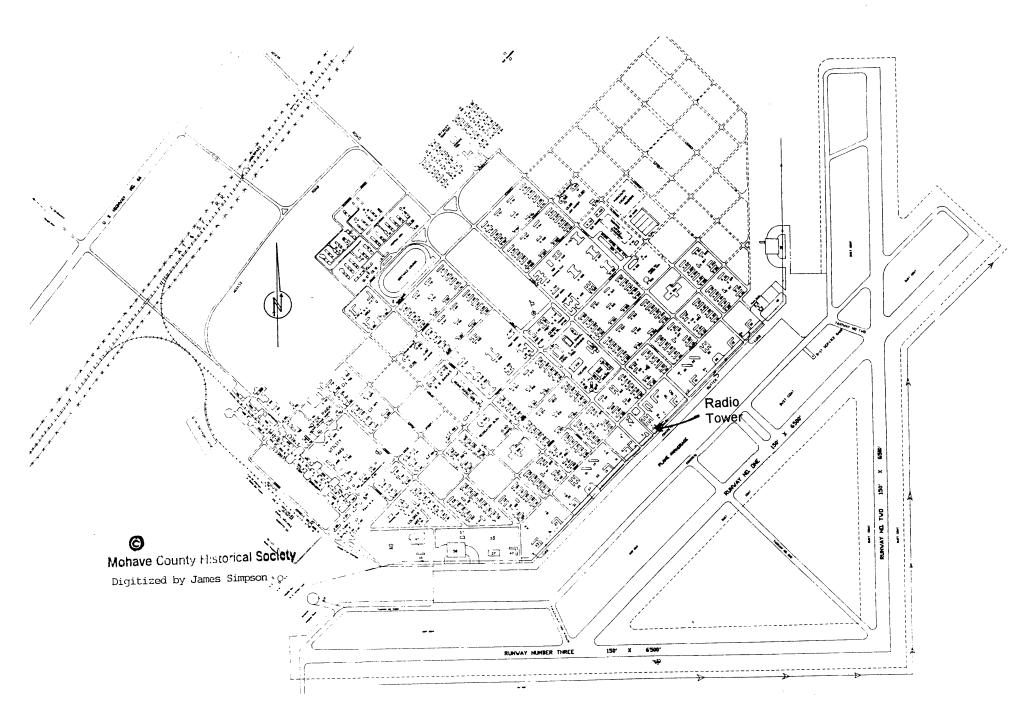


FIGURE 2. FACILITY MAP OF THE KINGMAN ARMY AIR FORCES (KAAF) FLEXIBLE GUNNERY SCHOOL DURING WORLD WAR II.

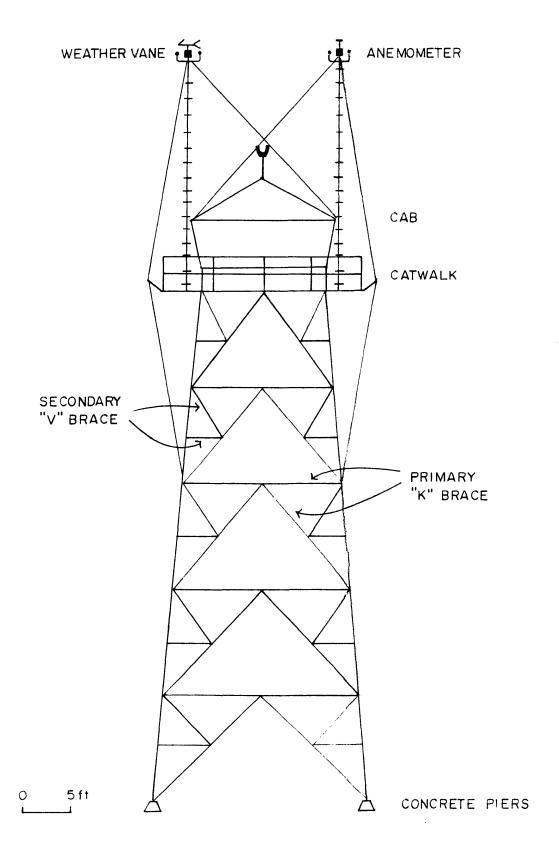


FIGURE 3. KAAF RADIO TOWER SKETCH SHOWING BRACING PATTERN AND GENERAL PROFILE (STAIRWAY NOT SHOWN).