



California State Military Department
**The California State Military
Museum**



Preserving California's Military Heritage

**Historic California Posts, Stations and Airfields
Hayward Air National Guard Base
(Russell City Army Air Field, Hayward Army Air Field)**



P51's of the 194th Fighter Squadron at Hayward ANG Base (Courtesy of Bill Larkins)

History

In 1942 Hayward Army Air Field west of the city of Hayward was built as an auxiliary field to [Chico Army Air Field](#). The primary aircraft stationed at the field were P-38 fighter aircraft. This post may have also named "Russell City Army Air Field" for the unincorporated area outside of the Hayward city limits where it was located.

Later it came under the control of [Hamilton Field](#). Hayward became a civilian airport in 1946 and in August 1947 it was deeded to the City of Hayward. It was called Hayward Municipal Airport, became Hayward Air Terminal in 1963, and in January 1999 it was named Hayward Executive Airport. It is a general aviation and corporate operating field.

The California Air National Guard moved onto land adjoining the airport in 1949. A control tower was erected in 1960. Initially it was the home of the 61st Fighter Wing which included the 194th Fighter Squadron on 25 June 1948. The 61st Fighter Wing was redesignated as the 144th Fighter Bomber Wing on 1 November 1950. The wing also consisted of the 192nd Fighter Squadron at Reno, Nevada and the 191st Fighter Squadron at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The P-51D and later the P-51H were flown from 1948 until 31 October 1954. During its early years with the P-51D/H, the unit earned prominence as one of the Air Force's most respected aerial gunnery competitors. In June, 1953, while still flying the P-51, the unit qualified for the first all-jet, worldwide gunnery meet. Using borrowed F-86A Sabre jets, the 144th, which represented the Air National Guard, placed fifth in competition.

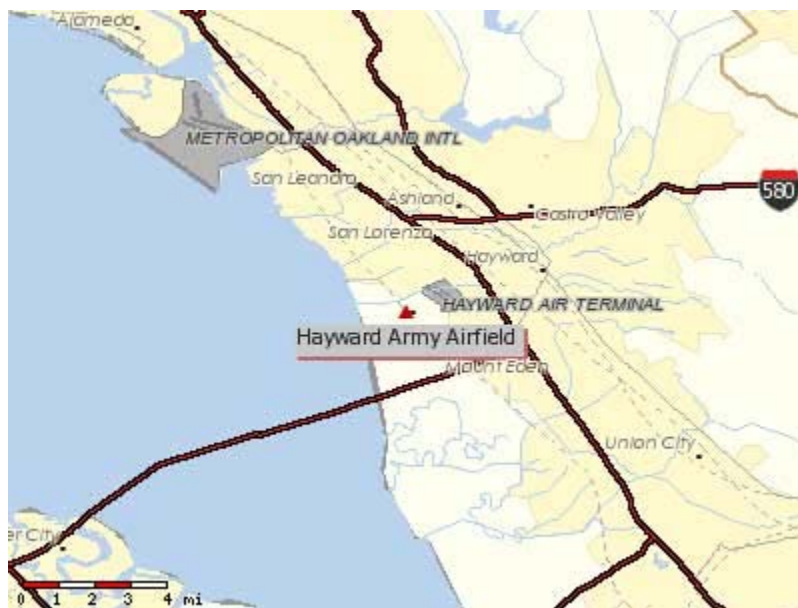
On 1 November 1954, the 194th accomplished the transition from the piston-engined, propeller

driven P-51 to its first jet aircraft, the F-86A. At the same time, the 194th relocated to Fresno, followed by the wing in 1957. The site of the Fresno Air National Guard Base has been used for military aviation since World War II, when it was known as Hammer Field.

For 22 years after the Korean War the field was home to the 129th Air Rescue Squadron, (including its several redesignations), of the California Air National Guard. In 1955 the California ANG was authorized to organize a new squadron to replace its 194th FIS at Hayward Airport; the new unit was the 129th Search and Rescue Squadron (SRW) (Medium), an ANG-manned unit which had been activated during the Korean War in August 1951 and had been assigned to the 111th SRW to serve alongside a Pennsylvania ANG squadron, the 103rd. The 129th SRS was inactivated on January 1, 1953 after the PA ANG unit was returned to state control.

On April 3, 1955 the 129th Air Resupply Squadron was established at Hayward and equipped with Curtiss C-46D Commandos in the Summer 1955 supplemented by Grumman SA-16A Albatrosses in 1958. The C-46Ds phased out 1 November 1958: redesignated 129th Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium). January 20, 1962 reached Group status with federal recognition of the 129th Troop Carrier Group. May 1, 1980: permanent change of station from Hayward Air Terminal to NAS Moffett Field.

Sources: 144th Fighter Wing, Ron Reuthers and Bill Larkins



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Known Units that Served at Hayward Army Air Field

362nd Fighter Squadron, June 4, 1943 to October 4, 1943.

394th Fighter Squadron, December 8, 1943 to March 8, 1944.

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