**1. NAME**

**COMMON:**

Wendover Air Force Base

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**


**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

1/2 mile south of Off U.S. 40/180

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Wendover

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:**

2nd

**STATE/ CODE:**

Utah 49

**COUNTY/Z CODE:**

Tooele 045

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY (Check One):**

- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**OWNERSHIP:**

- Public
- Private
- Church
- Back

**STATUS:**

- Public Acquisition:
- In Process
- Being Considered

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:**

- Yes:
- Restricted
- Unoccupied
- Unrestricted
- No

**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Government
- Industrial
- Educational
- Military
- Commercial
- Religious
- Entertainment
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:**

United States Air Force

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Hill Air Force Base

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Tooele

**STATE:**

Utah

**CODE:**

49

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:**

Tooele County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:**


**CITY OR TOWN:**

Tooele

**STATE:**

Utah

**CODE:**

49

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

Utah Historic Sites Survey

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

1973

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

Utah State Historical Society

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

603 East South Temple

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Salt Lake City

**STATE:**

Utah

**CODE:**

49
Wendover Air Force Base is located just south of the town of Wendover. Although presently unoccupied the base chapel, hospital, barracks, administration offices, hangars, and other buildings remain.

The fire station is still in use by the base caretakers—the base was closed by the Air Force in 1963. One runway is still in use for commercial and private air traffic into Wendover. The Air Central building serves as headquarters for this limited use of the base.

The barricaded area, where the crew of the Enola Gay was housed, remains on the south side of the base separated from the other buildings by the runways.

The buildings which do remain were built in the typical World War II temporary military use style. They are frame buildings and, since 1963, have deteriorated from lack of use.

At present the state of Utah is attempting to acquire the air base site. Several businesses have expressed an interest in using the air base buildings for offices and warehouses. The runway will continue to serve as Wendover's airport.
The history of the base began in 1939 when the Air Corps commenced an extensive expansion program. High on the priority list were adequate bombing and gunnery ranges.

By 1940 a site was located at Wendover. The Air Corps desired some 3,000,000 acres of land 90% of which was public domain. However, because of grazing commitments, the Interior Superintendent was willing to release only 1,500,000 acres. Livestock men in the area suggested that another site be selected or the area reduced in size. They estimated that use of the 1 1/2 million acres would "wipe out 100 outfits" of livestock men and cost the state about $1,500,000 annually.

Despite these objections, work began on the base in November 1940. Temporary barracks were constructed and two 150 x 7000' runways with taxi strips and anchorage areas were graded and graveled. In May 1941, the areas were paved and more extensive construction began.

The first training unit arrived at Wendover April 6, 1942 and found the area ideal for bombing and gunnery practice. Because of the abundance of salt, obtainable from the nearby Bonneville Salt Flats, a city of salt was constructed near the mountains for bombing practice.

The historical significance of the base is its role as the training site for the 509th Group under the command of Colonel Paul W. Tibbets, Jr. It was Colonel Tibbets, flying his B-29, "The Enola Gay," who dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The 509th Group was organized December 17, 1944 and trained at Wendover until May of 1945 when it left for Tenian Island in the Marianas. During its stay at Wendover, the group was housed in a maximum security area. Information about the group's mission was so restricted that even members of the 509th did not know the purpose of this training.

Although the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been regarded by some people as a means too terrible even for use in world wide conflict, it did bring to an end the war with Japan. The crew of the "Enola Gay" proved that an atomic bomb could be used under combat conditions. The threat of its future use served the United States as an important post war foreign policy tool. For its role in ushering in the Atomic Age, the Wendover Air Force Base deserves recognition.
USAF Historical Division "Brief History of Wendover Air Force Base 1940-56." Typescript copy provided by the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 2010

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:** A. Kent Powell, Preservation Historian

**ORGANIZATION:** Utah State Historical Society

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 603 East South Temple

**CITY OR TOWN:** Salt Lake City

**STATE:** Utah

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [X] Local [ ]

**Name:** Milton L. Weilenmann

**Title:** State Historic Preservation Officer

**Date:** Oct. 25, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date:** 7/17/75

**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**Date:** Jun 27, 1975
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER | 10 | PAGE | one

UTM REFERENCES:

A 11/749400/4513600
B 11/753200/4513600
d 11/749400/4510000
C N 11/753200/4510000
WENDOVER AIR FORCE BASE
SE OF WENDOVER, UTAH
UTM REFERENCES:
A - N 749400 / E 4513000
B - N 758200 / E 4513000
C - N 744400 / E 4510000
D - N 758200 / E 4510000

**Note:** The UTM coordinates provided are approximate and should be used with caution for precise location.