

Lincoln Army Air Field Regimental Chapel

The Lincoln Army Air Field Regimental Chapel was built in May of 1942 as one of three non-denominational military chapels serving the World War II Lincoln Army Air Field. Today, it is a symbol of one of the most significant events in our history and a reminder of the many individuals who gave their lives for our country. The Chapel was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.



The United States entered World War II in December of 1941 and the following year eleven army air fields were constructed in Nebraska. Construction of the Lincoln Army Air Field on a 2,750 acre site, located five miles northwest of Lincoln, started on March 22, 1942; 150 days later the air field was operational at a cost of fifteen million dollars. In the next three years over 25,000 military aircraft mechanics were trained at the field. The air field provided basic training for army aviation cadets and served as an overseas deployment staffing area for bombardment groups and fighter squadrons headed for combat duty. The rapid construction of the Lincoln Army Air Field and other army facilities across the country represents one of the largest military mobilization efforts in United States history and was made possible by the use of standardized plans developed by the Army Corps of Engineers and the assumption that construction would be only temporary in nature. 1,016 buildings were built at the Lincoln Air Army Field using mobilization construction; today only the Chapel and two warehouses remain at their original locations.

Chapel #1, also known as the West or Hospital Chapel, was built in 21 days in May at a cost of \$28,427 on the west side of Avenue "B", now N.W. 48th Street. Two other identical chapels were built east of Avenue "B". Originally, the Corps of Engineers did not plan to construct chapels; religious services were to be held in theaters and recreation halls. Only 17 army posts had chapels. However, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt felt soldiers would gain a boost in morale if they could attend religious services in a military chapel. Under pressure from Mrs. Roosevelt, standardized plans for non-denominational army chapels were developed by the Corps. The architectural drawings for the chapels included construction drawings for all of the furnishings. Originally the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of 604 chapels to be built within six months; by the end of the war the number had increased to 1,137. It is unknown how many of these chapels still exist today. However, the temporary nature of their construction, and the military's propensity to constantly update and modernize, work against their survival in great numbers. Many of the chapels have been moved from their original locations or extensively remodeled.