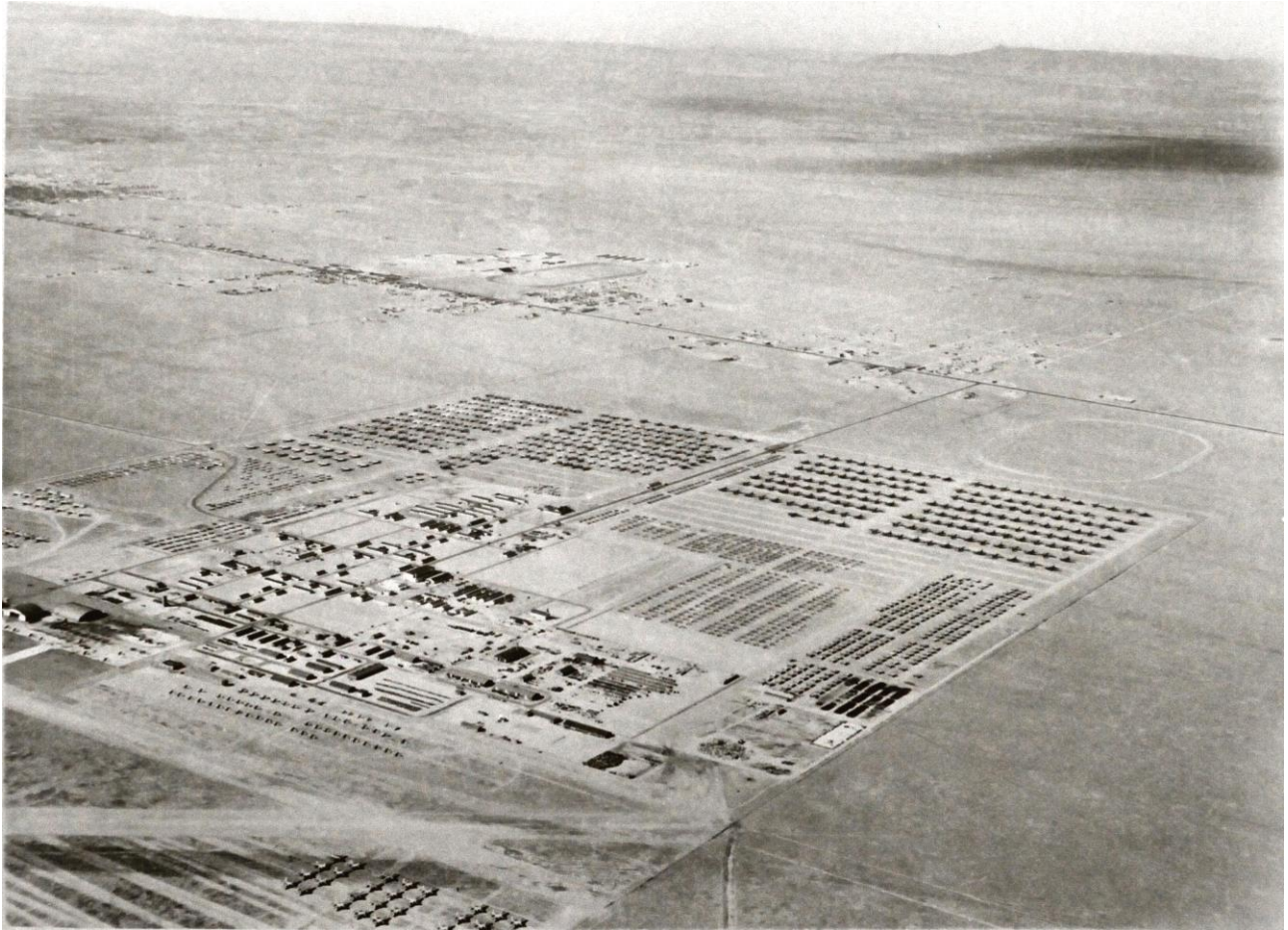


Kirtland Field, the Boneyard of Warplanes

As the war was coming to an end in 1945, Kirtland Field began receiving war-weary and surplus military aircraft as they landed on the old Oxnard Field runways. From there they were towed to various graded mesa land around the Sandia base area.



In this aerial view of Sandia Base, the main road through the center of the base is Wyoming Blvd. To the north is the old Route 66, also called Central Ave. The New Mexico State Fair grounds race track can be seen in the upper middle of the photo.



The Sandia Mountains in the background



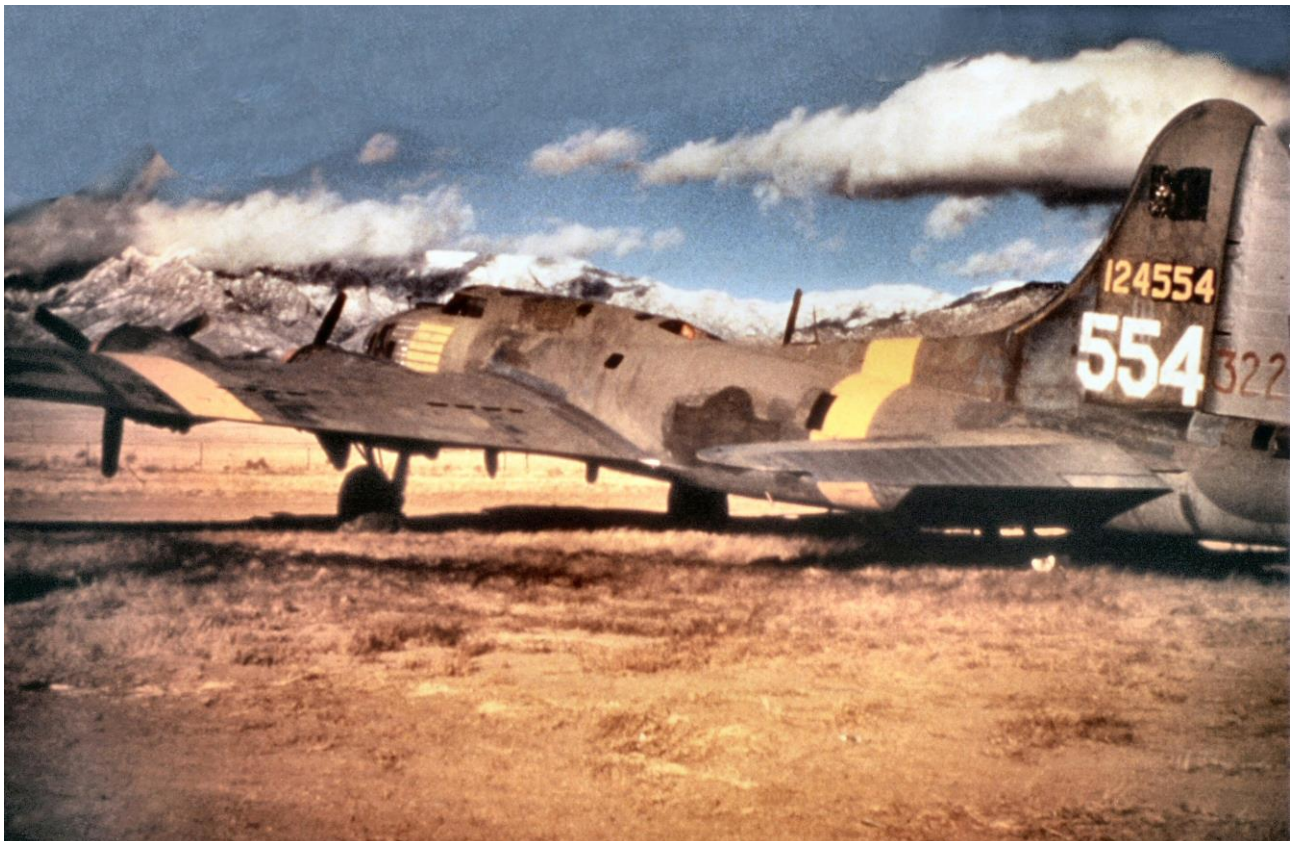
This view is looking to the south and Oxnard Field is seen in the middle of the photograph. As shown, more and more planes were being added after the war ended.



Rows and rows of B-24 and B-17s presented an impressive sight.



We are fortuitous to have a group of color slides of some of the aircraft that were parked on the base, the photographer is not known.



Boeing B-17 bomber



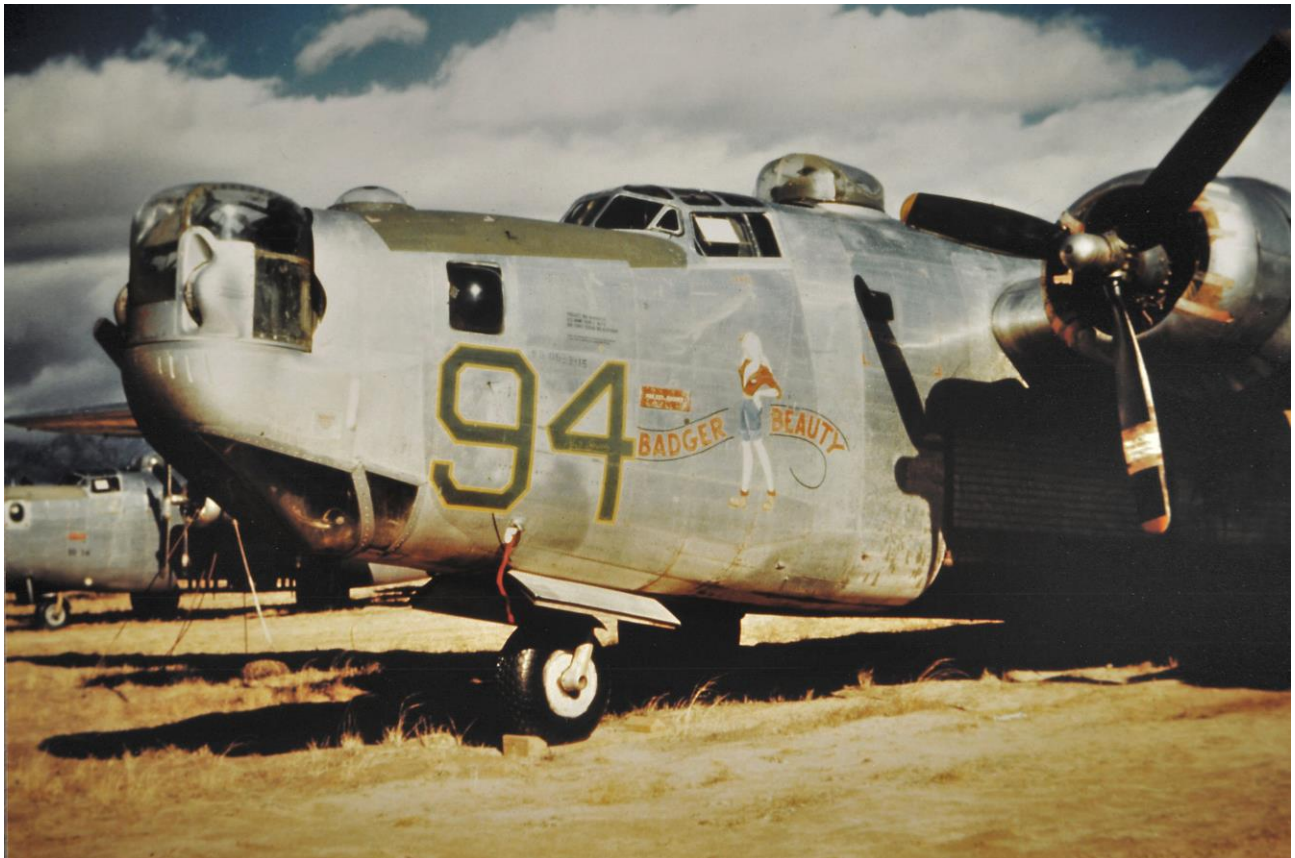
Bell P-39 aircorba



B-24 liberators



More B-24s





Above a Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter/ Below a North American P-51B Mustang





Early razorback P-47 fighters being striped down for disposal. The smoke in the background is the smelter used to melt the planes into ingots of aluminum. The

planes were stripped of the engines and other items, leaving only the aluminum skin and frame to be melted down.



Looking east, the Sandia Mountains in the background, Tijeras Canyon in the upper right.



Looking to the north, Oxnard Field in middle, dark black line in middle is Wyoming Blvd.

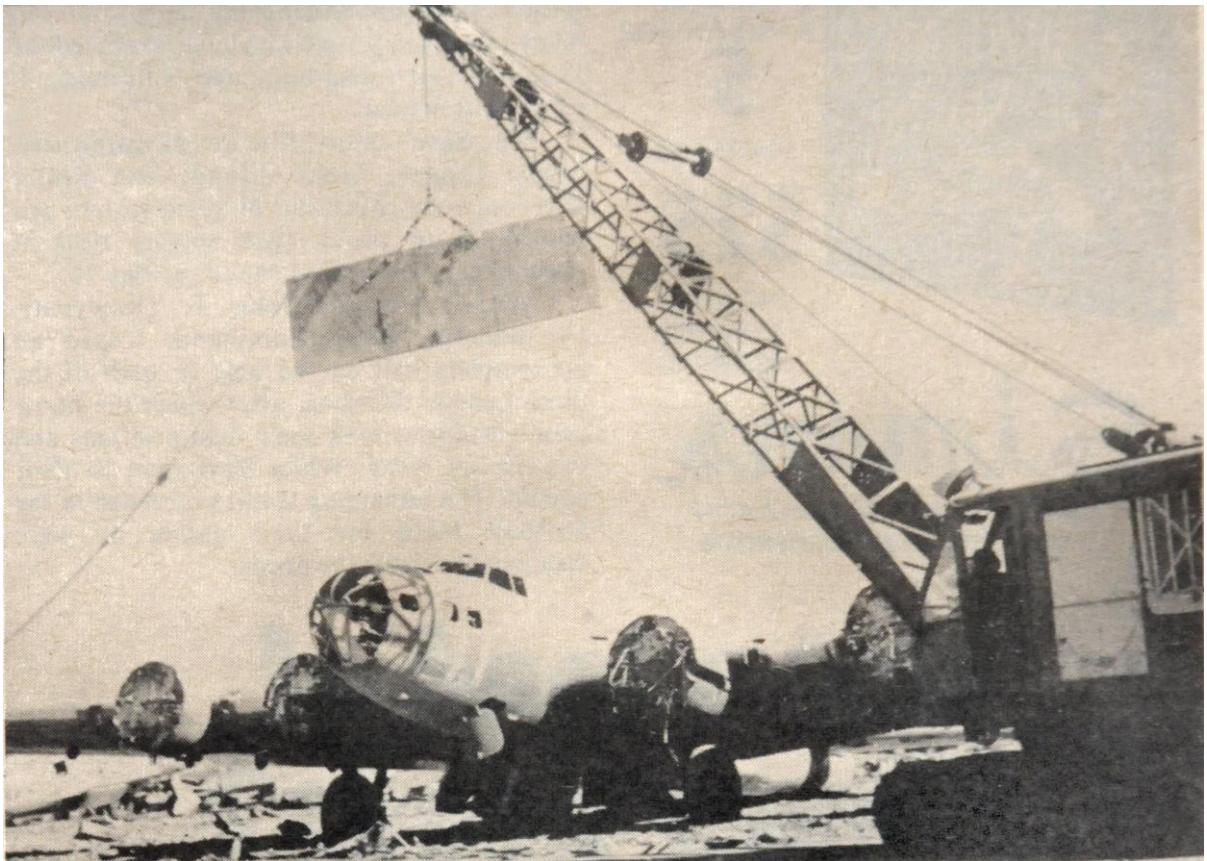
As can be seen from the photos, just about every type of aircraft was represented; more than 2,250 war-weary and surplus military planes were parked waiting for disposal by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, later becoming the War Assets Administration. After the war a number of the aircraft were sold to private parties, for a few hundred dollars, you could buy one of the trainers or transport and due a little maintenance and fly off the field to a new home. A few of the bombers that were sold, were to be used in crop-dusters and fire-fighting operations. Paul Mantz and Jacqueline Cochran well known pilots at the time bought several P-51 and P-64 fighter aircraft for air racing and movie work. Some planes were sold to foreign governments; however this still left many thousands of planes to be disposed of. Albuquerque was just one of many sites across the country that had many thousands of aircraft parked in fields around their airports, and were in the same situation of what to do with them. The answer was to accept bids from salvage contractors to clean up the problem.



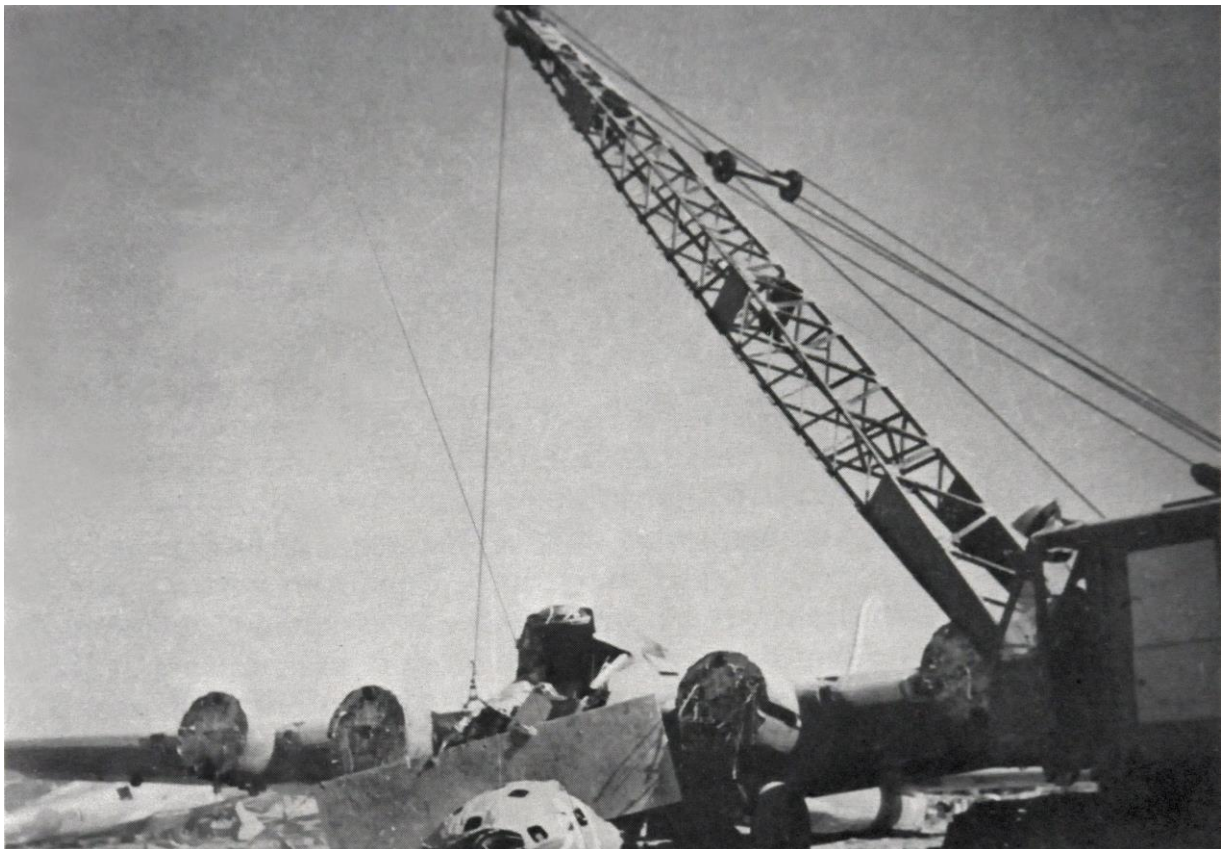
A local gasoline dealer, Calvin and Hugh Horn had a series of gas stations in the area, devised a method of removing the aviation fuel from the tanks, they recovered many thousands of gallons, at 2 cents/per-gallon to resell on the market. Calvin Horn was a photographer in the war; he is in the photo holding a camera on right.

The salvage contractor recovered around 5,000 lbs of aluminum, in addition to scrap iron and copper, plus the rubber tires and many other special items to get rid of the aircraft problem. This was the end of the need to use Oxnard Field, its time had come to close and move all air operations to Kirtland Field.





A B-17 is being scrapped here on Sandia Base, the large steel plate is dropped from the crane, chopping off the nose of the plane, and this guillotine blade drop was used to continue chopping the plane into small pieces that could fit into the smelter to be melted down.



Additional Photos of Salvaged Aircraft







