Gerstner Field will become reality today

(Reprinted from the Nov. 16, 1917, Lake Charles Daily American - Press)

The Lake Charles aviation camp (Gerstner field) becomes such in reality today. It has to date been in the making, but today two trainloads of aviator troops arrived over the Southern Pacific and, reaching Mallard Junction, were switched into the camp at Holmwood, where they immediately took up their quarters in the ample accommodations provided for them.

The first intimation of the movement of troops to the camp here came late last evening, and this morning about 8 o'clock it was learned that one of the trains was not far away, as a still earlier report indicated the train in question had left New Orleans for Lake Charles.

The whereabouts of the second train reported to be bringing troops here were not known at this early hour.

Yesterday several instructors for the training of the flyers arrived and immediately went to the camp. At the present time there are a number of officers at the camp, ready for the work of instruction and more are anticipated right along.

Though there is a question about the camp being turned over to the government at an earlier date, the indications are that it will probably be near December 1 when this event takes place, as about two weeks' work still seems needed to finish the camp.

The first trainload of troops came to Mallard Junction about 8:30 o'clock this morning, arriving at the field an hour later.

There are 265 enlisted men in the first aviation contingent, and 16 flyers. The enlisted men are mechanics.

The other troop train will arrive this evening about 6 o'clock, according to schedule.

The troops have come from the Louisville & Nashville into New Orleans, coming here over the Southern Pacific.

The arrival of the aviation troops caused rumors to fly about that the camp would be formally turned over to the government immediately, but confirmation one way or the other could not be secured today.

It was learned from competent sources that such act is not contemplated short of two weeks, as there remains much yet to be done toward completing the camp.

However, the fact that the camp will still be in the hands of the contractors, the work for which the camp is destined will not be detained, it is stated, but instruction will begin with alacrity.