

The early days of aviation in North Texas

Dallas Love Field

Commissioned on October 19, 1917, Dallas Love Field – the longest running airport in North Texas – began as a training base for the U.S. Army Air Service during World War I.

Following World War I, Love Field remained a military air base until the City of Dallas purchased it in 1927. Construction of paved runways in 1932 helped spur the growth of its commercial air service throughout the 1930s. During the early 1940s, Love Field played a vital role in military operations during World War II, acting as a flight training and aircraft overhaul facility.

In the years that followed, the airport experienced significant expansion as commercial air travel boomed. By 1965, it featured new terminals and a second parallel runway.

Once limited by the Wright Amendment - a federal law passed in 1979 to restrict air travel from Love Field and promote the growth of the then-new Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport - Love Field was able to expand its reach nationwide after the law's repeal in 2014, strengthening its role as the home base for Southwest Airlines.

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport

One of the biggest and busiest airports in the world, Dallas Fort Worth International Airport officially opened January 13, 1974, after years of planning and cooperation between the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. Before DFW, each city had its own airport – Dallas had Love Field, Fort Worth the Greater Southwest Airport. Competition between the two prompted the federal government to step in and urge a joint solution.

The cities agreed in the 1960s to build a regional airport. Construction began in 1969, and DFW opened five years later with nine airlines and four terminals. Its central location made it ideal for connecting flights across the U.S., and it quickly became a major hub.

Resting on more than 17,000 acres, DFW is now one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. It has five terminals, with a sixth under construction, and its own post office, ZIP code and police and fire departments. It is the main hub for American Airlines.

Beyond air travel, DFW Airport has had a major impact on the region's economy, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions in economic activity. It has helped the Dallas–Fort Worth area grow into one of the top metro regions in the U.S. and continues to expand to meet global travel demands.

Perot Field Fort Worth Alliance Airport

Located in far north Fort Worth, the Perot/Alliance airport holds a unique place in aviation history: It was the first U.S. airport designed specifically for industrial use.

Opened in 1989, the airport was developed through a public-private partnership between Hillwood Development, a company founded by Ross Perot Jr., and the City of Fort Worth. Its remote location and infrastructure were built to support a large-scale logistics hub, combining air, rail and truck transportation.

Originally named Alliance Airport, it was rebranded in 2022 as Perot Field Fort Worth Alliance Airport to honor the Perot family's contributions to the region's development. The airport is home to major logistics operations, such as FedEx and UPS, making it a central hub for freight and cargo.

Unlike commercial airports, Perot Field does not offer passenger service but has still played a critical role in regional economic growth. It is a cornerstone of the AllianceTexas development, a 27,000-acre master-planned community focused on business, aviation and innovation.

Meacham International Airport

Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, Meacham International Airport is the second longest running airport in North Texas and one of the oldest continuously operating airports in the state.

Originally known as Fort Worth Municipal Airport, it was renamed Meacham Field in 1927 after former Fort Worth mayor Henry Meacham. It was Fort Worth's first municipal airport and served as the city's main airport until Greater Southwest International Airport opened in the 1950s.

Like Love Field, Meacham served as a military training facility during World War II. It also served as a stop for American Airways, which later became American Airlines. Still standing, Meacham's American Airways hangar, opened in 1933, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Even after commercial airlines shifted to DFW Airport, Meacham continued to play an active role in North Texas' aviation community. Today, it serves as a hub for private and corporate aviation, flight schools and air services. It also houses a museum and several aviation businesses.