Possible legend for events marker:

The Harlingen Army Airfield and Harlingen Air Force Base

In 1940 Mayor Hugh Ramsey proposed to the War Department that it consider Harlingen as a site for a military training facility. With World War II on the horizon, the U.S. Army Air Corps received approval for such a base in March 1941. At this site the city leased 992.5 to the government for $1 a year. By early August work had commenced on the airfield itself, followed by the infrastructure needed for 151 officers, 2155 enlisted men, and the first 600 students of the flexible gunnery school. By May of 1942 nearly $5 million had been appropriated for the installation. In 1943-44, 583.8 additional acres were acquired. After the war’s end in August 1945, the base was closed within six months. More than 48,000 gunners had been trained in the six-week instructional programs during the three and one-half years of the airfield’s operation.

In June 1950 the Korean War commenced and the “Cold War” continued. Two years later the U.S. Air Force reopened the facility as the Harlingen Air Force Base. Five million dollars were appropriated for its expansion. Its mission was to train navigators, initially in a 28-week course and by 1960, 38 weeks. By the time the last cadet had graduated in June 1962, 13,355 students had completed the Navigation School curricula run by 700 officers, 1500 airmen, and complemented by 800 civilians. Due to Federal economies the HAFB was selected to be deactivated after June 1962. The two military facilities in their nearly 14 years of operation helped immensely in Harlingen’s growth and were a source of pride and joy to the city.