

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ingalls FieldOther names/site number: DHR ID# 008-5052

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 6240 Airport RoadCity or town: Hot SpringsState: VACounty: BathNot For Publication: ☐N/AVicinity: ☐N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: air-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: air-related

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, STONE, BRICK, METAL, EARTH

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Ingalls Field is located at 6240 Airport Road (SR 703) near the town of Hot Springs in south-central Bath County, Virginia. The airfield occupies a plateau like section of the summit ridge of Warm Springs Mountain at about 3,750 to 3,800 feet above sea level (the elevation posted at the airport is 3,792). The approximately fifty-acre nominated area contains two contributing historic resources: a partly preserved, T-shaped pair of 1931 grass runways, counted as a single resource, and an early 1930s terminal building. The latter is a small frame building standing at about 3,760 feet above sea level, according to the most current USGS map. The runways and the area around the terminal are surrounded by forest on most sides. The airport expanded to the north in 1960-61, a section which consists of paved runways, hangars, a temporary terminal, a new terminal (under construction in August 2025), and various other structures. The new section has commanding views of mountain ranges in all directions. Other buildings and structures once stood in and near the nominated area and may survive in wooded areas as foundation remnants.

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Narrative Description

Inventory

1. Runways. 1931. Contributing structure.
2. Terminal. Early 1930s. Contributing building.

Runways

The two grass **runways** (inventory no. 1) are arranged perpendicularly in a T-shaped configuration with the terminal and formerly other buildings near their meeting point. One of the runways was described as the “NE and SW runway” in a historic-period account and hence is described as the northeast-southwest runway in this report. The other is therefore described as the northwest-southeast runway. The latter, which is at present the most distinct of the two and is maintained so that it can be used by small aircraft, formerly had a cleared adjacent area that functioned as an airplane parking ramp. This area’s overgrown edge is where the terminal is located. The northeast-southwest runway is less distinct and less complete. The north ends of both grass runways were taken to create a paved runway in 1960-61 and are not located in the nominated area.

Terminal Exterior

The north-facing **terminal** (inventory no. 2) is a small, one-story, frame building with an L-shaped plan, a metal-sheathed front/side-gable roof, and unpainted horizontal flushboard sheathing formerly covered with tar paper and white-painted weatherboard siding. In the reentrant corner of the building are remnants of a front porch consisting of kicked roof extensions, a deteriorated beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling, a stone foundation wall, and a collapsed floor structure with deteriorated floorboards. The original square porch posts and railings with square balusters are missing, as is a ladder stair with handrails that rose to an observation deck that sat on the east part of the roof extension. The ladder stair appears in one historic-period photo but does not appear to be shown in another (the observation deck appears in both photos).

Opening from the porch are two entries, one into the manager’s office at the front of the building and the other into the waiting room at the back. The office entry has a stack-panel door and the waiting room entry has a door with a six-pane window above three stack panels (the office door may not be original; an early photo appears to show a glass-panel door with a gridded muntin pattern in its place). These doors and the basement door are painted light blue. Entry and window openings have simple quarter-round trim. The standard windows have six-over-six wood sashes. There are three smaller and higher restroom windows with six-pane casement sashes and, on one of these windows, a screen panel hinged at the top. The roof eaves have exposed rafter ends with

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traces of green paint under the white. Green paint also survives on the top weatherboards or bed boards that survive on some elevations.

The foundation is constructed of sandstone ashlar blocks in multicolor hues of gray, buff, honey, ocher, red, pink, and purple. The site slopes to the south so that the foundation is more exposed on that end, and there is a stairwell with stone retaining walls leading down to a basement entrance. Set into the corner of the stairwell retaining wall is an iron benchmark with incised triangle and rectangle figures. The basement entrance has a wood door and there are three small rectangular basement windows with two-pane sashes. On the south rear elevation is an exterior brick chimney with a stone base (the stone drabber than the foundation stone), stretcher-bond reddish brickwork (with the occasional kiss mark, darker brick, and patches of vitrification), and stepped shoulders. The bricks are reused handmade bricks, perhaps from a demolished building at The Homestead.

Terminal Interior

The interior has wood floorboards and beaverboard walls and ceilings divided into panels with battens. The ceiling panels have a Craftsman-influenced pattern with square and narrow rectangular panels around the borders. Molded wood cornices run along the top of the walls in all rooms. The walls, ceilings, and cornices were painted white and/or off white on two or more occasions. Doors, which are stack-panel on the interior, and the door and window trim are painted dark brown.

The airport manager's office preserves a number of features associated with its original use such as a bulletin board, a phone jack, a bracketed shelf, and a faucet (without a sink). On the ceiling are an attic access and the base of a light fixture. The primary feature of the waiting room is the fireplace, located on the back wall of the room. The fireplace currently has no mantel; whether it had one originally or had an exposed brick surround is at present unclear. A metal stove stands amid other debris near the fireplace and there is a stove flue thimble above, set into the brickwork of the chimney which is mostly exposed due to loss of water-damaged wall sheathing. The waiting room has a small ceiling light fixture with a decorative glass shade.

To one side of the waiting room are doorways to two restrooms. These have, in whole or in remnants, porcelain commodes and sinks, wall-mounted light fixtures, and metal paper towel dispensers. There are ghost impressions of former over-sink mirrors. One restroom has a turncock (possibly used to cut off water to the building) and a cylindrical metal object of unknown function mounted on the doorframe. The door to one of the restrooms has a metal inscription plaque missing its inscription. The basement, which was probably used for storage, has stone walls in the same hues visible on the exterior.

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Integrity Statement

Ingalls Field possesses good overall integrity. The property retains its key historic elements, the grass runways and terminal. The runways are virtually unchanged from their original character, though their north ends have been erased by subsequent airport construction and the area in front of the terminal where airplanes parked is partly overgrown. The terminal retains its overall form and plan and most historic-period features and finishes such as windows, doors, roofing, foundation, chimney, flooring, wall and ceiling finishes, and trim. It retains its fireplace, though the fireplace may be missing a mantel. The building is also missing its weatherboard siding, porch posts and railings, and rooftop observation deck, and portions of the under-sheathing are deteriorated as a result of exposure to the elements. The historic complex as a whole is missing several secondary resources, including the manager's house. Despite these losses, Ingalls Field possesses overall integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The immediate setting is virtually unchanged from its original wooded character, with the exception of the later airport construction noted above. That construction, though outside the period of significance, is nevertheless not out of keeping with the historic function of the 1930s airfield. The paved runways have the same open quality as the grass runways. The survival of character-defining features and the integrity of setting contribute to the airfield's high integrity of feeling and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1931-1961

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Ingalls Field, located on top of Warm Springs Mountain in Bath County, Virginia, consists of a small terminal building and grass runways constructed in the 1930s by the Virginia Hot Springs Company, developer of The Homestead resort. World War I flying ace and Homestead board member David S. Ingalls, for whom the airport is named, officially inaugurated the field by landing on it in May 1931. The novelty, cachet, and speed of air travel—under five hours from New York’s Pennsylvania Station to the airfield—contributed to the resort experience for The Homestead’s guests. The house-like terminal building has a front porch, a waiting room with a fireplace, and an airfield manager’s office, as well as decorative features like Craftsman-influenced beaverboard wall and ceiling finishes and a foundation of multihued sandstone blocks. The original airfield was superseded by the completion of a new terminal and paved runway on an adjacent site in 1961, though one of the grass runways remains in use. Ingalls Field is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the Transportation area of significance as a unique transportation-related historic resource in Bath County from the early days of commercial aviation, and as a prestigious means of travel to and from The Homestead, the county’s principal economic enterprise during the twentieth century. The period of significance extends from 1931, the first year of airfield operations, to 1961 when the original terminal was retired. Ingalls Field is eligible at the local level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historic Context and Criterion A Transportation Area of Significance

Ingalls Field is historically associated with the Ingalls family resort enterprise known as The Homestead. In the 1890s a syndicate associated with the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad formed the Hot Springs Company, also known as the Virginia Hot Springs Company, to develop the preexisting resort at Bath County’s famous Hot Springs thermal springs. One of the company’s owners was Melville E. Ingalls; later Melville’s son Fay Ingalls (1882-1957) operated the resort. Fay Ingalls wrote a history of The Homestead—*The Valley Road: The Story of Virginia Hot Springs* (1949)—in which he described the genesis of the airfield during the early years of the Great Depression.¹

¹ “Homestead,” 8.2-8.3; Ingalls, *Valley Road*, 180-183. Several people and organizations assisted the report author, foremost among them Preservation Bath and its project contact, Tom Richardson. Assistance was also provided by Preservation Bath members Rebecca Larys, Bill Jones, and Lee Elliott; Richard L. Armstrong, president/collections manager with the Bath County Historical Society; The Homestead staff Cindy White and Bruce Young; Parke Kershner, Ingalls Field; Richard (Mack) McElwee and Julie Meadows with the County of Bath; Jeffrey Bryant Ford; Terry Ammons; Crockett Stanley; Blair Smyth; Noah Bergman; and Aubrey Von Lindern, Austin Walker, and Michael Pulice with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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In 1929 The Homestead acquired 7,000 acres on Warm Springs Mountain, which defines the southeast side of the valley in which the resort is located, in order to secure water rights. "Having bought the top of the mountain," Fay Ingalls wrote, "the next thing to consider was what to do with it." A golf course was considered, as was a steeplechase course. Another idea was an airfield, though this does not seem to have been seriously considered initially. In the June 1930 issue of the *Homestead Spectator* magazine Ingalls wrote, "If we ever felt that such a thing [an airfield] was necessary at Hot Springs, it would provide an A1 landing field." The idea gained traction later in 1930, in part due to the influence of Ingalls' nephew, David Sinton Ingalls (1899-1985). David Ingalls distinguished himself as a Navy pilot during World War I (he was the only Navy aviator honored with the title "Ace") and afterward pursued careers in business, politics, and public service, including the post of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Aeronautics (1929-32). He was also, in the early 1930s, a member of the board of directors of the Virginia Hot Springs Company.²

David Ingalls, writes his uncle, scouted potential airfield locations in the vicinity of The Homestead from the air. The final selection was clinched at a meeting at the future site of the airfield attended by Fay and David Ingalls and several "aviation-minded men," guests at the resort, including Juan Trippe, founder of Pan American World Airways, and Townsend Luddington, founder of the Luddington Line, which Fay Ingalls considered "the first real Washington-New York air line." Despite these stellar aviation associations, Ingalls wrote, "The building of the airport . . . was a pretty amateurish job. The use of bulldozers and similar equipment was not as widespread in 1930 as it has since become nor did the Company at that time own sufficient of such machines. The airport, for another reason, was largely built by hand labor." That other reason was the desire to alleviate unemployment caused by the Depression and by a severe drought that afflicted Bath County farmers. "The financial affairs of the Company were none too rosy and the work at the airport might well have been stopped, but people did not realize the long, hard years ahead and employment could be offered on top of the mountain, so the work went on."³

Barracks were constructed on the mountaintop and work continued through the hard winter of 1930-31. Ingalls wrote, "The original plans for the airport have never really been completed. These called for transverse runways as well as the T which now exists, elaborate hangars and extensions of runways to take the largest commercial planes." Though Ingalls did not explicitly state it in his book, by offering air travel to The Homestead guests he was enhancing their resort experience and generating positive press for the beleaguered resort. Aspects of Ingalls' accounts are echoed in an anonymous ca. 1990 report in the files of the Bath County Historical Society, which, though it erroneously dates the commencement of work to the spring of 1929, provides additional detail. "Work continued, even during the hard time of the great depression and except for severe winter weather, until two turf runways (one 250ft x 3,400ft and one 150ft x 2,400ft), a small wood frame terminal or office building, a modest wood frame dwelling to house the

² *Homestead Spectator* (June 1930): 4; Ingalls, *Valley Road*, 180; Bath County Deed Book 69, p. 106.

³ Ingalls, *Valley Road*, 181-182.

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manager, hangars and storage buildings had been completed.” Some of the buildings described in the report, such as hangars, were built later than the early 1930s. The 1931 and 1933 Healing Springs, Va., USGS maps show a single building in the vicinity of the original terminal building, perhaps the terminal building or the construction worker barracks.⁴

An article in the February 1931 *Spectator* credited unnamed “engineers” with a supervisory role in the planning and construction of the airfield. The article provides a third account of the field’s origins:

The patrons of The Homestead were delighted with the announcement of last fall that the Virginia Hot Springs Company had authorized the immediate development of a Class A airport to serve its guests and visitors to the Hot Springs Colony. Work was started immediately and has advanced so rapidly that the engineers confidently claim the new field will be ready to receive planes by June of the coming season.

The *Spectator* added: “The new airport will be developed in units until the entire project is completed. The first runway, which is already under way, is the northeast-southwest runway, following the direction of the prevailing winds. This unit, when completed early in the summer, will permit the landing of any type of plane in reasonably good weather.” Although Fay Ingalls in this account claimed the mountaintop “immediately suggested its availability” as an airport, later in the article it was stated that, “Several sites were considered in and about the valleys surrounding Hot Springs, but all were disregarded in favor of the mountain top site where the dangers of flying in and among hill tops is eliminated.” Less turbulence and fog and the superior visibility of the elevated location were cited as positives. The field was easily accessible to guests via Delafield Road, an existing carriage road up the mountain, but was distant enough that Homestead patrons would not be disturbed by aircraft noise. The photos that accompanied the article showed heavy equipment and blasting at the site.⁵

A follow-up *Homestead Spectator* article in May 1931 announced:

Just six months after the woodchoppers first invaded the dense timberland on top of Warm Springs Mountain, the new Hot Springs airport received the first visitor to come to The Homestead by air. Mr. David S. Ingalls, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Aeronautics, in whose honor the field has been named, glided to a graceful landing one hour after leaving the Naval flying field at Washington, D.C.

Ingalls may have been the first official aeronautical visitor, but according to an April 9, 1931, report he was beaten to the field by “Pilot Brown” and “Manager Gaston” with the Dixie Flying Service. The duo flew in from the airport at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and “made a good landing despite mud and inclement weather.” Following Brown, Gaston, and Ingalls a number of well-heeled Homestead guests including Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt availed

⁴ Ingalls, *Valley Road*, 183; “Ingalls Field Airport,” 1; Healing Springs, Va., 1931 and 1933 USGS maps; *Homestead Spectator* (May 1957).

⁵ “New Airport,” 4-5.

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themselves of the facility. The New York City area supplied many of the early passengers via an extension of the Luddington Line which connected New York (Newark) and Washington. From Pennsylvania Station to Hot Springs total trip time was 4 hours 40 minutes with the reverse trip taking 4 hours 25 minutes.⁶

The May 1931 article continued, "The area for the second runway has been cleared and work will be carried on gradually until Ingalls Field will rank with the finest landing fields in the East," also that, "The final plans for the airport provide for the construction of hangars to accommodate visiting planes, and a modernized service station. A fuel station has been built and it is now possible for visiting airmen to obtain all necessary supplies." An undated *Spectator* clipping from early 1931 noted that completion of the first runway was expected in early April. Undated photos in the Ingalls Field photo collection show two hangars of vertical-board-sided frame construction with doors on tracks and exposed rafter ends, the latter characteristic of 1930s construction but also possible from the 1940s. These stood somewhere adjacent to the grass runways and terminal area. The airport was licensed by the Virginia State Corporation Commission on June 16, 1931. The document notes that the "Virginia Hot Springs Airport" was located six miles from the Homestead Hotel "near the point known as the Pinnacle."⁷

An undated color photo, possibly printed from a Kodachrome slide taken in the late 1930s or 1940s, shows the existing terminal with a lower, side-gabled building next to it on the west side. The second building, which had the identifying text "Ingalls Field" painted on its roof, was the manager's dwelling. The image also shows a small open-sided gabled structure, a small white-painted building with a red gas pump next to it, and a third, larger white-painted building in the distance. A black-and-white photo of the terminal, probably taken in the late 1930s or 1940s, shows the original rooftop observation deck from which the manager monitored airport activities. A Coca Cola cooler stands on the front porch in the photo.⁸

During its early years, Ingalls Field was a popular destination for Homestead excursionists. Attendees at a Garden Clubs of Virginia event at The Homestead in early June 1931 were to be "taken on a motor trip to Ingalls Field—the Hot Springs airport on the top of Warm Springs Mountain, where a picnic luncheon will be served." Photos with the May 1931 *Spectator* article show a crowd of spectators watching as "A visitor arrives by air," one of the group a boy in an aviator's leather jacket and cap. At some point The Homestead inaugurated a charter service equipped with a twin-motor, five-passenger Cessna piloted by Eddie O. Kent. Navigation was aided by the installation of an "air-ways radio beacon" in 1933, donated by Pan American World Airways. Around the same period the airport was awarded a certificate by the Daniel

⁶ "Ingalls Field New Hot Springs Airport," 8-9; "Plane Dares Landing." A photograph accompanying the May article may show a small shed-roofed structure in the general vicinity of the terminal, perhaps an original manager's office. An abbreviated version of the May article was printed in the June 25, 1931, issue of *Blue Ridge Guide*.

⁷ "Ingalls Field New Hot Springs Airport," 8-9; "Regular Air Passenger Service," 12; Ingalls Field photo collection.

⁸ Kodachrome was introduced for use in still cameras in 1936, which would suggest the photo dates to that year or later.

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Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics, signed by Fund president Harry F. Guggenheim and famous aviator Charles A. Lindbergh. The certificate reads in part, “This is to certify that Virginia Hot Springs has completed the work of identification for the service of aerial navigation thus contributing to the establishment of a nation-wide system of transportation by air.”⁹

The development of Ingalls Field occurred during the first flush of commercial aviation in Virginia. A 1936 report noted that in 1930 no passenger trip miles were flown in the state that year, with commercial flights limited to airmail. In 1931 daily passenger trip miles amounted to an average of 348 miles, a figure that increased dramatically to 2,848 miles in 1932. Some of this traffic would have been to and from Ingalls Field. Trip miles decreased precipitously in 1933, one of the worst years of the Depression, before rebounding to 1932 levels in 1936. The 1936 report included a map of Ingalls Field showing the field’s T-form runway configuration, a runway widening near the terminal that functioned as an aircraft parking ramp, and three buildings. Though the buildings are unlabeled, they included a small building in front of a larger one, which is the same relationship the surviving terminal had to the former manager’s dwelling, indicating these two buildings stood by 1936. The map’s legend notes that the airport’s “day marking” consisted of “Roof Markers in Town.” This probably refers to the painted identification of the airfield on the roof of the manager’s dwelling, as roof markers in the town of Hot Springs, which is miles away, would have been useless as a guide to the airport. The airport had cone markers (small conical markers set on the ground), a hundred-foot marker circle at the junction of the two runways (though the circle was considered faint by the report authors), a wind direction indicator, and airport facilities including service, telephone, and transportation (the latter on call). The airport had no night marking, lighting, or civil airway equipment.¹⁰

An early reference to military use of the field is an October 1938 report of a visit by Lt. Anthony Mustoe, “meteorological adviser with the general staff U.S. Army Air Service,” who landed in “one of the late model, all-metal army attack ships.” Whether the field received military use in the run up to and during World War II is uncertain. On April 9, 1941, the airport was closed as a consequence of a crash resulting from “the soft condition of the landing surface.” On December 2, 1941, it was reported, “Major Allan C. Perkinson, director of the division of aeronautics of the State Corporation Commission, warned State flyers yesterday that Ingalls Field at Hot Springs is closed from November 24 until April 1, 1942 with no attendant or maintenance[.] He urged

⁹ *Covington Virginian*, June 8, 1931; “Ingalls Field New Hot Springs Airport,” 9; “Homestead Airport,” “Ingalls Field Airport,” 1. A 2000 report states that Lindbergh “reportedly helped celebrate the opening of Ingalls Field” (*Recorder*, September 29, 2000). Lindbergh was a media sensation in the 1930s, and the lack of period newspaper accounts of him visiting the airfield strongly suggests that he did not. Likewise, no known *Homestead Spectator* article mentions a visit by him.

¹⁰ *Tentative Report of the Virginia State Planning Board*, 12, airport plan 25. The third building, which is partly visible beyond trees in a period photo, may have provided airport storage. The 1936 map notes that the airport did not have a hangar at the time. The “service” noted on the map would have included the terminal’s two restrooms. Given the socioeconomic context of the airfield during the historic period, these are interpreted to have served for male and female white users rather than white and African American users.

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pilots using the field to use extreme caution.” In June 1944 the airfield received full redesignation with operation as a commercial field by the Garner Aviator Service of Roanoke and Richmond.¹¹

Evidence suggests the field continued in use during the late 1940s and 1950s with little if any interruption. An article in the May 1957 *Spectator* describes the airport as it was at that time:

It will now take planes up to and including a DC-3. The surface is firm, well drained grass. From April 15 to November 15 there is an attendant on duty 24 hours. Fuel and lubrication are available at the field and mechanical service is obtainable from Woodrum Field in Roanoke, if needed.

There are now two 3,400 foot runways in excellent condition. This spring the NE and SW runway has been widened and regraded, some trees have been cut down to improve the hazards of approach and several other obstructions have been removed, such as two old hanger [sic] sheds and some power lines.

A Non-directional 224 KC identification beacon brings planes safely into the field. The beacon is operated from sun up to sun down. A Unicom 122.8 MC. and 3023.5 KC has been installed for communications between the pilot and field. There is a tie-down service for small planes and fire truck permanently stationed at the airport is equipped with foam extinguishers to meet any emergency.

A hotel taxi carried passengers back and forth between the resort and the field, and an “Air Taxi service” and limousine service connected the field to Roanoke.¹²

In the late 1950s area political leaders considered the airfield’s potential to spur economic development in the region. On December 10, 1959, a local newspaper reported on efforts to attract industry to the Clifton Forge, Covington, and Alleghany County area (the cities and the county immediately south of Bath County), and urged airport upgrades to allow use by the commercial planes of the era. A separate report the same day noted planning was already well underway, and that Ingalls Field had been selected as “the only adequate site for a commercial airport” in the area. On December 15 it was announced, “A large commercial airport servicing Alleghany and Bath counties, Covington and Clifton Forge will be a reality in less than two years.” The Wiley and Wilson engineering firm of Lynchburg was involved in the site selection process in conjunction with Federal Aviation Agency officials. In attendance for the September 1960 groundbreaking for the airport’s new 5,000-foot paved runway was David S. Ingalls, then vice-president of Virginia Hot Springs, Inc., who stated the airport was “a very important thing to everyone in the area.” Plans included construction of McGraw’s Gap Road (SR 606) to

¹¹ *Recorder*, October 7, 1938; *Covington Virginian*, April 9, 1941, and June 19, 1944; *Waynesboro News-Virginian*, December 2, 1941. The closing date of November 24 in the December 2, 1941, report may be a typo for December 24, as the closing would otherwise have been reported after the fact. The report implies continued use may have been anticipated in emergencies.

¹² *Homestead Spectator* (May 1957).

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connect the airport to Clifton Forge. "Many of the officials came to the event by plane," it was noted, "and were amazed at the size of the broad, grass-covered runways."¹³

According to the anonymous ca. 1990 report, the new runway and aircraft parking ramp, designed by the Washington, DC-based Airways Engineering Corporation, opened to the public on September 7, 1961. Virginia Hot Springs, Inc., built a new terminal building and donated it to the airport in November 1961. The *Spectator* that month pictured Don Rupert and John Beavers of "Airways Engineers," Homestead chief engineer Carl J. Wallin, and airport committee member Thomas J. Lennon standing in front of the partly completed new terminal building reviewing a construction drawing. The issue also included an airport plan that showed the new paved runway crossing the northwest-southeast grass runway, which is shown extending beyond the paved strip to the airport access road. The northeast-southwest runway is not portrayed. The original terminal and manager's dwelling are indicated, as are two other structures in their vicinity. "Since the initial construction," wrote the author of the anonymous report, referring to the 1960-61 construction, "many improvements have been made. The runway was extended 600 feet to 5,600 feet, the aircraft parking ramp was more than doubled, taxiways have been built, a full instrument landing system was installed and the terminal building has been enlarged and remodeled." True to the hopes of the airport expansion promoters, a number of large industrial plants located in the Clifton Forge-Covington area as a result of the expansion. In October 1962 it was reported that 82 airplanes carrying 251 passengers used the airport during a four-day period, and the demand led to approval of scheduled air service operated by Piedmont Airlines in June 1963, service which commenced in April 1964.¹⁴

The original terminal building was no longer used as a terminal after 1961. Its subsequent use is uncertain, though it has been used informally for the storage of obsolete airport equipment. As late as 1966, as shown on a USGS map of that year, three structures stood at the location of the original terminal, two of which would have been the old terminal and manager's dwelling. In 1990 it was reported that about 35,000 people used Ingalls Field annually, about ninety percent of them guests at The Homestead, including at various times Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter. The grass runways remain in use for fix-winged aircraft and military helicopters. Ingalls Field is today regarded as the highest elevation commercial airport in the eastern United States.¹⁵

¹³ *Daily Review*, December 10 and 15, 1959; *Covington Virginian*, September 8, 1960.

¹⁴ *Homestead Spectator*, November 1961; "Ingalls Field Airport," 1-2; *Covington Virginian*, September 2, 1961, October 26, 1962, and June 17, 1963; *Roanoke Times*, April 19, 1964.

¹⁵ Healing Springs, Va., 1966 USGS map; *Recorder*, June 28, 1990.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Air Commerce Bulletin (Washington, DC).

Bath County deed and plat records. Bath County Courthouse, Warm Springs, Va.

Bath County Historical Society Collection. Warm Springs, Virginia.

The Blue Book of American Aviation . . . 1940 Edition. Asheville, NC: Aviation Statistics Institute of America, 1940.

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Descriptions of Airports and Landing Fields in the United States. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932.

Directory of Airports and Seaplane Bases. Part I. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939.

“A Guide to Ingalls Field Airport.” Brochure, ca. 1980.

Healing Springs, Va., 1931, 1933, and 1966 USGS maps.

“The Homestead.” National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form, 1984.

“The Homestead Airport.” Undated clipping in the files of the Bath County Historical Society, Warm Springs, Va.

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Warm Springs, Va.

“Ingalls Field New Hot Springs Airport.” *Homestead Spectator* (May 1931): 8-9.

Ingalls, Fay. *The Valley Road: The Story of Virginia Hot Springs*. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1949.

“A New Airport” *Homestead Spectator* (February 1931): 4-5, 19.

“Plane Dares Landing Here Last Sunday.” Newspaper clipping (April 9, 1931). Bath County Historical Society Collection.

Recorder (Monterey Va.).

“Regular Air Passenger Service Between New York and Hot Springs is Planned.” *Homestead Spectator* (March or April, 1931): 12.

Richmond News Leader (Richmond, Va.).

Tentative Report of the Virginia State Planning Board on Part VII Section 4 Aviation. Richmond: 1937.

Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the State Corporation Commission of Virginia for the Year Ending December 31, 1931. Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1932.

Virginian Review (Covington, Va.).

Waynesboro News-Virginian (Waynesboro, Va.).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Va.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR ID# 008-5052

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 50 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.952978 Longitude: -79.828283
2. Latitude: 37.947378 Longitude: -79.823584
3. Latitude: 37.943486 Longitude: -79.827768
4. Latitude: 37.948460 Longitude: -79.837875

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area is a portion of the tract described in Bath County Deed Book 69, p.106, and depicted in the plat that accompanies the deed and is filed in Plat Cabinet 1 Slide 20. The boundary description follows the relevant metes and bounds in the deed with the addition of a new line between vertices (hubs) N and C that divides the nominated area from that part of the property that is not proposed for nomination. The boundary of the nominated area is as follows: Beginning at "N", a hub; thence S. 23° 32' W. 1072.00 feet to "T", a hub; thence S. 57° 52' W. 956.62 feet to "U", a hub; thence S. 45° 47' 40" E. 1080.00 feet to "V", a hub; thence S. 29° 42' 20" W. 733.36 feet to "W", a hub; thence N. 45° 47' 40" W. 1758.04 feet to "A", a hub; thence S. 44° 12' 20" W. 450.00 feet to "B", a hub; thence N. 45° 47' 40" W. 501.23 feet to "C", a hub; thence by a new line to "N", the point of beginning. (Note: hub V may also be designated hub Y in the deed and plat.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the core pre-1961 area of Ingalls Field and excludes the paved runway and other resources associated with the 1960-61 airport expansion.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization: Landmark Preservation Associates
street & number: 6 Houston Street
city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450
e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net
telephone: (540) 464-5315
date: September 4, 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ingalls Field

City or Vicinity: Hot Springs

County: Bath

State: Virginia

Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni

Date Photographed: July 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13. Terminal as seen from the northwest-southeast runway. View facing southwest.

2 of 13. Terminal east and north sides. View facing southwest.

3 of 13. Terminal north and west sides showing office and restroom windows. View facing southeast.

4 of 13. Terminal south side showing chimney and bathroom and basement windows. View facing northeast.

5 of 13. Terminal porch showing waiting room entry (left) and office entry (right). View facing southwest.

6 of 13. Terminal foundation at southeast corner. View facing west.

7 of 13. Terminal manager's office with bulletin board far right.

8 of 13. Terminal waiting room with fireplace and bathroom door.

9 of 13. Terminal waiting room with bathroom doors.

10 of 13. Terminal bathroom ceiling.

11 of 13. Northwest-southeast runway looking northwest from southeast end.

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12 of 13. Looking northward across junction of northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest runways toward current airport center.

13 of 13. Looking southward from current terminal across the north ends of the northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest runways.

Historic Images Log (See Continuation Sheets)

Figure 1. Terminal east side showing the observation deck and ladder stair in a ca. 1940 photo in the Ingalls Field photo collection, Hot Springs, Va. View facing west.

Figure 2. Airfield buildings including the terminal (far left) and manager's dwelling (next to the terminal) in a ca. 1940 photo in the Ingalls Field photo collection, Hot Springs, Va.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Figure 1. Terminal east side showing the observation deck and ladder stair in a ca. 1940 photo in the Ingalls Field photo collection, Hot Springs, Va. View facing west.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation

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Figure 2. Airfield buildings including the terminal (far left) and manager's dwelling (next to the terminal) in a ca. 1940 photo in the Ingalls Field photo collection, Hot Springs, Va.

Ingalls Field

6240 Airport Road, Hot Springs vicinity, Bath County, VA, DHR ID# 008-5052

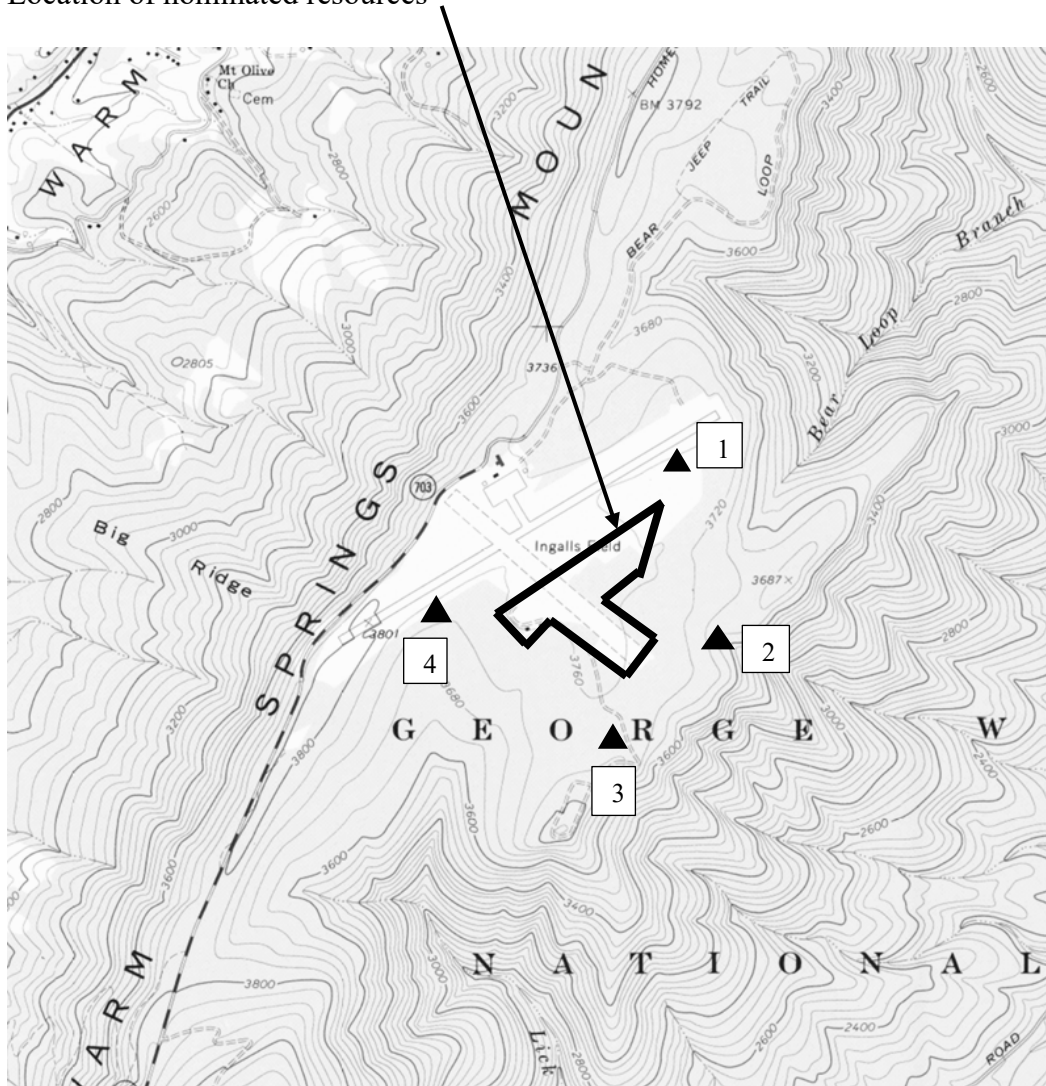
National Register of Historic Places Location Map

Map adapted from 1983 Healing Springs, Va. USGS map. Approximate boundary indicated by heavy black line.

Latitude/longitude coordinates:

1. 37.952978 -79.828283
2. 37.947378 -79.823584
3. 37.943486 -79.827768
4. 37.948460 -79.837875

Location of nominated resources



0 2000

scale in feet



Ingalls Field

6240 Airport Road, Hot Springs vicinity, Bath County, VA, DHR ID# 008-5052

National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map, Site Plan, and Photo Key

Map adapted from Bath County GIS. Boundary indicated by heavy black line. Resource locations approximate. See nomination report for verbal boundary description (drawing unscaled). Arrows indicate number and direction of view of nomination photos and are keyed to the photo log in the nomination report.

Inventory

1. Runways. Contributing structure.
2. Terminal. Contributing building.



























