

"You know," said an airport authority member, "I don't hear even the chronic crybabies crying any more. Perhaps they are afraid to, but I certainly don't hear them. It's been a lot of work, but it's been enjoyable. It's an education—every day is different. I don't want to sound stuffy, but you get a sense of accomplishment. You really do. I like to feel like we're doing something for the community. That makes the hours worth while. The big job still is ahead of us. What we have done so far is prepare for it. I'd like to stress the tremendous cooperation we have received from all public bodies and from private citizens as well. That's been most impressive to me."

With the official declaration of surplus announcement on the 29th of June 1965 came the realization that that milestone would increase the activity between the Salina institutions and the regional Federal offices. Everyone expected a blizzard of paperwork. The airport authority and the educational interests were developing a mountain of paper and were anticipating early decisions on the part of the Federal agencies. The first major development was expected to come from the Salina Area Vocational-Technical School. A detailed proposal to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had been completed and was under study in the HEW regional office. Farther away was the massive "airport package" which would involve the Federal Aviation Agency.

The man on the street was discussing the fact that Schilling Air Force Base was officially out-of-business as a fighting unit on the 25th of June. The revolving airfield beacon atop the watertower was dark. The control tower stood empty and the aircraft aprons were no longer filled with aircraft. The noise of power lawnmowers had replaced the noise of jet aircraft. The Schilling story, which began in the early days of World War II with a cluster of tar paper shacks, was concluded with the ceremonies involving the folding, packaging and shipment of a gold-fringed blue flag to Air Force archives.

However, on that day a new squadron unit was activated under the command of Colonel Scanlan. Not one hour was lost in the maze of work involved in the transition. The new command wasn't an impressive one, since it had no aircraft, no machine shops, no battle flag, and no combat mission.

On that day it was estimated that the closure and transition was approximately 6 weeks ahead of the original timetable. The commander's statement that he would try to keep the place cleaned up and in repair was carried out to the letter. Except for neatly placed "off-limits" signs and the stillness that prevailed throughout the next 12 months, the appearance of the base buildings and grounds was to remain excellent. Without exception, military and civilian visitors to the base—and there were hundreds—commented that there was no active military installation that could claim a higher degree of basic maintenance and appearance.

The activities of the airport authority and those of the other local institutions materially increased in the weeks that followed the declaration of surplus. On the 29th of June the Urban Renewal Agency granted the community funds for planning and reserved additional funds totaling nearly \$1 million for the anticipated development of a city-county government and Civic Center. This tremendous boost to morale was certainly significant. On the 2d of July the Air Transport Association released a report which said that