

# Things Are Jumping At Raeford Airport

BY LAURIE TELFAIR

Raeford's airport is growing. The city's new office building there has just been completed and a snack - shop grill is under construction.

The Green Beret Sport Parachute Club, one of three sky - diving clubs at Ft. Bragg, uses the airport for parachute jumps. Members of the club usually jump three or four days during the week as well as on Saturday and Sunday.

The club has been using the airport for jumps for about a year and a half now, but with the building completed and fuel facilities added, the airport is now home base.

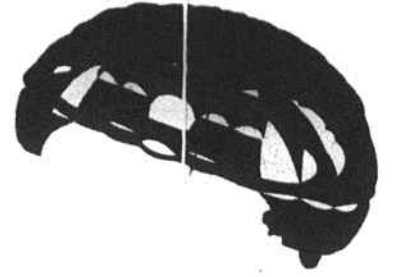
The city recently leased a portion of the airport and the new building to SSgt. Gene Thacker to operate the club, a parachute school and similar operations.

Thacker, who is stationed at Ft. Bragg, plans to retire in about a year, city manager John Gaddy said, and will then operate a business at the airport full time. He has purchased land bordering the airport and is building a home there.

The snack shop, which is owned by Joe Williams, is partially completed. When it is finished, outdoor tables will be set on a patio with a view to the skydiving area, Gaddy said.

The city recently fertilized the grass landing strip and with the recent rain, the grass has begun to spread more thickly over the strip.

A fuel pump and telephone have also been installed at the airport. Gaddy said he hoped the city could eventually add lights and pave the landing strip and refueling area.



SKY RIDE -- A parachutist glides slowly earthward toward a target spot at the Raeford airport. Members of the Green Beret Sport Parachute Club are using the airport for jumps several days a week and on weekends.

PHOTOS

BY

ROBERT DICKSON



CITY ADDITION -- A new building at the airport has been completed recently by the city and is leased to Gene Thacker for a sports parachute club there. This is the first major improvement the city has made at the airport since the property was acquired.



CHUTE PACKING -- Members of the Green Beret Sport Parachute Club get their parachutes ready for another jump at the Raeford airport. Part of the airport is leased to SFC Gene Thacker for the club and other activities.



ALL ABOARD -- Sky divers get ready for take off at the airport. Members of a sport parachute club make jumps there on weekends and frequently during the week. The city has just completed a small office building at the airport and has leased for the sky diving activities.



TOUCHDOWN -- A member of the Green Beret Sport Parachute Club comes in for a landing at the target area at the Raeford airport last week. The parachutist make frequent jumps there during the week.