

Annaba Rabah Bitat Airport (IATA: AAE, ICAO: DABB), formerly known as Les Salines Airport, and popularly as El Mellah Airport is an international airport located 9 km (5.6 mi) south of Annaba, a city in Algeria.[1] It is named after Rabah Bitat, a president of Algeria (1978-1979).

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History[edit]

Built at the time of French Algeria, the airport was named Bône-les-Salines, in reference to the salt lakes in the vicinity of the site.

It was put into operation in 1939 and a decree of December 16, 1958 entrusted the operation to the Chamber of Commerce of Bône.[4]

World war II[edit]

During World War II the airport was known as Bone Airfield, and was used by the German Luftwaffe. Later captured by the United States Army, the USAAF Twelfth Air Force in the Western Desert Campaign in 1942–1943.

In November 1942 the Allies invaded French Morocco and Algeria (Operation Torch). The British airborne operations in North Africa started on 12 November, when the 3rd Battalion, Parachute Regiment carried out the first battalion sized parachute drop, on Bone airfield. The remainder of the 1st Parachute Brigade arrived by sea the next day. Bone Airfield was the base of No. 111 Squadron RAF, a Supermarine Spitfire squadron under Squadron Leader Tony Bartley. One notable pilot to fly from Bone on occasion was Wing Commander Adrian Warburton who was an infrequent visitor after crash landing there on 15 November 1942. 81 Squadron were based at Bone from the 16th November to the 31st January 1942 with Ras Berry DSO DFC and then Colin F Gray DSO DFC being Squadron leaders. Alan M Peart DFC also claimed his first aerial combat victory as well as two further aircraft damaged over Bone harbour during this time. [5]

Algerian war[edit]

After the war, the air base 213 one of the air bases of the French Air Force, was established on the site at that time. It was home to the 1/91 Gascogne Bombardment Group, a unit recreated on September 1, 1956 (and temporarily dissolved on September 17, 1962, after the Algerian War), which was equipped with Douglas B-26 Invaders.[6]

Post-war period[edit]

After Algerian independence, and until 2000, Annaba airport was named El-Mellaha (meaning in Arabic "Les Salines").

Since then, the airport has been named in honor of Rabah Bitat, former head of the Algerian

state.

Facilities[edit]

The Old terminal had an annual capacity of 500,000 passengers. In January 2016, the new international terminal had been opened. The New Terminal, which commissioning generates 300 jobs, has an expandable capacity of 700,000 passengers per year.[7]

Terminal of the airport.

Terminal of the airport

Airlines and destinations[edit]

Airlines Destinations

Air Algérie[8] Algiers, Istanbul, Lyon, Marseille, Oran, Paris–Charles de Gaulle, Paris–Orly

Tassili Airlines Algiers, El Oued, Hassi Messaoud

Volotea Marseille[9]

Statistics[edit]

The evolution of air traffic at Annaba airport between 2006 and 2020 is :[10]

Traffic Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
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Total	362	303	372	244	386	607	416	435	402	585	421	547	446	846	462	003	473	530	489	739	530	709	553	349	520	493	515	481	105	229
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