



The Navy Presence in Texas During the 20th Century

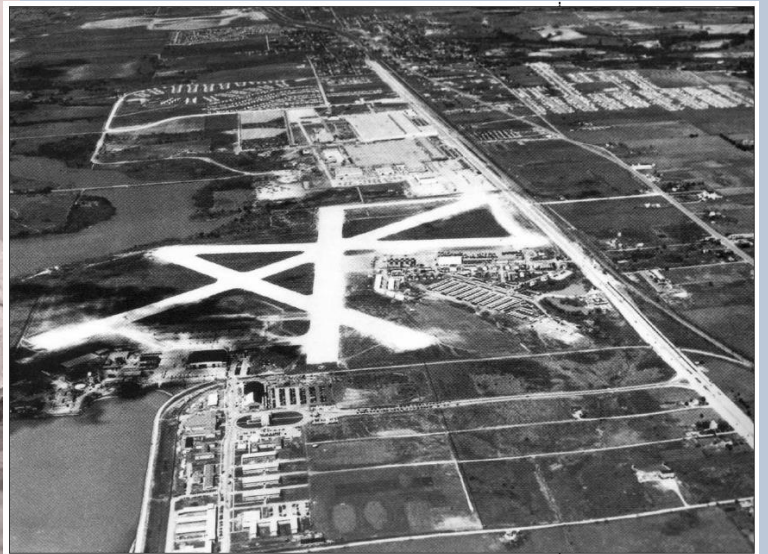




Figure 1. Map of NAS Corpus Christi showing auxiliary fields and outlying fields, 1943. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California.

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San Antonio Navy recruiters next to recruiting trailer, 1942. Source: San Antonio Light Photograph collection, Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, Texas.

Top: T-28s flying in formation at NAS Corpus Christi, 1954. Source: National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. Bottom Left: Blue Angels pilots at NAS Corpus Christi, 1954. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California. Bottom Right: Aerial photo of NAS Dallas and Hensley Field in relation to Plancor #25. Source: United States Naval Air Stations of World War II: Volume 2, Western States by M. L. Shettle, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

This brochure is a summary of a larger report entitled, *The Navy Presence in Texas During the Twentieth Century*. The report, brochure, and a website are all part of a mitigation project conducted by the U.S. Navy in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission for the loss of ten Senior Officers' Quarters at Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The story of the Navy in Texas during the twentieth century encompasses diverse periods of war, depression and economic and military expansion. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Texas contributed little to the Navy's overall mission. However, the onset of World War I, the birth and increasing importance of naval aviation and the growth of Texas' oil and gas industry all contributed to the emergence of the state as a key location for naval development. Though the Navy's presence has diminished in the postwar decades, Texas continues to play an integral role in the modern Navy's overall mission.

Texas' important contributions to the Navy in the twentieth century originated with the establishment of the naval district system in 1903. Throughout the previous century, the United States Navy operated under a centralized approach to coastal defense. By the late nineteenth century, however, naval leaders recognized the advantages of a decentralized district system to manage naval threats along the country's immense coastline. As a result, in 1903, the Secretary of the Navy approved the creation of thirteen naval districts encompassing the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coastlines. From 1903 to 1915, the districts encompassed only the immediate coastline and were tasked solely with defense duties, with administrative, communication and logistic functions continuing to emanate from Navy headquarters in Washington, D.C. By 1915, however, with Europe at war, U.S. naval planners initiated significant organizational changes to the district system. From 1915 to

1918, a series of orders expanded the duties of individual districts to include administration, communications, logistics and defense. In addition, the territory for each district expanded outside of the coastline and into the interior of the nation. For Texas, now part of the newly established Eighth Naval District headquartered in New Orleans, the decentralized system resulted in new naval facilities related to the United States' entry into World War I. The expanded responsibilities of each naval district remained unaltered until World War II.



Aerial photo of Cuddihy Field, 1941 (An auxiliary field of NAS Corpus Christi). Source: National Archives II, College Park, Maryland

THE NAVY

1903

Eighth Naval District Established

1911

First demonstrated plane landing on a Navy ship

First hydroplane flight

Naval Air Station Program begins

1916-1919

Establishment of Point Isabel Navy Wireless Station

U.S. Enters World War I

Establishment of Galveston Naval Air Patrol Station

Establishment of U.S. Helium Production Plant, Fort Worth

Navy completes 1st aerial crossing of the Atlantic

1920-1922

1920 Naval District System Expanded

1921 Congress authorizes the Bureau of Aeronautics

1922 U.S. Navy commissions the first aircraft carrier, the
Langley

1933-1939

1933 Adolf Hitler elected as Chancellor of Germany

1935 Hitler passes the Nuremburg Laws

1938 Establishment of Dallas Naval Reserve Air Base

1939 Implementation of the Industrial Mobilization Pro-
gram National Defense Act

1940

Establishment of Naval Air Station Dallas

Construction begins on Naval Air Training Center Corpus
Christi

Establishment of Kingsville Naval Air Training Center

Establishment of Rodd Field

Establishment of Cabaniss Field

Establishment of Cuddihy Field

Defense Plant Corporation founded

1941

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi Commissioned

Naval Air Base Dallas Commissioned

Cabaniss, Rodd, and Cuddihy Fields are completed

Camp Wallace Constructed

Japan attacks U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor

Germany Declares War on U.S.

1942

Establishment of Hitchcock Naval Air Station

Establishment of Eagle Mountain

Establishment of Fort Worth Naval Air Station

Establishment of Waldron Field

Establishment of NAAS Kingsville

Establishment of Tarrant Airfield Fort Worth

Establishment of Naval Air Technical Training Center on
Ward Island

Establishment of the first radar school at NAS Corpus
Christi

Congress Authorized Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant

20th CENTURY TIMELINE

1943

Establishment of Chase Field Naval Air Station

Establishment of Plant B at NIRAP Dallas

Naval Reserve Air Base Dallas Commissioned

NAS Hitchcock Commissioned

NAS Clinton takes control of NAS Eagle Mountain

Establishment of Meacham Field Naval Auxiliary Air Facility

1945

Naval Operation Support Center (NOSC) Orange Established

Tarrant Airfield becomes Fort Worth Army Airfield

Prisoner of War Camp opens at NAS Corpus Christi

Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant named surplus property

NAS Hitchcock placed in maintenance status

1946

NAAS Kingsville decommissioned

Camp Wallace taken out of service

Establishment of the Strategic Air Command

Prisoner of War Camp closes at NAS Corpus Christi

World War II ends

1948

Naval Air Advanced Training Command moves to NAS Corpus Christi

Blue Angels move to Corpus Christi

1951-1952

NAAS Kingsville Re-commissioned

NIRAP Dallas changed to Naval Weapons Reserve Plant-Dallas

1958-1959

NOSC Orange deactivated

Naval Space Surveillance Program (NAVSPASUR) Established

1961

NAVSPASUR Detection system commissioned

Transmitter Station at Lake Kickapoo Activated

Army leases majority of NAS Corpus Christi for Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD)

1968-1975

NAS Kingsville becomes an autonomous unit

McMullen Target Range Commissioned

Cabaniss Field Reactivated as Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (NALF)

Naval Air Advanced Training Command (CNATRA) replaced NAATC

Vietnam War Ends

1983

President Reagan includes \$215 Million for Military Sites in Texas

1985-1990

Navy Selects Ingleside for battleship port

NS Ingleside Officially Opens

1993-1995

NAS Chase Field Closes

Carswell Air Force Base renamed Naval Air Station Fort Worth

Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant Closes

Coastal Defense

Prior to World War I, coastal defense in Texas was primarily handled by the Army, rather than the Navy. The Army constructed Fort Crockett on Galveston Island in 1897. The fort included batteries along the Gulf of Mexico designed to use artillery for coastal defense. After the Galveston hurricane of 1900, the fort was deactivated and occupied by the Army Corps of Engineers. The fort remained closed until 1911. In 1913, Fort Crockett was proposed as the hub for Army and Navy men, ships, and supplies used for the construction of the Panama Canal.

A key component of the Eighth Naval District's mission was to provide coastal security and monitor enemy traffic in the Gulf of Mexico. In pursuit of this mission, the district erected five section bases in 1941, three of which were located in Texas: Sabine Pass, Corpus Christi and Galveston. These bases allowed the Navy to coordinate defense efforts throughout the Gulf. In addition to the section bases, the artillery units at Fort Crockett on Galveston Island were reactivated by the Army. Also assisting was the Coast Guard, which staffed observation towers and operated boat patrols across the Gulf coast, from Brownsville to New Orleans.

Fears of the enemy targeting the Gulf of Mexico arrived shortly after the United States entered the World War II. On 28 January 1942, a German U-boat allegedly was spotted in the Gulf of Mexico, near Port Aransas. No attacks in the Gulf occurred immediately thereafter, but, in the following weeks, several oil tankers were sunk in the Atlantic. Between 1942 and 1944, German U-boats in the Gulf sank a number of merchant vessels off the coast of Florida, in the Caribbean, and in the Gulf of Mexico; some of which were based in Galveston. Over the next two years, German U-boats in the Gulf sank 56 ships and damaged an additional 14.

To solve the problem of U-boats in the Gulf, the Navy turned to blimps and constructed a base near Galveston, Texas to support this effort. The use of blimps or airships to detect submarines dates back to World War I when the British first used them to deter torpedo attacks. In 1942, the Navy began construction of NAS Hitchcock along the Texas coast to house blimps used to thwart U-boat attacks in the Gulf. Upon completion, however, the U-boat threat had been greatly diminished but observation blimps continued anti-submarine patrols along the coastline of Texas. By 1944, U-boats were no longer present in the Gulf of Mexico, allowing the Navy to convert NAS Hitchcock to a naval air facility.



NAS Hitchcock, 1943. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California.

Background: Blimp hangar, 1943. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California.

Naval Aviation Training

Prior to World War I, all naval aviation training occurred at NAS Pensacola. In the years preceding America's involvement in World War I, it became clear that if the military were to use air power in any capacity, the country needed more trained pilots, ground crews, and flying fields for such an operation. In 1916, with an increase in Congressional funding, the first of 29 new fields were constructed, based on Canadian models that had been adapted to fit the needs of American military service. Nevertheless, prior to World War I, the Navy had few aviation resources; only 54 aircraft and 48 pilots in April 1917. With America's entry into World War I, however, naval experimentation with aviation increased tremendously in scope and responsibility. The majority of naval aviation training continued to occur at NAS Pensacola, but Texas became the location of several additional training fields, located at San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Waco, Wichita Falls, and Dallas. By November 1918, though, naval aviation forces nationwide included 2,107 aircraft and 15 lighter-than-air ships (blimps), along with 6,716 officers and 30,693 enlisted men. Marine Corps aviation forces included an additional 282 officers and 2,180 enlisted men. Naval aircraft logged almost 800,000 miles in bombing and patrol missions, dropped over 126,000 pounds of bombs on German targets on land and at sea, and sank or damaged 12 German submarines.

At the conclusion of World War I, the United States entered into a disarmament treaty that limited the construction of new battleships, battle cruisers and aircraft carriers. Due to military reduction plans following the war, the number of naval officers and enlisted men fell as a result of reduced activities.

The establishment of NAS Corpus Christi in 1941 was in direct response to the Navy's need for naval aviators at the onset of World War II. The attack at Pearl Harbor not only increased the pace of training programs at Pensacola and Corpus Christi; it also provided the impetus for the Navy to commit funds to the construction of a series of secondary stations around its two main bases to serve as auxiliary landing fields and support bases. NAS Corpus Christi, the hub of the Navy's training activities in South Texas, served as the "main field" for six other fields constructed in the region, including Rodd, Cabaniss, Cuddihy and Waldron auxiliary air stations, which border NAS Corpus Christi; Kingsville Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS) in Kingsville; and NAAS Chase Field in Beeville.

Eight days following the dedication ceremonies, 52 cadets arrived at NAS Corpus Christi to begin flight instruction. Training commenced on 1 April 1941. Cadets completed two weeks of basic training and infantry followed by four weeks of ground training and daily classroom instruction. After ground training, a cadet moved on to nine weeks of classroom and flight training on the N3N Yellow Peril trainer, an aircraft widely used as a primary trainer throughout the late 1930s and 1940s. Cadets at NAS Corpus Christi endured intensive flight training divided into primary, basic, instrument, and advanced classes and occurred at the naval air station as well as the Outlying Landing Fields (OLFs). Cadets trained in fighters, dive-bombers, torpedo bombers, scout observation, multi-engine land and sea planes, and in-flight instruction on Vought observation seaplanes, Grumman fighters, Curtiss scout-bombers, and the Douglas SBD dive bomber. Rodd, Cabaniss, and Cuddihy Fields became operational in the early summer of 1941. The first group of cadets trained at NAS Corpus and each OLF, depending on the type of plane the cadet was qualified to fly. After approximately seven months of training, the first class of cadets graduated in November 1941, just 36 days before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

Background: Prop training aircraft, NAS Corpus Christi, 1961, Source: Operational Archives Section, Washington Navy Yard.

Although Corpus Christi was the center of Naval Aviation training during World War II it wasn't the only location for Naval Aviation training in Texas. The climate, geography, and vast open space made Texas an ideal place for training. Naval training facilities were established at Dallas, Hitchcock, Fort Worth, Kingsville, Chase Field, Eagle Mountain, Clinton as well as outlying fields at Rodd, Waldron, Cabaniss, Cuddihy, and Meacham.

After D-Day on 6 June 1944, the role of naval air stations changed again to accommodate the new military climate of the United States. The war was turning in favor of the Allied Forces and, since early wartime construction and recruiting had been so extensive, many military bases were no longer in need of extra facilities or manpower. Most military personnel needed for the Navy war effort were already serving in Europe or in the Pacific. During this period, the number of cadets receiving primary flight training at various stations was reduced because the rate of combat pilot survival was one-third greater than anticipated. Owing to low combat losses, the Navy no longer needed as many new pilots, only replacements for those who had completed their tour of duty. By the end of the war, naval aviation training in Texas proved vital to the war effort. NAS Corpus Christi graduated 35,000 naval aviators; 7,000 more than those produced by NAS Pensacola.

In 1957, the Navy constructed an auxiliary air station at Port Isabel on the site of a former Army Air Corps base. Documentation from 1959 states that station's mission was "To maintain and operate facilities and provide services and material to support operations of aviation activities and units of the Naval Air Training Command and other activities and units, as designated by the Chief of Naval Operations." This included receiving and storing rockets and ammunition, providing for the arming and de-arming of jet aircraft, maintaining target facilities and gunnery areas, maintaining jet training aircraft during gunnery and staging operations, and providing administrative support. By 1961, however, the station was disestablished.

At NAS Corpus Christi, in 1958, the Navy announced the closure of its Overhaul & Repair Department in Facility 8. Since opening during World War II, the Overhaul & Repair Department grew to Corpus Christi's largest industry, employing 4,000 and sustaining an \$18 million payroll. The Navy tried to rehire civilian workers in different capacities, but most lost their jobs. Facility 8 remained idle until 21 April 1961, when the Navy converted it into the Army Aeronautical Depot Maintenance Center (ARADMAC) at the request of then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. In the mid-1960s, the Navy ended seaplane training and closed the seaplane ramps and training facilities at the base.



NAS Corpus Christi, ca. 1942. Source: NAS Corpus Christi, Public Affairs Office, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Background: Prop training aircraft, NAS Corpus Christi, 1961. Source: Operational Archives Section, Washington Navy Yard.



Aerial Photo of NAS Corpus Christi, 1949. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California.

Industrial Facilities

In addition to naval aviation training during the war industrial facilities underwent reorganization following the war. In summer 1945, it became apparent to the Industrial Mobilization Program that the war was coming to an end. The need to fund an expansion of the country's industrial facilities diminished, and the DPC was renamed the Office of Defense Plants. This action signaled the end of the DPC's wartime work and provided a means to manage and administer the former industrial facilities. The Office of Defense Plants recommended to the War Department (renamed the Department of Defense [DoD] in 1947) that the military branches retain facilities considered critical to the manufacture of military supplies, with the remainder sold to private enterprise. On 28 July 1945, the Department of the Navy and War Department gave their consent to the disposal of excess DPC-sponsored property and, on 20 August 1945, the War Productions Board released 146 properties, including Plancor #25.

The DPC responded to Congress and the War Department's requests by sending its best engineers to all of its wholly owned plants and conducted surveys to determine the best postwar uses for each factory and contractor. In February 1946, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), on behalf of the Office of Defense Plants, filed a letter of intent with the War Assets Administration stating that Plancor #25 would be permanently transferred to the Department of the Navy, which could then either sell the plant outright or lease it at its discretion. President Harry S. Truman signed the Industrial Reserve Act (Public Law 883, 80th Congress) on 1 December 1947, and it became law early in 1948. The plants listed in the Act formed the basis of the new government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) facilities program. The legislation authorized three types of GOCOs—ammunition, missiles, and aircraft/aerospace manufacturers—that provided the government with many advantages beyond the ability to lease excess properties. The military retained ownership of the plants while shifting the day-to-day operational duties to a private contractor, who paid a nominal rental fee. In addition, the government possessed 145 emergency reserve plants that could quickly, and legally, be converted to wartime production in an emergency. The legislation assigned the Department of the Navy plants worth nearly \$335 million across the nation, including the Dallas County facilities. The former Plancor #25 was renamed Naval Industrial Reserve Aircraft Plant (NIRAP) Dallas and was subsequently leased to Chance Vought Aircraft of Connecticut.

Between 1947 and 1966, the Department of the Navy controlled 11 GOCOs involved in the manufacture and testing of jet and rocket engines. The improvements to NIRAP Dallas represented the Navy's goal to improve and modernize some of its GOCO facilities, which probably occurred at other sites nationwide. In addition, from 1945 to 1957, the General Dynamics Corporation operated a Naval Ordnance Aerophysics Laboratory in Daingerfield, Texas, approximately 130 miles east of Dallas. The facility was used to test new aircraft and included a supersonic wind tunnel.

Aerial photo of NAS Dallas and Hensley Field in relation to Plancor #25. Source: United States Naval Air Stations of World War II: Volume 2, Western States by M. L. Shettle, Jr.

Space Surveillance

The successful launching of Sputnik I by the Soviet Union resulted in an extraordinary number of short- and long-term military and political implications, among them the creation of the program that originally operated within the Naval Space Command and was later transferred to the Air Force in 2004. In 1958, satellite technology was new and its uses and implications were largely unknown. The U.S. viewed Sputnik I as a major threat to its national security. The delivery system that successfully launched Sputnik I into space illustrated Soviet ballistic missile capabilities and demonstrated U.S. vulnerability to possible Soviet missile attack. Sputnik I also underscored the immediate need for a radar system capable of detecting man-made orbital objects. Such concerns prompted the U.S. to aggressively search within the defense community for a system capable of monitoring, detecting, and tracking artificial orbital bodies. The establishment of Naval Space Command and its series of field stations across the southern U.S., including Texas, is a direct result of this effort.

Although the successful launching of Sputnik I was largely unanticipated by the U.S. intelligence and defense communities, the Department of the Navy had begun studying methods of satellite detection several years earlier. Such efforts were undertaken by the mid-1950s in conjunction with the Navy's Vanguard satellite program. The Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) conducted numerous experiments with radio interferometry as a means of tracking the Vanguard satellites.

On 20 June 1958, the Advanced Research Projects Agency authorized the NRL to develop, install, and operate a nationwide space surveillance system, based on the radio interferometer technique, to detect and predict the orbital patterns of artificial satellites. The multistatic field stations evolved into the Naval Space Surveillance program, or NAVSPASUR, whose sole purpose was the operation of transmitting/ receiving field stations and the 24-hour detection and orbital prediction of all artificial satellites. Officially commissioned on 24 May 1959, NAVSPASUR was run by Officer-in-Charge, Commander D. G. Woosley from facilities located within the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Dahlgren, Virginia. NAVSPASUR headquarters monitored all its field stations via Teletype, which provided instantaneous results, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The communication between the field stations and headquarters enabled NAVSPASUR to continually detect and identify all man-made orbital objects and recognize any new objects that might appear in the earth's atmosphere. With the network connected, NAVSPASUR became the Navy's first operational space command. The centerpiece of the system was constructed near Archer City, Texas, at what was known as the Lake Kickapoo Field Station. It was the primary broadcast station of the system and facilitated the tracking of orbiting objects.

NAVSPASUR completed the final aspect of its third construction and development phase with a 1965 system-wide frequency conversion from 108.015 MHz to 215.980 MHz. The construction, upgrades, and frequency conversion stretched the satellite detection system across the continental United States and was essential to increasing the overall effectiveness of the system. Combined, the field stations provided effective, nation-wide coverage because they now had capabilities to consistently detect satellites at ranges from less than 100 miles to thousands of miles away. In addition, the number of stations, spaced at various and widely separated longitudes, enabled NAVSPASUR to detect a newly launched satellite on its first few revolutions. Furthermore, NAVSPASUR constructed both high-altitude and low-altitude receiving stations in order to detect all orbital objects, even the hard-to-find spy and reconnaissance satellites that generally fly low or extremely high.

Background: Aerial photograph detailing the main transmitter at the Lake Kickapoo Space Surveillance Station. Source: U.S. Naval Space Surveillance System.

SHIPBUILDING

While the Navy began an association with the shipbuilding industry in Orange, Texas in 1917, the necessity for additional ships for World War II greatly expanded that mission. In August 1940, the Navy commissioned the construction of 24 surf-landing boats, to be constructed by the Livingston Shipbuilding Company in Orange. At the time, Texas was home to four large shipyards. To coordinate efforts, the Navy established the Office of the Supervisor of Shipbuilding in Orange, which oversaw the construction of the vessels, managed the supply of materials and labor, and directed the development of housing and other facilities for Navy personnel and shipyard workers. Soon thereafter, in September 1940, the Navy ordered 12 destroyers from the Consolidated Steel Corporation shipyard in Orange. In April 1941, the Weaver Corporation received a contract to build 10 Motor Mine Sweepers and two wooden "sub-chasers." Additional plants emerged in Brownsville, Beaumont, Houston, and Galveston. Liberty ships were constructed at the Todd Shipyard in Houston. These emergency ships, composed of different sections welded together, initially had a poor public image because of their appearance. In effort to raise confidence in liberty ships, President Franklin D. Roosevelt held a Liberty Fleet Day when the ships were first launched, thereby earning the class of ships their name. Liberty ships were designed by the U.S. Maritime Commission using a standardized design, so that they could be produced quickly and efficiently by shipyards across the country. At the beginning of World War II, Todd Shipyard could accommodate the construction of 20 ships at a time. While new ships were constructed at the shipyard in Houston, workers at the Galveston shipyard retrofitted merchant vessels with guns capable of fighting enemy planes or submarines. In addition, workers at the Galveston Todd Shipyard repaired ships that had been torpedoed. Tasks included welding, riveting, painting, and other odd jobs.

Women were an important part of the workforce at the Galveston Todd Shipyard, and other manufacturing plants that supported the war effort. According to H. A. Suhler, who worked at the shipyard during World War II, "a woman who was a good seamstress could make a pattern for a piece of sheet metal very easily. They also worked as insulators, but not many did welding unless they were exceptionally good at it." At its peak, the employment of women in the shipbuilding industry nationwide reached 11 percent of the workforce. Overall, close to 100,000 men and women worked at Texas shipyards from 1940-45 and produced 1,521 ships.



Todd Drydock, Galveston, Texas, 1942. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, California.



Photo of the USS Menges at Launching from the Consolidated Steel Corporation shipyard, June 15, 1943. Source: National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

Background: USS Pride at Launching from the Consolidated Steel Corporation shipyard, July 3, 1943. Source: National Archives II, College Park, Maryland

WAVES

Begun in 1942, the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service) supported the Navy's mission in Texas in a wide variety of ways during World War II. As described by Norman Delaney in *An Oral History of the Naval Air Station Corpus Christi during World War II*, WAVES served as "Link trainer instructors, parachute riggers, aerologists, meteorologists, aircraft mechanics, radio operators, security officers, metalsmiths, hospital corps WAVES, dental assistants, gunnery instructors, secretaries, Chaplain's assistants, pressure chamber technicians, air traffic controllers, cryptographers, and language instructors."



Photo and Background: WAVES machinists at work, NAS Dallas, 1943. Source: National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

WAVES

Ordnance Manufacture

The Navy introduced guided missiles to its arsenal immediately following World War II, when German scientists, who were researching rocket weapons for the Nazis, came to America to work for the U.S. military at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico. Chance Vought Aircraft began its research into missiles in October 1943 after first hearing of Germany's pilot-less aircraft program. The company was one of the 12 aircraft manufacturers that responded to the guided missile competition initiated by the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) in 1945. Because Chance Vought Aircraft had a design in development for nearly two years, the company had an advantage over other firms competing for BuAer contracts. Furthermore, Vought's longstanding manufacturing history with the United States military afforded the company an additional edge which directly increased the Navy's presence in Texas.

In 1945, Chance Vought submitted a guided missile design, called the P/A VI, BuAer. The design included numerous advantages, and contributed to the company being awarded a manufacturing contract in early 1946 for a single guided missile prototype. Subsequent tests and models resulted in the firm receiving an additional contract in November 1947 for the manufacture of one Regulus prototype. The simple, innovative, and versatile design of the Regulus made it affordable and desirable to the Navy. Vought's guided missile was the first designed specifically to carry an atomic warhead and could be launched from submarines, cruisers, guided missile ships, aircraft carriers, and land bases. The Regulus was economical and easy to install, with little modification to the launching vehicle. Its inexpensive and quick installation, combined with its ability to be reused, cut the Regulus' cost to one-tenth that of comparable programs carried out by other aerospace companies.

In April 1948, Chance Vought relocated its aircraft division from Connecticut and opened operations in NIRAP Dallas, formerly operated by North American Aviation. Vought immediately resumed the engineering phase of the Regulus missile prototype. On 1 June 1948, Vought informed the Navy that it could produce 30 Regulus test missiles for the amount originally allocated. The fabrication and testing phase of the project was to occur in the company's new and modern plant. NIRAP Dallas' production capabilities enabled the company to consolidate Regulus manufacturing and testing in one single location, which further reduced manufacturing costs and permitted the company to fabricate 29 additional models. By 17 December 1948, Vought delivered the first 10 Regulus production models.

After World War II, the crux of the United States military's massive nuclear retaliation depended solely on the Air Force, which greatly limited the strategic capabilities of the armed forces – military leaders could only deliver a nuclear bomb to areas accessible by heavy bomber aircraft. The advent of guided missiles changed military planning because they provided the means of delivering thermonuclear weapons directly upon enemy territory, regardless of the location and its accessibility. In this postwar environment, the Navy found itself in a uniquely important position, especially after it combined its guided missile programs with a modern, strong fleet of vessels and submarines. The development, acceptance, and operational readiness of the Regulus missile further strengthened the Navy's position within the armed forces and placed it on equal footing with the Air Force in terms of missile development. For a decade, the Navy had the only guided missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead anywhere in the world. In this sense, Chance Vought's Regulus I missile was a true product of the Cold War – conceived during a time in which the United States military was looking for a powerful deterrent to Soviet and communist expansion worldwide. Even though the Regulus was not the most technologically advanced of guided

These characteristics made Chance Vought's Regulus missile important to Cold War policies and practices and valuable to the United States and the nation's defense.. The success of the initial Regulus program led to a successor missile called the Regulus II. Development on this program began at NIRAP Dallas in 1954, but was cancelled a few years later. The Navy determined that this second program was not a significant improvement on its predecessor, primarily because it could not be launched from a submerged submarine. The Polaris ballistic nuclear missile, which was in development, could launch a nuclear warhead from underwater. The Navy considered the Polaris, not the Regulus II, as the long-term future of naval missiles. It was manufactured by Lockheed in California. Termination of Vought's Regulus II program saved the Navy \$100 million, and these funds were immediately diverted to the Polaris program. It took nearly a decade for the Polaris to be operationally ready, so the Navy continued to support, purchase, and utilize the Dallas-produced Regulus I as an interim program. From 1954 to January 1959, Chance Vought manufactured 514 Regulus I tactical missiles. All of these missiles were manufactured in Vought plant at Dallas, which had been redesignated by the Navy in 1952 as Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) Dallas. For 16 years, the Regulus served aboard specially designed submarines, a variety of surface ships, and from the ground.



Photo and Background: Administration Building, Rocketdyne Solid Propulsion Operations at the former Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant, ca. 1959. Source: McGregor, Texas (McLennan County) Vertical File, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Background Opposite Page: Site Plan of the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant, 1945. Source: Fred Lamb, VSE Corporation, McGregor, Texas

THE BLUE ANGELS

The Blue Angels, the Navy's famed precision flying team, transferred to NAS Corpus Christi from NAS Jacksonville, Florida in 1949, bringing the first jet aircraft to South Texas. After a year of operations at NAS Corpus Christi, NAATC temporarily moved the Blue Angels to Whiting Field in Pensacola, Florida for use in the Korean conflict. Assigned to the aircraft carrier Princeton, the Blue Angels conducted operations in Korean waters before returning to NAS Corpus Christi on 25 October 1951. NAATC considered disbanding the Blue Angels after their tour of duty, but decided to use the team to "demonstrate the ultimate in naval aviation to the student aviator and the public." To accommodate the operational needs of the Blue Angels and provide them logistic support, NAS Corpus Christi worked closely with the team's supply personnel to procure specialized materials prior to their arrival.

Just prior to the Blue Angels first public appearance, the team held a press conference and photo opportunity at NAS Corpus Christi. Members of the national press, radio, and television covered the event, thereby focusing attention onto the base. On 19 June 1952, the Blue Angels made their first public flight demonstration at the Mid-South Navy Festival in Memphis, Tennessee. An estimated 50,000 spectators viewed the team's performance.

As part of an overall reorganization of the Navy from wartime to peacetime operations, the Blue Angels transferred from NAS Corpus Christi in 1955 to its present home at NAS Pensacola. The team still consists of six pilots and continues to perform all over the world.



Blue Angels pilots at NAS Corpus Christi, 1954. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, CA

Background: Blue Angels pilots at NAS Corpus Christi, 1954. Source: NAVFAC Archives, Port Hueneme, CA.

NAVY POW CAMPS

During World War II, approximately 79,000 German Prisoners of War (POWs) were held in military installations across Texas. This represented about 20 percent of the approximately 400,000 German POWs held across the United States. Most were held in the 51 camps that the Army operated in Texas, such as those at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio or Camp Wallace near League City. Towards the end of the war, from May 1945 through March 1946, NAS Corpus Christi also hosted a POW camp for German prisoners. The prisoners were transferred to NAS Corpus Christi from Fort Sam Houston in August 1945. Additional POWs were housed at Cabaniss Field and Chase Field. The POW camp at NAS Corpus Christi was located near the south entrance, immediately north of the Commissary (Building No. 119). The camp could accommodate up to 1,200 persons housed in temporary wood huts with only screens and canvas over the windows. However, only about 250 POWs actually were housed at NAS Corpus Christi. The prisoners built the camp themselves.

As described by Richard Paul Walker in *Prisoners of War in Texas during World War II*, the American military “closely followed the rules of the Geneva Convention in treatment of prisoners...American officials assumed that POWs with high morale were easier to control than bitter, dejected inmates.” The prisoners, consequently, benefited from a policy designed to improve morale and provide leisure activities, such as educational and religious programs, sports, and entertainment. While the prisoners were required to perform manual labor, the Navy also schooled them in English, American government, and civil liberties. The POWs also performed hurricane relief duties and assisted the navy personnel in public works maintenance, repairs, and other day-to-day station operations. Both Navy personnel and the POWs themselves reported that quality of life for the POWs was very good. In an oral interview, former POW Heinz Bosowitz stated: “Camp life was like a holiday to us, especially as we had no guards. We just had civilians to look after us. We had football, table tennis, very good food. We had everything we wanted. They didn’t treat us like prisoners of war here. They treated us like one of their own. Those were happy times.” The Navy eventually sent the prisoners to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas for repatriation to Germany. All buildings associated with the POW camps in Texas were dismantled immediately thereafter.

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