CELEBRATING 77 YEARS OF NAVAL AVIATION TRAINING

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
NAS WHITING FIELD
NAS Whiting Field celebrated 77 years of commitment to training the world’s finest aviators on July 16. On the occasion, we remember what it was like for those serving onboard Whiting Field in its first years during World War II.

In early 1943, Rear Admiral George D. Murray selected the site to meet the demands of a growing Naval air training program during WWII. The new facility would help increase the peak student load at the Naval Air Training Center, Pensacola from a max of 3,500 students to 4,500 students.

To achieve the goal, 21 parcels of land comprising 2,920 total acres were selected as the site of the next Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS), the newest and largest addition to NATC, Pensacola. While that may sound exciting, the people assigned to “Field X,” as it was called at that time, might tell a different story. There are lasting vivid descriptions of both the harsh living conditions and the pride everyone took in watching the base seemingly grow before their eyes.

As Y2c K. E. Kreiser put it, Whiting Field, then known as Field “X,” was “an expanse of swamp, woods, and mud.” Whenever it rained, and that was most days, the worked soil became mud, knee deep. And whenever the sun came out, typically minutes after having just rained (as
anyone who has experienced Whiting weather can tell you), the top layer of mud would bake and scatter in the wind, coating everything and everyone with dust.

Tough conditions, however, became business as usual for those stationed at the auxiliary field as did sharing the grounds with the wildlife that had taken residence in the area before the Navy arrived. Although little issue may have been taken with the wildlife that seemed to freely roam the roads, hangars and even, on one occasion, the barracks, squads were dedicated to patrolling the runways to keep the livestock from interfering with flight operations. From a personal account, Kreiser describes how the first service in the freshly built chapel was highlighted by the sudden appearance of a cow sticking her head through an unfinished window to contribute her stunning “contralto moo-o-o” to the final hymn.

The personnel who were first transferred to Whiting Field had to contend with many rugged living conditions. Despite construction having started in April, and the first Cadets arriving in June, there were few amenities present by the time flight operations began in July. Personnel often lived in unfinished buildings or in tents when there was no other room. Despite the constant efforts of Public Works to improve living conditions, none of the buildings on base would have hot water until November. In fact, according to Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) Sp(T)1c Ruth Berreyesa, water was in such demand that those desiring a shower would have to make the trek to Pensacola to get one:

“In fact—if there were water here

Throughout a day, we’d give a cheer.
And for a while we wore a path
To Mainside for a shower bath!”

The ruggedness of life on Whiting Field was not without purpose. Their task was to get as many students as much flight time as possible so they could complete their aviation training.

Those constructing the base proceeded with priorities of a strict hierarchy: operational ability first, amenities second, and amusements a final third.

The necessary facilities to run South Field were finished as soon as possible to accommodate the seamless transfer of the training squadrons from surrounding stations to Whiting to continue training, while the rest of the base remained under construction. It was not until July 16, 1943, that the base would be officially commissioned.

The installation was named for and dedicated to Kenneth Whiting in a ceremony honored by the presence of his widow Mrs. Edna Whiting. The name of the field changed from Field X to NAAS Whiting Field and transferred command from NAS Pensacola to Commander Gillespie, the installation’s first commanding officer.

On November 15, Whiting Field became fully operational with the transfer of Squadron VN8D8-C from Corry Field to North Field. Subsequently, peak student load was reached and lasted into the start of the next year.

Cadets were crowded six to a room designed for 4, and all extra available space in officer and enlisted barracks were put to use. WAVES were not excluded from this lack of
comfort as the number assigned to Whiting was steadily increasing as the barracks to house new additions were still under construction.

Before the year was out in 1943, the base was fully operational. But construction on base continued. Over the years as the personnel made Whiting more and more their home, the base made upgrades to the original scope of the mission at Whiting. Since much of the base was still under construction, cadets assisted in getting any work done that was in need of laborers when they would have otherwise been on their off time.

Due to the efforts of the Public Works and Ship’s Services, many amenities and recreations sprouted up on base over the years such as: laundry and dry cleaning services, merchandise stores, canteens, barber shops, a library, gym, movie theater, talent shows, swimming pool, tennis courts, athletic fields, recreation halls, C.P.O. Club, Officers Club and Aviation Cadets Recreation and Athletic Club. Additionally, efforts to improve conditions on the grounds were extended to various paving projects and the soil erosion project, which fought to counteract the erosion that took place after the site had been stripped of its vegetation for construction.

On December 1, 1943, a base newspaper was officially christened as the Whiting Tower, earning a lucky Ensign a twenty-five dollar war bond for winning the naming competition. In its first issue, the Tower informed readers of the new and upcoming additions and events on base, as well as the current stories and hijinks that took place among the people stationed there.

Photo of first students in Squadron VB-4.

MWR Facility Posture During COVID Mitigation

All programs, events, classes, sports remain cancelled

- Fitness Center: Closed
- Swimming Pool: Closed
- Community Recreation: Closed
- Aces Pub: Closed
- Liberty Center: Closed
- Whiting Park: Closed
- Library: Closed
Note: this includes the 24/7 student study area

Sikes Hall and the Atrium: Closed for group functions
Note: this includes Soft Patch and Winging events

- RV Park: Closed - Call 850-418-9507

- Child Development Center: Mission Essential Declarations Only

- North Field Snack Bar, South Field Snack Bar and the Tower Café are open for “Take-Out Only”

North Field Snack Bar: Call in 850-623-2692
Hours of operation: Mon - Fri 7:00am – 1:00pm / Sat - Sun - Hol closed

South Field Snack Bar: Call in 850-623-6574
Hours of operation: Mon - Fri 6:00am – 7:00pm / Sat - Sun - Hol closed

Tower Café: Call in 850-623-7290
Hours of operation: Mon - Fri 6:00am – 1:00pm / Sat - Sun - Hol closed
The Early Days of NAS Whiting Field (cont.)

With each new addition, the readers were able to track the growth of Whiting Field into more than a training field.

From the additions of swimming classes (no more traveling to Mainside for water) to the installation of coke machines around the base to help everyone “wet down the dust,” all were able to enjoy a semblance of normalcy in the midst of a war effort. Conditions continued to improve for the coming years until Whiting became a second home.

On July 12, 1945, a prisoner of war (POW) camp was officially established at NAASWF. The POW camp for German soldiers was operated through the efforts and cooperation of Naval authorities at NAS Pensacola and Army authorities at Camp Rucker, Alabama. These POWs worked at various constructions projects on the base. While most of their contributions were providing facilities to maintain the camp itself, they also contributed to the soil erosion project. It is also popularly believed that these prisoners built most of the brick veneered, hollow clay tile constructed buildings on the station.

The hustle and bustle at Whiting, however, came to a conclusion. On August 14, 1945 Japan surrendered, ending WWII. With the end of the war came numerous victory celebrations. German POWs were returned to their homeland.

Training flights for cadets and aviation pilots were suspended for several days so the men could decide whether to remain in the Navy or return to civilian life.
Whereas the end of WWII slowed things down for a time at the installation, Whiting Field continued its critical aviation training mission that continues today. Many aviators, instructor pilots, leaders, support staff, and family members have come and gone through the decades, but Whiting’s importance to the Navy and Department of Defense continues to this day.

From the origins of the muddy fields, to 2020, people who contributed to building the facility in the early 1940’s could not have imagined that their efforts would still allow the Navy to produce the world’s finest aviation warfighters.

Happy Birthday Whiting Field!

Japanese surrender service on Whiting Field.

V-J Day on Whiting Field.

This Day in Naval History

**JULY 01, 1801**
Commodore Richard Dale’s squadron arrives at Gibraltar for the protection of American interests and to strike at the Barbary Pirates in the Mediterranean. Squadron ships were USS President, USS Philadelphia, USS Essex, and USS Enterprise.

**JULY 04, 1776**
The Second Continental Congress unanimously adopts the Declaration of Independence, which announces the colonies’ separation from Great Britain.

**JULY 17, 1975**
U.S. Apollo (Apollo 18) and Soviet Soyuz (Soyuz 19) space craft dock in space, making the first manned space flight conducted jointly by the 2 nations. The Apollo craft remains for 9 days, 1 hour, and approximately 28 minutes. USS New Orleans (LPH 11) later recovers the Apollo craft.

**JULY 19, 1812**
The frigate, USS Constitution, under the command of Capt. Isaac Hull, escapes a British squadron on a three-day chase off the coast of New Jersey.

**JULY 20, 1960**
In the first launch of the Polaris missile, USS George Washington (SSBN 598) successfully fires two operational Polaris missiles while submerged off Florida.

Congratulations to Brewton Outlying Field!

They are the champions of our 1st OLF Cup event which took place from June 22nd through June 26th. The MWR team brought out the fun with a PS4 game system and Call of Duty Modern Warfare to each of the ten Whiting Field OLF’s. Each OLF had the opportunity to play six, five minute rounds. Service members were allowed to choose individual or team play. The two highest kill totals, for the tournament were used to determine the winner.

The OLF teams showed their skills on the playing field. A variety of maps were selected and only default weapon settings were allowed. This gave all the participants an equal playing field. MWR Community Recreation truly enjoyed spending time with the OLF service members. Look for more of these types of events in the near future.

V-J Day on Whiting Field.

MWR eSports

OLF Cup

June 2020

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Call of Duty Modern Warfare

Champions

Brewton Outlying Field
The Risk Management Information (RMI) initiative is a single program of record to improve Navy and Marine Corps safety management.

The RMI initiative is a mission-essential capability to improve the readiness of the Department of the Navy (DON) by way of:
- Safety data capture
- Data management
- Data analysis
- Dissemination of the leading indicators of safety risk to our Sailors and Marines


Hometown: Jacksonville, Fla.
Time in service: 2.5 years
Time onboard: 7 months
Mentor: Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class Banos, currently stationed in San Diego. They were stationed together in Diego Garcia. Martinez described his mentor as someone able to explain multiple ways to complete a task and accomplish the mission.
Favorite inspirational quote: “If you don’t believe in yourself, then who will?”

Contribution to the mission: Air Traffic Controller Airman Martinez has played a vital role in ensuring that ATC is fully operational. He is, according to his supervisor, one of the most proficient flight planning supervisors in the division. He led his team filing flight plans and movement messages ensuring Training Air Wing Five (TW5) remained at 100% mission readiness. Additionally, he was key in submitting Notice to Airmen for the Blue Angels flights at NASWF.

What is one goal you have for your career? To be fully qualified as an air traffic controller at Whiting Field, contribute to the mission training new Naval aviators.

FACE COVERINGS: WHAT’S ALLOWED?

YES

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Refer to NAVADMIN 194/20
Conratulations to Training Air Wing Five Wingers
Whiting Field Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to Training Air Wing Five Wingers

HT-8 Winging Class July 10, 2020

HT-18 Winging Class July 10, 2020

HT-28 Winging Class July 10, 2020
Whiting Field Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to Training Air Wing Five Wingers

HT-8 Winging Class July 24, 2020

HT-18 Winging Class July 24, 2020

HT-28 Winging Class July 24, 2020
Whiting Field Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to Training Air Wing Five Awardees

TW-5 Commodore’s List with Distinction Recipient receives recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters
June 18, 2020

TW-5 Commodore’s List Recipient receives recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters
June 25, 2020

TW-5 Commodore’s List with Distinction Recipient receives recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters
July 10, 2020

TW-5 Commodore’s List Recipient receives recognition at TRAWING-5 Headquarters
July 10, 2020
NAS Whiting Field